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Technology and Election Administration in Nigeria

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Abstract

In this study, election administration in Nigeria between 2015 and 2019 was analyzed with the view to ascertaining the extent to which the deployment of technology enhances the credibility of the electoral process. The study employed secondary data obtained from textbooks, journals, and newspapers and adopted the instrumentalism theory of technology as a framework of the analysis. The findings showed that the appalling and fraudulent electoral process that is characterized by rigging led to the deployment of technology in election administration in Nigeria. The use of technological devices such as permanent voterscards and smartcard readers has spawned contradictory ramifications for the electoral process. On the other hand, the deployment of technological devices in the registration and accreditation of voters is seen to have made the electoral process more transparent and credible. However, the utility of these technological devices is being vitiated by poor handling and inadequacy of internet facilities. Besides, there are some fraudulent practices such as vote-buying, underage voting, and lack of internal democracy that are undermining the credibility of the electoral process. The study concluded that the adoption of technology has, to a large extent, transformed the election administration in Nigeria, though there are still challenges and impediments to be surmounted. The study recommended that electoral officers should be adequately trained on how to handle the technological devices and that functional internet facilities should be put in place for the optimal performance of technological devices. It further recommended that efforts should be made to reform modalities for the conduct of party primaries as well as regulate prohibitive nomination fees for political office aspirants. Finally, it suggested that stiff penalties for underage voting and vote-buying among others should be institutionalized.

***Keywords**: Credible elections, democracy, election administration, permanent voter's card, Smart card readers, technology*

1. Introduction

The conduct of elections is a core attribute of modern democracy. When such elections are freely and fairly conducted, they permit the citizens to have the opportunity to elect their representatives. The political history of Nigeria since independence in 1960 aptly shows that elections that ought to confer legitimacy on leaders were in the past conducted in such ways that made a mockery of the involvement of the electorate in the electoral process. They were massively rigged and accompanied by violence (Joseph, 1991).

In response to the recurring incidence of fraud in election administration in Nigeria, a series of reforms have been carried out on the electoral process since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999. The electoral body, that is, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), introduced the use of technology in the electoral process. It started with the use of Direct Data Capture Machines in the registration of voters for the 2011 elections when INEC procured and deployed over 132,000 Direct Data Capture Machines (DDCMs) for the registration exercise (Yakubu, 2017). The exercise featured an Automated Fingerprints Identification System (AFIS) designed to rid the register of multiple registrants. Similarly, in the build-up towards the 2015 elections, the registration exercise featured an improved AFIS designed for the identification of similar fingerprints on the register used for the 2011 elections.

In the 2015 polls, INEC, for the first time, adopted technology for the registration and accreditation of voters. During the exercise, the Temporary Voters' Cards (TVCs) that were issued to voters for the 2011 election were replaced with the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) (Ayeni & Esan, 2018).

Similarly, the 2015 and 2019 polls were conducted using PVC and Smartcard Readers (SCR). In the presidential poll of the 2015 general elections, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), General Muhammadu Buhari (Retd.) won the presidential election receiving 15,424,921 (53.96%) votes while Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) received 12,853,162 votes (44.96%). The other twelve presidential candidates altogether received 309,480 votes (1.08%) (INEC, 2015).

Apart from the fact that the candidate of the then ruling political party, the PDP; Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, conceded defeat to the candidate of the then opposition party, General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC, the 2015 elections witnessed low election petitions. The various election tribunals received a total of 297 petitions compared to 506 petitions in the 2003 elections, 1270 in the 2007 polls, and 731 in the 2011 elections (Nwangwu, 2015). In the 2019 general elections, Major General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC also won the presidential election. He polled 15,191,847 votes while his arch-rival Alhaji Abubakar Atiku of the PDP polled 11,262,978 votes (INEC, 2019b). However, unlike the 2015 polls, when the then sitting President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, congratulated the APC candidate, the PDP presidential candidate and the PDP utterly rejected the results of the poll. They proceeded to the tribunal to contest the results. Similarly, the number of petitions was also on the high side. The various electoral tribunals in various parts of the federation received a total of 766 petitions nationwide(Yahaya, 2019). It is against the background of these conflicting views this paper examined the attraction and limitations of the adoption of technology in election administration in Nigeria.

2. Objectives of Study

This study aimed to ascertain the extent to which the deployment of technology in election administration has transformed the electoral process in Nigeria. The objectives of this study are to:

1) Discuss the rationale for the introduction of technology in election administration in Nigeria.
2) Ascertain the extent to which the deployment of technology has addressed infractions in the electoral process in Nigeria.
3) Identify issues and challenges associated with the deployment of technology in election administration in Nigeria.
4) Highlight measures capable of enhancing the credibility of the electoral process in Nigeria.

3. Materials and Methods of Study

The study employed a qualitative research technique. Data were elicited from the official publication of the election management body in Nigeria, namely, the Independent National Electoral Commission, journal, textbooks, and newspapers, and qualitatively analyzed in this study.

This study was anchored on instrumentalism theory of technology, a theoretical perspective adapted from the philosophy of technology. This theory sees technology as morally neutral and disconnected from its social consequences and as a means to address the humanly-defined problem or need. In this study, 'technology' was seen as tools or equipment deployed to solve a specific problem, which, in this context, is electoral fraud. Various devices used in the conduct and administration of elections of the 2015 and 2019 polls such as the Permanent Voter Cards (PVC), the Smartcard Readers (SCR), mobile telephony system, the Internet, and other computer-mediated communication (CMC) devices were considered as technological instruments intentionally deployed to enhance the credibility of elections in Nigeria. Hence, the objective of the analysis in the remaining part of this study focused on the extent to which these new technological devices helped in ensuring the sanctity and credibility of the 2015 and 2019 polls in Nigeria.

Discussion in this paper, apart from this introductory segment, was organized into different segments which focused on conceptual and theoretical issues, the attraction of technology in election administration in Nigeria, the challenges of new technologies for the electoral process as well as the conclusion of the study.

4. Result and Discussion

In this section, the discussion focused on technology, election administration, and credible elections, as well as the framework of analysis.

4.1 Technology

Various writers have defined technology from different perspectives. In this study, some of the definitions that focus on the functional dimension of technology were considered. Kumar, Kumar & Persaud (cited in Wahab, Rose & Osman, 2012) advanced the view that technology consists of two primary components. The first component is made up of physical items such as products, tooling, equipment, blueprints, techniques, and processes while the second component concerns the know-how in management, marketing, production, quality control, reliability, skilled labour, and functional areas. This conception by Kumar et al. (2012) saw technology as instruments or equipment deployed for a particular purpose. The second dimension of the definition given by Kumar et al. (2012) was about the knowledge of how the various equipment or tools are combined to achieve the desired goal. Flowing from the views espoused by these writers, technology is intentionally deployed to achieve a predetermined purpose.

According to Grubler (2003), technology, in its narrowest sense, consists of manufactured tools and equipment. He asserted that the purpose is to enhance human capabilities or to enable human to perform tasks they could not perform otherwise (p. 20). He contended further that technology transcends artefacts to encompass things that are made and how they are made (p. 20) as well as the knowledge about how to deploy them.

Carroll (2017) classified technology into two categories stressing the intention or purpose of deployment, namely, primary and secondary intentions. Carroll (2017) asserted that the primary intention is when technology, as stated earlier, is employed to achieve a particular task or solve a problem. In contrast, the secondary intention refers to a situation where technology that is deployed to achieve a primary purposeis at the same addressing another problem or serving a purpose that was not intended in its initial application.

4.2 Election Administration

Election administration has also received considerable attention in the literature. It is about the different activities involved in the conduct of elections which entails activities before, during, and after the conduct of elections (Tobi & Oikhala, 2018). Ajayi (2007) averred that election administration refers to the election management bodies and the existing rules and regulations that guide the conduct of elections. Harris (1934) stressed the attributes of ideal election administration. He advanced the view that it is that one which uniformly and regularly produces precise and accurate results; where it is expected that there would be no slightest question about the integrity of the ballot box or doubt cast upon the honesty of the elections (p. 1). Harris (1934) asserted further that a sound election system involves a convenience to the voters, so that they may participate in the elections without severe loss of time or trouble. He also advanced the view that there should never be any question about the accuracy of the results which should be as accurate as of the accounts of a bank or any other commercial institution (Harris, 1934).

4.3 Credible Election

Different writers have developed different parameters for measuring the credibility of an election. This study adopted the Open Election Data Initiative criteria for evaluating the credibility of elections in Nigeria. These are inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, and competitiveness. Inclusiveness stresses equal opportunities for all citizens to participate as voters in the selection of the representatives and as candidates for election. The principle of transparency means that each phase of the electoral process should be open to scrutiny. Information regarding all stages of the electoral cycle must be made available to the voters and candidates. Also, partisan and non-partisan observers should be accredited to serve in all phases of the election process. The principle of accountability means that stakeholders in the electoral process must be made to answer questions for malfeasance and remedies must exist for those whose election-related rights were violated. Competitiveness implies that the electoral system must permit citizens to form political parties they think will represent their interests. Similarly, parties and candidates must be able to campaign and voters to cast their votes freely (Open Election Data Initiative, n:d).

5. The Attraction of Technology in Election administration in Nigeria

The history of election administration in Nigeria since the attainment of independence is that of the perversion of the will of the people (Akinsanya, 2015). There is hardly any election in Nigeria whose outcome has not been contested. The first post-independence elections conducted in 1964/1965 were very controversial. In the Second Republic, the electoral process did not fare better. The outcome of the elections included violence and arson in different parts of the country. In the journey to the Third Republic, the June 12, 1993 election adjudged to be the freest in the political history of Nigeria and presumably won by Chief M. K. O Abiola was annulled by the military government of the day. The narrative on election administration in Nigeria shows that elections have been far from being democratic as the will of the people have not been allowed to triumph.

Between 1999 and 2019, six general elections were conducted in Nigeria. The first in the series was the 1999 general polls supervised by the military. Though there were isolated sharp practices and irregularities as reported by domestic and international observers, the overall outcomes of these elections were accepted (Nwangwu, 2015). However, in the 2003 elections, reports of domestic and international election observers showed that the elections were marred by a series irregularities in many states of the federation. For instance, the International Republican Institute (INI) (2003) observation team noted among other things that inadequate election administration, unfriendly election environment caused by the violent political campaign as well as series of deliberate acts of electoral fraud in some parts of the country collectively undermined the electoral process in Nigeria (IRI, 2003). In the 2007 polls, the electoral process was equally marred by a series of irregularities. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) (2007) observation team noted failure to display voters register, inadequate voting materials, the omission of the names of some candidates in the ballot papers, lack of secrecy in the voting process and underage voting among others were noticeable in the 2007 polls (NDI, 2007). Even, late President UmaruYar ‘Adua, who became president on the platform of these questionable electoral practices, had to admit publicly at the occasion of his inauguration that the elections were massively rigged and that a reform was needed.

It was the general condemnation of the 2007 election and the determination to stem electoral fraud that prompted the INEC to introduce technology in the administration of election in Nigeria. The former Chairman of INEC, Professor Attahiru Jega while justifying the use of the (SCRs) for accreditation of voters before the upper chamber of the National Assembly, that is, the Senate in 2015, declared among other things that, it was one of the mechanisms introduced by the Commission to improve on the credibility of the electoral process and that the use of card readers would add value to the electoral process in Nigeria in line with international best practices (Adebowale, 2015). Similarly, Mr. Kayode Idowu, the then Chief Press Secretary to INEC Chairman, also gave four features of the SCR that informed its deployment in the electoral process. These are:

(i) The verification of the PVCs presented by voters at polling units and ensuring that they are genuine and issued by INEC.
(ii) The biometric authentication of the person who presents PVC at the polling unit and ensures that he/she is the legitimate holder of the card.
(iii) Provision of disaggregated data of accredited voters in male/female and elderly-youth categories- a disaggregation that is vital for research.
(iv) Sending the data of all accredited voters to INECs central server, thereby enabling the Commission to determine if fraudulent alterations were made (Idowu, 2015).

Since 2015 when the deployment of technology in election administration commenced, it has continued to be applauded because it is, to a considerable extent seen, to have made elections conducted to be more transparent than previous exercises. As mentioned earlier on, the idea of electronic registration started during the preparation for the 2011 elections when Direct Data capture Machines were used in the registration exercise. Though it was an improvement on previous exercises, there were still cases of multiple registrations. In the build-up to the 2015 elections, INEC deployed technology in the revision of the 2011 voters register. It embarked on data optimization process, which involved an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) exercise to address the problem of multiple registrations associated with the 2011 registration exercise. Apart from this, INEC embarked on Continuous Voters

Registration exercise for those who did not register in 2011. At the end of the exercise, the final number of registered voters for the general elections announced by INEC stood at 68,833,476 (Nwafor, 2015). Similarly, in the build-up to the 2019 elections, INEC revised the voters' register and was able to have an idea of total voters in Nigeria.A total number of 84,004,084 Nigerians registered as voters for the 2019 elections (INEC, 2019a). This development, without doubt, safeguarded against multiple registrations as well as multiple voting.

Furthermore,the use of the card reader and the PVC in the accreditation of voters has transformed election administration in Nigeria. With technology, the process has been broken down into three phases. These are identification, verification, and authentication. Identification is about the physical comparison of the face of the card holder with the image displayed on the SCR when the PVC is read (Nwafor, 2019). Verification (that is to ascertain whether the card is original) - being able to read the information on the chip of the PVC presented; Authentication is about the comparison of the fingerprint stored on the card with what is physically presented and scanned by the reader. With these innovations, technology has improved on the processes of accreditation of voters on the polling day.

Writing on the attraction of the deployment technology in election administration in Nigeria, Ayeni and Esan (2018) asserted among, other things that.

> The incorporation of ICT in Nigerian electoral system has modernized the system and improved election management in the country. Results revealed that the introduction of Electronic Voters Register (EVR), Automatic Fingerprints Identification System (AFIS), and Smart Card Reader (SCR) had reduced the incidence of multiple registrations and multiple voting to the barest minimum (p. 5)

Apart from the registration and accreditation, technology has also been featuring prominently in the election monitoring either by registered domestic and international observers and monitors or party agents and their supporters. With the use of technology such as the Internet, Whatsapp, Facebook, and twitters, communication and exchange of information, particularly about the conduct of the elections, are now made more accessible. Mobile smartphones have become real instruments used to monitor elections in various parts of the country as video and images can now be exchanged to show situation reports in different voting locations in the country. In the 2015 and 2019 polls, as results were being announced at the polling booths, the party agents were using mobile phones to send messages to party members.

6. Challenges and Limitations of Technology in Election Administration in Nigeria.

The narratives on the effectiveness of the deployed technology seem to have been over-bloated and exaggerated as a series of issues have arisen with the increasing deployment of technology. First, in the much-celebrated 2015 general elections seen to be credible, there were certain contradictions spawned by the adoption of technology, particularly the permanent voters' card, and the Smart Card reader device. It has been alleged that the PVC was used as an instrument for disenfranchising voters. Specifically, INEC was accused of using the distribution of PVCs to suppress voters in some parts of the country, particularly in the South East. Nnaji (cited in Agbu 2015) argued that in the 2011 election, the South East region had about 5 million registered voters, but the region recorded only 2.6 million voters in 2015. He contrasted this development with the total voters in Jigawa and Kano states. Jigawa was part of Kano state before its creation in 1991. It had 3.1 million and even doubled that of Lagos state, which had 1.4 million voters. Similarly, the PVCs collection rate equally raised questions. For instance, the states in the North East Region tormented by the Boko Haram terrorist sect with parts of their residents displaced had higher PVC collection rates than the highly populated, relatively peaceful, and politically conscious, the Lagos State.

Also, the allegation of using the PVC to suppress voters was equally extended to the stronghold of the frontline political parties. For instance, in the build-up to the 2015 elections, when INEC started issuing PVCto replace the Temporary Voter Cards (TVC), there were allegations against INEC by the APC and PDP accusing the election body of trying to disenfranchise their members notably when it was announced that only holders of PVC would be allowed to vote amidst the complaints by Nigerians of problems encountered in the process of collecting their PVCs. Part of the complaints included the absence of INEC

officials in some accredited booths, the late arrival of officials, missing cards, among others. In the 2019 general elections, the contradictions experienced during the 2015 elections repeated themselves. People complained of their inability to collect their PVCs. This complaint was obvious in metropolitan areas, particularly Lagos.

There is also a recurring issue of the failure of the biometric technology on the polling day. Before the 2015 elections, INEC carried out a test in March 2014 on the effectiveness of the biometric technology. The test run took place in 225 of the total 120,000 polling units and 155,000 voting centers that were used for the 2015 general elections. The exercise took place in twelve states selected from each of the six geopolitical zones as follows: Niger and Nassarawa (North Central), Bauchi and Taraba (North East), Kano and Kebbi (North-West), Anambra and Ebonyi (South East), Ekiti and Lagos (South West), as well as Delta and Rivers (South-South). In the exercise, the device was said to have recorded 100 percent success in the authentication of the genuineness of the PVC. However, the success rate was 59 percent in the verification of fingerprints (Adebayo, 2015). Before the test run, the then Chairman of INEC, Professor Jega had assured Nigerians that the Commission had conducted some functional tests on the Smart Card Reader and that the device passed in all the thirteen categories conducted regarding its desirability.

In the 2015 polls, what happened during the test run exercise repeated itself during the polls on March 28 and April 11, 2015. The smart card reader device failed to verify the fingerprints of many voters, including that of the former President, Dr. Jonathan, his wife, and mother (Yakubu, 2017). Basically in some states, the authentication success rate was 79 percent, while in others it was as low as 16 percent (Yakubu, 2017) Apart from this, it was widely observed that the accreditation process was prolonged and the use of the SCR had to be abandoned. It was envisaged that the SCR would not spend more than20 seconds to accredit a voter (Adebowale, 2015), but during the 2015 polls, the device spent more than ten minutes to accredit a voter on the polling day to the extent that in Borno state, it was reported that the SCRs succeeded in accrediting only ten percent of the voters (Odiakose cited in Alebiosu, 2016). This slow performance of the SCRs foot dragged the accreditation exercise beyond the stipulated time. It led to the rescheduling of polls for the following day in some polling units in different parts of the country (Yakubu, 2017). Due to the failure of the SCR device, INEC resorted to manual accreditation of voters, thus defeating the primary purpose of the device. For instance, in the Presidential and National Assembly elections held on March 28, 2015, at Ikangba Polling Units 02/003 and 02/010 in Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun State, the fingerprints of many voters including that of the author could not be captured by the SCR. They were accredited manually before they could vote.

With regards to the 2015 polls, contradictions spawned by the SCR as reported by Election Monitor (as cited in Nwangwu, 2015) included: Cases of fingerprints andPVC rejection**,** card readers not working at all, delays in using the card readers in some polling units and network failure. Others included cases where voters' pictures did not appear on the card reader, the card readers functioned slowly and did not pick up on time, some card readers not very sensitive to thumbprints, initial rejection of passwords by card readers, cases of low battery strength, cases where the card reader did not correspond with the manual, miss-match information and some of the card readers had an incorrect setting.

The malfunctioning of the SCR device in the 2015 polls has been attributed to the way and manners they were handled. It was observed that some INEC officials did not remember to remove the protective film cover on the face of the lens which might have blocked the lens of the card readers, making it difficult for them to read the biometric data in the PVCs presented by voters for scanning which made the verification of fingerprints to be impossible (Alebiosu, 2016), which means that part of the reasons for the failure of the technological devices can be attributed to way and manner INEC staff handled the devices (Yakubu, 2017). Apart from poor handling, in some locations, the SCRs could not work at all because of the inadequate Internet services, which could be attributed to the poor state of the infrastructure of the Internet in Nigeria. The failure of the SRC prompted INEC to change the mode of accreditation into manual in areas there were problems with the SCR in the 2015 presidential election (Odiakose as cited in Alebiosu, 2016). This development, as argued by Alebiosu spawned contradictory ramifications because the directive came when the elections were on and "after millions of frustrated voters had gone home disenchanted" (Alebiosu, 2016, p. 83).

What transpired in the 2019 elections did not differ significantly from what happened in the 2015 elections. Though there were recorded improvements in the operation of the smart card device, the SCR failed to capture the fingerprints of many voters on the February 23 and March 7, 2019, polls. For instance, it was reported that the Presidential candidate on the platform of the Young People's Party, Professor Kingsley Moghalu, and the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, YakubuDogara experienced difficulties with the smart card reader in capturing their fingerprints (Nigeria Civil Society Situation room, 2019). One of the effects of the failure of SCR was that INEC central server could not be relied upon to account for the total number of voters accredited and therefore difficult if not impossible to determine if fraudulent alterations were made. Manual accreditation of voters in the 2019 polls led to the cancellation of votes in many parts of the country (Isuwa, 2019). The implication of the preceding shows that the smart card reader has not successfully functioned as a device for accreditation of voters.

7. Enhancing the Credibility of the Electoral Process in Nigeria

Discussion in the preceding section, aptly shows that the deployment of technology was designed to enhance the credibility of the electoral process in Nigeria, which, however, to an extent has not been achieved. There are still roadblocks to credible elections in Nigeria which should be dismantled. These are discussed in this section.

First, the use of the PVCs and SCRs focused on voter's registration and accreditation but not on other areas where electoral malpractices have been visible in Nigeria. For instance, technological devices have no bearing on some issues such as internal democracy, vote-buying, underage voting, among others. Primaries are still far from meeting the principles of inclusiveness and competitiveness. Internal democracy within the parties remains a farce as parties still engage in the imposition of candidates and total disregard to agreed modalities for contesting political offices (Agbu, 2015). In the built-up to the 2019 polls, the primaries conducted in some states of the federation such as Imo and Ogun were very controversial. The complaints were on the issues of the imposition of candidates and lack of internal democracy. This issue of imposition of candidates and godfatherism as it is popularly called in Nigeria have not allowed for internal democracy within the parties. They have continued to undermine the credibility of the electoral process, meaning that there is the need for a reform of guidelines for the conduct of party primaries to provide a level playing field for contestants.

Second, the electoral process in Nigeria is still far from being credible if assessed against principles of inclusiveness and competitiveness. One reason for this can be explained within the context of distorted political finance which overtly and covertly disenfranchised many political aspirants in the 2015 and 2019 elections. What the frontline parties required aspirants to pay were beyond the reach of what vast majority of the contestants could afford. For instance, in the built-up to the 2019 elections, the fees for expression of interest for the frontline political parties were too high, thereby disenfranchising many Nigerians having political ambitions, particularly the youth. In order to obtain the presidential form in the APC, aspirants were required to pay N 45 million; governorship N 22 million; senatorial N 7 million; House of Representatives N 3.8 million and state House of Assembly N 850,000. In the PDP, presidential aspirants were expected to pay N 12 million, governorship N 6 million; senatorial N 3.5 million; House of Representatives N 2.5 million, and N 600,000 for the State House of Assembly (Editorial Punch Newspaper, 2018; Oyewamide & Oguntuase, 2018).

The implication of these prohibitive fees for the electoral process in Nigeria is that it has continued to pave the way for the moneybags to participate in the electoral process or for the incumbents at all levels to continue to perpetuate themselves and equally disenfranchising honest and serious-minded whose salaries are based on the paltry minimum wage of N 18,000 per month (Kupoluyi, 2018). Consequently, there is a need for a downward review of political finance.

Thirdly, despite the deployment of technological devices in the administration in Nigeria, the process is still fraught with fraudulent practices such as vote-buying and underage voting in some parts of the country. In the 2015 polls, underage voting was observed mainly, in Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Gombe, Bauchi, Katsina, and Kogi States (Ndujihe & Kumolu, 2015). In the 2019 elections, underage voting was equally observed in some parts of the country. These issues are beyond technology, and surmounting them has the capacity of enhancing the credibility of the election in Nigeria.

8. Conclusion

Technology is a human-made device to accomplish a specified task. In this context, the adoption of technology in the conduct of elections in Nigeria should not be seen as an end to itself, but a means to achieve credible polls. If properly implemented and adhered to, election technology will have the capacity of enhancing voter identification, rule out identification fraud that encourages multiple voting, and make the voting process much easier and faster (Agbata, 2018).

There is no doubt about the fact that the use of the PVCs and SCRs in the election administration in Nigeria has bolstered the confidence of the electorates in the electoral process and made the elections more credible than previous exercises. Nonetheless, apart from the contradictions spawned by technology, there are a series of other factors that are still undermining the conduct of credible elections in Nigeria. While efforts aimed at addressing contradictions associated with the malfunctioning of the technological devices are critical, attention should emphasize the other segments of the electoral process, mainly the conduct of primaries, to ensure that they remain transparent, inclusive, and competitive. Underage voting and increasing rate of vote-buying should also be tamed to enhance the credibility of the electoral process. Apart from a downward review of the prohibitive expression of interest and nomination fees to permit the participation of low-income earners, efforts should be made to ensure that there is strict compliance with existing regulations on political finance regarding the ceiling on campaign funds.

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