THE IMPACT OF ELECTION ENVIRONMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY IN NIGERIA: THE PATH WE DID NOT TAKE.

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SUMMARY
The spate of inconclusive and violence cancellation of election results has remained a recurring decimal in the anals of Nigerian democratic transition and has become a permanent scar and trade mark among Election Management Bodies (EMB) in Nigeria. This stemmed from the fact that some Election Management Bodies are less focused and seek to distance themselves from the election environment (election stakeholders) in the electoral process on the pretext that their independence calls for such approach. This paper therefore set out to examine the role of stakeholders in election administration as it affects the performance of Election Management Body in Nigeria and also highlight the important areas which the EMB have neglected. Descriptive method was adopted. In the end it was discovered that credibility

and general acceptability of any election outcomes and legitimacy of elected government are a functions of transparency, fairness of the electoral process and effective management of stakeholder's relationship. The study recommended that Election Management Bodies should foster close cooperation with stakeholders to enhance their confidence and strengthen their support in Election Management Bodies policies and programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Man is a product of his environment and so his institutions and they were created to interact with each other on balanced basis. Sharma, Mpisadana and Kaur, (2012) observed that in the social system, environment broadly comprises of institutions, history, laws, ethics, philosophy, religion, education, traditions, beliefs, values, symbols and myths. All these institutions are influenced by the society, environment and culture that include; election management body.

Each election takes place in a context that is affected by political, social, historical and cultural factors. Administrative and cost factors also impact upon the electoral process, and specifications of these will differ depending on electoral systems, countries and geographical regions. Election Management Body being a sub system of the society interacts with the social system, it is shaped by the latter and in turn influences it as pointed out by Gaus (1983) that election administrators bear the unmistakable impact on the cultural milieu at the given time. Peter (1984) opines that the social and economic systems of a country place boundaries on the actions of

government and more specifically public administration.

Therefore, Election Management Body does not operate in a vacuum nor is it an island unto itself, there is a myriad of stakeholders, constituents 'public' whose legitimate concerns and interests, the election management body should strive to accommodate and keep on board when deciding policies and practices. Needless to say that the general environment that surrounds election management body has an inevitable impact with the way the EMB makes decisions as they interact, in the same way, the decisions of the stakeholders also affect the EMB. In this interaction between EMB and the stakeholders, mutual relationship and interdependence can be observed.

The environment of election management body consists of individuals, groups, and organizations that have interests or stakes in the election management operations. In election terminology, the word election environment refers to election stakeholders. These are political parties, media, election management staff, civil society organizations and many others. Election stakeholders are people who are involved in or have vested interest in the success and failure of election. Therefore, knowing who the stakeholders are very important and the process begins by developing healthy relationships. These help to decide on issues from the beginning, during planning and at the execution of election. They should know how the election management body functions, including their scope, milestones and goals. Therefore, election management body should identify their stakeholders

and determine their needs and expectation. Effective communication between them will ensure the success of election project and every group on the same page. Remember that election stakeholders can affect or be affected by the election management actions, objectives and policies.

The election management body is required to invest in his customer (stakeholders) satisfaction and thereby enhance goal achievement. The EMB should, as they say in business parlance, 'know their customers' so that their services and goods are tailored and responsive to the requirements of its customers (stakeholders). This will help to develop customer confidence in the EMB and also generate support (Alexander, 2014). Put it differently, there is a correlation between election stakeholder support, loyalty and election management body's credibility and higher performance. The lesser the stakeholders' support and loyalty towards the EMB, the lesser the EMB's credibility. For instance, an EMB may organize an election which, technically speaking, may be clean and flawless, but if stakeholders are not involved, and kept in the loop about the process, there will be suspicions and distrusts about the results and may lead to a rejection of the election outcome. Against this backdrop, it is important that the election management body fosters transparent and participatory approach which involves stakeholders in the way it administers the whole electoral process.

Election stakeholders must play a central role in setting up of priorities and objectives of election management body in order to ensure relevance and appropriateness. The influence and power of

stakeholders can affect the success and failure of an election. Power here refers to the ability of the stakeholders to affect the implementation of election policy due to their strength or force. Power can be important in terms of supporting as well as in terms of constraining the initiative. For the success of an election, it is very important for the stakeholders to know when, how stakeholders can take action, involved and how much capacity they should contribute.

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005) enumerates a number of basic actions to maintain good relationship with the stakeholders to include;

- Maintaining open, two-way communication with the stakeholders;
- Being sensitive to stakeholders needs and concerns;
- Seriously considering stakeholder's views when making decisions;
- Treating stakeholders equitably so that none is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by EMB activities;
- Actively transparent with meetings open to scrutiny and follow up;
- Maintaining the highest standard of ethics, respect for human rights, impartiality and care in its relationships with stakeholders; and
- Equitably resolving any conflict between the needs of EMB members and staff and those of other stakeholders.

An EMB can also adopt a formal policy on transparency, which can reflect the rights of stakeholders and emphasize to EMB staff the

importance attached to the objective as well as clarity on how it is to be achieved. Although stakeholder management is critical to the success of the EMB in Nigeria, this subject is rarely taught, learnt, or understood in EMB circles. Therefore, this article is an attempt to investigate the impacts of election environment (stakeholders) on the credibility and performance of EMB in Nigeria and to explore functional alternative strategies of relating with the election environments (stakeholders) for better result.

Conceptual Explication

Some concepts can convey different meanings depending on the context and usage. The following concepts in the passage will be defined:

Election

Election is a set of activities whereby members of a community choose their leaders. Election can be conducted to endorse, reject or recall a serving political office holder accused of non-performance or misconduct. There are five types of elections in Nigeria, namely; general election, by- election, referendum, plebiscite and recall election. Each of them aims at endorsing or rejecting certain persons or public policies. Independent National Election Commission workbook observes that election is important whether in local or national, it serves as a political leveler for all citizens, with the concept of all persons being equal before the ballot box, which is one man one vote. It also brings together the various parts of the country together and helps in the

redistribution of the commonwealth, irrespective of religious, social, political or other differences.

Election Stakeholder

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005) defines stakeholders of an election management body as those individuals, groups and organizations that have an interest or stake in the election management body's activities and operations. They can be classified into primary and secondary stakeholders. The primary stakeholders include political parties, election management body's staff, the executive branch of government, legislature, the judiciary, civil society, election monitors, media community and electorate and donor community. The secondary stakeholders include; election management body suppliers, general public and regional and international networks.

The complexity and specialist skills for electoral management require that an institution be formal and to be responsible for electoral activities. Such bodies have variety of shapes and sizes, with a wide range of titles to match, which include "election commission, department of election, election council, election unit, or election board" The term election management body has been coined as a name to refer to the body or bodies responsible for electoral management whatever wider institutional framework is in place.

Election Management Body

Election management is an organization or body which has been founded for the purpose of, and is legally responsible for, managing one or more of the elements that are essential for the conduct of elections, and of direct democratic instruments. Election management is an essential part of any democratic process and has existed in some manner for more than fifty years (Benjamme, 2001).

Literature Review

Stakeholder concept has achieved widespread popularity among academics, policy makers, the media, and corporate managers and even within the field of strategic management, the stakeholder concept has become firmly embedded. It is about drawing them right from the beginning or start, so that their views, needs, and ideas can shape those options and services that flow from the organization. This section presents an overall stream on the relationship between election management body and stakeholders. In an empirical study, Aveni [1994] investigates what determines the success and failure between organization and stakeholders. This has been accomplished by examining both the characteristics of the organization as well as the specific stakeholder groups and the nature of their interaction among them. The result is that developing and maintaining good relationships are desirable goals for both the stakeholders and the organization.

In a total agreement with Aveni (1994), Donaldson and Preston (1995) point out that although this is descriptively true, organizations appear to

manage stakeholders for both instrumental (that is performance based) reasons and, at the core, normative reasons. Building on the work of others, Clarkson (1995:27) defines primary stakeholders as those who "without their continuing participation, the organization cannot survive as a long concern" suggesting these relationships are characterized by mutual interdependence. While Ford (1980) suggests that organizations pursue relationships with others to obtain benefits. By entering into relationships, an organization hopes to gain stakeholders satisfaction and loyalty while stakeholders look for unbiased quality service.

Barkan (1997) defines a successful election as one that creates "legitimate representative government". At a minimum, this means an election in which all significant players compete and accept the outcome. Beyond this, a successful election is one that, not only elects a government, but recognizes pivotal importance and relevant stakeholders as a patriotic partner collaborating to enshrine fairness, transparency and crisis free and credible election. For many election administrators those crops of people to be attended to are those who appoint them, establish the terms of their accountability, and supply them with resources. For some, the appointing authority is the only one entity to which they feel responsible. However, this view is myopic and not in line with the principles under which most electoral authorities are established. Election administrators are practically, legally and ethically accountable to a much broader range of political stakeholders and to the public. They are legally and ethically obligated to provide credible

elections even when their political superiors order them not to. In this respect, they embody at least as much political power as their bosses that appoint them (World Bank 2005).

According to World Bank (2005) forcing an electoral authority to be open about contemplated actions and explaining why those actions are needed, is a necessary part of electoral process and democratic governance overall. In this respect, the media strengthen and legitimize electoral process. The media are important in shaping the content in which the administrator's decisions are made and presented to the public. Many EMB failed to engage the press on regular basis and to respond to allegations of misconduct and to treat the media as anything other than an annoyance created suspicions carried over into election. Despite the mistrust, the EMB always makes use of the media to shape the public's attitude toward the electoral process.

Almon, (2006) observes that interest groups form an essential component of the election administrators' effort to establish the legitimacy of the electoral process and thus form part of the election administrator's management of political process. Groups are formed around economic or social concerns. However, during the period, their interest turns towards educating their members and public about the electoral process. What is important about these groups for the administration of elections is not why they were formed or what political interest they support, but they exist in the environment in which the election administrator operates.

Almon, (2006) further states that in order for election administrators to achieve their operational goals, they must actively engage political stakeholders who are beyond their scope of direct authority. For many election administrators, this political environment is dangerous place filled with actors more powerful than they cannot control. It is a place where unresolved conflicts and unpredictable changes transform into orderly planned process into administrative nightmare and where professional reputations can be ruined in the blink of an eye. On the whole, they would like to avoid any type of engagement. They are among the last and the most vocal supporters of the notion that politics must be kept out of the administration of elections. Still, some of the best election administrators recognize that the key to successful elections is embracing rather than avoiding the political world.

To these groups, issues are seen as important not only in their own right but also in terms of their relationship to one another calculated not only on the technical or operational level but also on political terms. In election administration, the management of political process involves building a climate of tolerance and active support for the electoral process and electoral policies among these political stakeholders outside the official's direct authority whose assent or assistance is necessary to achieve a credible election. In short, the management of the political process of election and legitimacy is required to produce a successful election.

Election administrators are expected to be faithful agents of their mandate to produce elections in

which the will of the people is expressed and the winners and losers generally accept the outcomes. Election administrators are assumed to have substantive experienced in the field of election administration and achieve their mandates as efficiently, and as effectively as possible. They are expected to be administratively competent in devising organizational structures and arrangements to produce successful election. Election administrators should also be able to integrate substantive judgments of what is in the public interest; evaluation of political expectations, and hard headed calculations of what can operationally be accomplished. In order word, they must integrate politics and administration into electoral process (Beuden, 2000).

In view of the above, an election management body should devise strategies for dealing with individual stakeholder's attitude toward an election. According to ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005) if stakeholders do not support election management body policies and practices, the election management body may find it difficult to involve them in activities. This would not be appropriate where stakeholders' involvement could demand an election management's noninterference of an election. If stakeholders are marginal, and have little assurance on election management body policies, the election management body needs to monitor it and keep them informed of the election management body's activities, but may not need to invest too much effort to involve them. Where an election management body identifies a wholly unsupportive stakeholder, it will need to analyze that stakeholder's potential intentions and

reactions to election management body's activities and develop a strategy for including the stakeholder, and an appropriate defense strategy, should this be unsuccessful.

Based on the Clarkson principles which are used in the corporate world for stakeholders' management and has been modified by ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005) to fit the election management body context, good relationship between the election management body and its stakeholders can be maintained as follows:

- Acknowledge and actively monitoring the concerns of all legitimate stakeholders and taking their interests appropriately into account in decision making and operations;
- Listen to, and openly communicating with stakeholders about their respective concerns and contributions, and about the risks they assume because of their involvement with election management body;
- Adopting processes and modes of behavior that are sensitive to the concerns and capacities of each stakeholder constituency;
- Recognizing the interdependence of efforts and rewards among the stakeholders, and attempting to achieve a fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of election management body activities among them, taking into account their respective risks and winner abilities;

- Avoiding activities that might jeopardize inalienable human rights (such as the right to vote) or give rise to risks which if clearly understood, would be potentially unacceptable relevant stakeholders

Dundas (1998) enumerates processes that ensure free, fair and peaceful elections which are listed in the hereunder:

- Strong legal and constitutional basis for independence and impartial electoral organization and administrations;
- Promotion of public confidence through open and transparent electoral procedures;
- The development of civic education programmes and systems designed to motivate citizens' involvement and electoral participation;
- The development of simple and functional voter registration procedures which will encourage maximum participation, and promotion and development of accurate and complex voter registration; and
- The development of the professional election officials with high integrity, a strong sense of public service and commitment to democracy.

Indeed, these are supports in which these stakeholders can provide to electoral management bodies, for example, in the development of professional election officials cannot be disputed. General confidence in the integrity of the election

management will enhance acceptability and legitimization of the winner.

Golding (2002) also underlined this position when he adds that, this is perhaps the end product of fostering the integrity of the election process as a whole, but building integrity takes time and has many facets. In addition to the need for electoral management body to have control over all its functions and major processes affecting elections, it highlights transparency in the electoral administration as a confidence-building measure. He argues that this will help to pave the way for acceptance of election results and hence play a vital role in legitimization to an incoming political administration. He provides an example in Kenya 1992 elections where the lack of efforts by the electoral commission to provide dialogue with political parties and electorates led to suspicions about integrity of the commission. This means that the whole election process had an unfortunate start and several months after public confidence continued to be lacking.

To this end therefore, there is need for political parties and other stakeholders to take their role in support of the integrity to the process seriously, demanding appropriate information but also ensuring the independence of election management bodies once appointment is made, that is, the institution is free from the influence of any outside individual or authority.

Theoretical Framework

A penetrating search into political science literature to locate a suitable theoretical orientation or

model upon which this work could be anchored revealed that there are a number of compelling paradigms found in social sciences. However, the adoption of any one or a combination of theoretical perspectives usually depends on either the paradigm affinity of the researcher/analyst or the explanatory and analytical strength after due consideration of its inherent properties. This work adopts systems theory. Systems theory is basically concerned with the problems of relationships and of interdependence rather than with constant attributes of objects. Golembiewisky (1977) views systems theory as representing a way of looking at reality that emphasizes 'whole' their properties and inter-relationship – contrasted with specialized parts. With our sense of whole expanding continuously especially with anything related to everything else, the systems view provides an orientation towards progressively more comprehensive view of reality.

Systems theory was developed in biological and social engineering sciences and was adopted by social scientists in explicating social and organizational phenomena. David Easton utilized this approach in the analysis of political life. Three elements guide the understanding of the systems theory approach. The system is a whole with parts, interdependent relations of the parts and each part makes certain contributions towards the survival of the whole (Olaniyi 1998). This refers to the concept of functionalism or system maintenance. This framework perceives an organization as an open system consisting of interdependent parts that are in constant interaction with the environment. From this interaction,

organization draws inputs from the environment in the form of raw materials, money and information. These are transformed into outputs which are exported back to environments and these enhance organizational survival.

The adoption of this approach is vital because the issue of stakeholders' relationship is considered not only in terms it enhances free and fair elections and legitimization of election results, but also in terms of the objectives and goals of the total electoral system. The theory emphasizes that organization functions as a whole comprises of sub-parts which come together to achieve the goal of the organization. The organization is functional when all the sub-systems or parts are also effective and efficient. Its justification is in functional interrelatedness of the parts that enthrone the criterion of efficiency which seem as imperative for organizational survival and goal achievement.

From the knowledge of systems approach, a full realization of the stated policy goal depends on the capacity of each of the various component parts to contribute co-operatively towards one purpose. Illustratively, for election management body to implement election policy effectively, the body must incorporate the contributions of the stakeholders to ensure harmony of purpose and for legitimization of election results. It is David Easton who said that the system does not stand alone, but is related to each other part. Putting it more positively, the operation of no one part can be fully understood without reference to the way in which the whole itself operates.

THE IMPACT OF ELECTION ENVIRONMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY IN NIGERIA

The election management bodies exist to provide or create services which should yield acceptable outcomes for various groups of stakeholders and people who have an interest, claim or stake in the organization, in what it does, and how well it performs. Not all stakeholders are equal, but they are entitled to the same level playing field and fair considerations. Therefore, participatory planning is required and this includes identifying public concern and value and developing a broad consensus on planned activities initiative. It is about utilizing the vast amount of information and knowledge that stakeholders hold to find workable, efficient and sustainable solutions to election management issues. The following serves as proactive and efficient strategies designed to enhance better relationship between election management body and election stakeholder groups:

Political Party and Candidate

A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold political power in the government. Parties and candidates are key players in election management. Candidates standing for public office are affiliated with the political parties which both define candidates' ideology and policy position while reflecting a list of issues with which the electorate can identify based on political party platform as mirrored in the candidate's election promise to the public.

Political parties and candidates are major stakeholders which election management body needs their concerns and interests in the implementation of election policies and programmes. Unless the election management body enjoys a good relationship with, and the confidence of political parties, its policies and programmes will attract criticism, and that it will make it difficult for election management body to enjoy widespread stakeholder's support. Where political parties are not appointed as a member of election management body, there is need for election management body to dialogue with the political parties.

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005). maintains that political parties and candidates are more likely to have confidence of an election management body if the body maintains an open-door policy to them. There is need to treat all political parties and candidates with respect, impartiality and fairness, and consider their opinions and suggestions. ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005) further stresses that, it is important that all political parties believe they are being treated equally and are offered the same level playing field by the election management body. There should be regular meeting with political parties-possibly more frequently during an election period can provide a framework for reciprocal communication and promote acceptance of election management body's timetables, processes and outputs.

Benjamin (2001) cites election management bodies in Canada, Lesotho and South Africa as countries having arrangement along such lines. In Kenya, the election management body liaises with

political parties in a formally constituted with political parties' liaison committee. In South Africa, they require the election management body to set up party liaison committee at all level of government, from national to local level. In other countries election management bodies have constituted consultative structure, though they are not legally require doing so. It is profitable for election management body to meet all the political parties at the same time rather than separately to discuss its decisions or policies. Minutes of the meetings should be provided to all political parties, whether they have attended or not.

In addition to these regular meetings, election management body should improve its relationship with political parties by including their representatives in election management body's sponsored events, for example; joint activities such as familiarization visits to voter registration facilities, participation in voter education and information workshop, joint media interviews or election management body sponsored public debates between candidates. Equal opportunity to participate should be given to all political parties and candidates. It is also important to involve political parties in consultations about setting an election management body's strategic objectives and evaluation of its performance.

The Executive Branch

The executive is the organ that exercises authority and holds responsibility for the governance of the state. There are many reasons for election management body to provide sound relations with executive branch of government. The Treasury or

Ministry of Finance is often responsible for election management body's budget. According to Muravchik (1996) election management body under governmental model need to work within the confines of a line Ministry, and may need to maintain close relationships with governmental Ministries for funds. Election management body may be subjected to audit by the state audit authority and may also need to respond to inquiries from OMBUDS person or anti-corruption agency.

In Nigeria, election management body also relies on the Police and other securities agents for election security and some transport services during election periods or events. Co- orporation and coordination will enhance performance if an election management body strives to keep all relevant ministries and agencies informed of its activities and consult with them on a regular basis about their services and support it may require from them. It can be useful if there are permanent groups or a liaison committee involving the election management body and government agencies on which the election management body relies for the provision of resources for electoral events.

The election management body should maintain good relations with every department responsible for vetting its budget request and releasing its funding in order to ensure that department is familiar with the election management body's programmes and critical nature of its funding requirements. For a good relationship, it is important that the Ministry of Finance has confidence in the election management body's

budgeting, accounting, financial control and reporting systems.

Legislature

Maintaining functional access to the legislature is indispensable in ensuring that, their views are considered in developing electoral legal frameworks and electoral resources allocations, and to obtain feedbacks on their performance from an important stakeholder. This access can be facilitated by having a formal point of contact in the legislature.

In Nigeria, legislature is the body usually responsible for making laws, including the electoral laws, and it may also approve the government budget and scrutinize all public accounts, including election management body. Maintaining a good relationship with legislature lets an election management body put forward its reports knowing that it will be dealt with because the body has some understanding of its activities.

Judiciary

The Judicial branch of government is charged with the responsibility of interpreting the laws and administration of justice. Many components of judicial system may interact with election management body activities. According to ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005), election management body may need the cooperation of the police and prosecuting authorities in investigating election offences, and to appear before the criminal justice. The election management body and its staff may be subject to investigation on civil litigation and election

management body's administrative policies and practices may be subjected to challenges in tribunals. The relationship between electoral dispute resolution bodies, accessibility and cooperation in its dealing with wider judicial system is highly necessary.

Media

Media have long been recognized as a cornerstone of democracy and they play an important role in influencing political discourse during elections. Free and balanced traditional media (print and broadcasting) foster transparency and the dissemination of important electoral information. The rise of the new media such as social media sites, blogs, email, and other media platforms- provides further avenues and possibilities for participatory citizenship, information and knowledge sharing and inclusion and empowerment. Both traditional and the new media can play a vital watchdog role, and serve as a campaign platform, a forum of public debate and as public educator, ultimately strengthening electoral process.

An election management needs media relations strategy that promotes regular positive contact with the media and ensures that the media have access to accurate electoral information- including on election management activities. If an election management body does not promote a transparent relationship with the media, there is a greater risk that incorrect information may undermine credibility.

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005). enumerates some elements of implementing a media

relations strategy for an election management body to include;

- Identifying the relevance of media relations and their coverage;
- Identifying the key people in the various media who can ensure accurate and prominent reporting of the election management body's activities;
- Being proactive and transparent in releasing information to the media;
- Ensuring that the information given to the media is clear, concise and easily understandable;
- Developing a timetable for providing electoral information
- Creating a single election management body's spokesperson for media and one point of administrative contact within the election management body for the media, and
- Setting up a media centre within the election management body.

Media conferences could be atleast weekly during electoral periods, and as needed at other times. It is advisable for an election management body to establish a full time unit to assume responsibility for media relations and appoint a person, preferable someone with a solid media background and who is respected in media circles as its spokesperson. Election management body may also need to deal with the media on a commercial basis, in relation to electoral advertising or regulatory political campaigns. Maintaining professionalism and probity in these

relationships will help create a positive atmosphere for the media's reporting of electoral activities.

For a number of reasons, an election management body is likely to monitor information that will be published by the traditional media. It will need to be aware of stress that might constitute, or point to, breaches of the law or code of conduct. It may require data on the extent of campaign publicity of various parties or campaign expenditure limits. The election management body will also need to take account of publicity, expressing criticism of, or concerns about the conduct of election. Appropriate media monitoring techniques should be passed through the use of commercial media monitoring services, and could gather press clippings, TV and radio recordings and internet news media ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005).

Electorates

The electorates are all the people in the country or geo political area who are entitled to vote in an election. In Nigeria, before one is qualified to vote, he/she must attain the age of 18 years. It is a group of people that election management body exists primarily to render services to and not only to those who regularly vote. Given the many and wide ranging tasks an election management body performs on behalf of the voters, it needs to keep them informed of its activities and programmes. It is wrong to assume that political parties, civic societies, the legislature, government are the institutions that by and large represent the electorate; an election management

body needs to deal with institutions and should avoid dealing with individual electorate.

According to ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005) an election management body can prove from creating direct channel of communication with the electorate, electorate potentials telephone inquiry services; public desks and suggestions boxes at locations such as market; parents or transport hubs and interactive radio and TV programme and town hall type of meetings featuring a lot of election management body contact persons and their contact details on regular basis.

It is important that election management body responds quickly and accurately to all questions and comments received from the public. A delayed response, or no response, gives the election management body a public image of an inefficient organization that is not interested in serving the electorate. Election management body needs to make extra- effort to provide electoral services, materials and information to those marginalized through disability, illiteracy and remoteness. An election management body can use the media to inform and educate electorates about elections, and undertake its own publicity programmes such as print audio, visual information products, and regularly upgrading website to keep voters in touch with its activities. It is helpful to set up a professional unit within electoral management body to deal with relations and voter information.

Civil Society Organization

World Bank (2013) defines civic society organization as a wide array of non-governmental and

non- profit organizations that have present in public life, expressing the interests, and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. These are a wide array of organizations: community organizations, labour unions, indigenous groups, charity organizations, faith based organizations, professional associations and foundations.

Civic society organizations deal with a wide range of issues- such as democratic development, legal reform, women's empowerment, human rights, civil education, governance and the right of the people with disability. Regular consultation with these stakeholders will enable them to advice the election management body of their specific needs and provide a forum for discussing and publicizing the election management body's activities and may also build positive relationship with civic society organizations by using them as partners to implement electoral activities. For examples: training of adhoc or temporary staff, or voter education and information programming.

Election Management Body Staff

In Nigeria, election management body staff are those staff employed on permanent basis by election management body to perform various election activities. Staff of any organization are the organization's greatest asset. Unless election management body safeguards the interest of its staff and responds to their needs and concerns, it may fail to deliver successful elections. Staff who are not loyal

to the election management body and its principles may frustrate the election management body's programmes or be corrupted by politicians. Unhappy staff may strive, even during elections and thus derails the electoral process.

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2005) is of the opinion that an election management body cannot assume that its staff will be loyal and automatically share and work hard to implement the election management body's values. It needs to support and generate his loyalty and professionalism. Election Management body has greatest advantages of developing professional election management body and that it can honestly tell his staff that their work, and that of organization, is intrinsically worthwhile and can contribute greatly to the welfare of the country. This should be constantly emphasized. The election management body also needs to treat all employees with honesty and fairness; provide competitive salaries and condition, recognize the need for career opportunities; provide staff working environments; ensure equal opportunities; acknowledge staff achievement; provide staff working environments; foster culture of cooperation; teamwork and trust, train and develop staff skills; and involve staff in the organizational planning of their work.

The adhoc or temporary staff recruited during the period of election are, for most voters- public face of election management body. In some countries, they form a cohort that works in each election, and therefore represents the organization, formally or informally, in their communities and not just at election time. If they are motivated to protect a positive image

of the organization, this can help consolidate public trust in and support for election process overtime. This factor needs to be taken into account by election management bodies, considering the mechanism that involves less public interest with staff. Election management body needs to make a determined effort to support their staff, instill in them the values of processional electoral administrators and respond genuinely to their needs.

ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY AND STAKEHOLDER: THE PATH WE DID NOT KNOW

There is little point in holding elections that involve expensive operations and the outcome is questionable. The EMB should be certain that it can ensure the legitimacy of the processes and the involvement of the stakeholders for which it is responsible. This can be done if the election management is founded on basic, but fundamental guiding principles; independence, impartiality, integrity, transparency, and service orientation. These principles form the basis of electoral administration and are essential to ensure both the appearance and the actual integrity of the electoral process. The principles are not developed in a vacuum; instead they have emerged in the context of international electoral standards and norms and are guided by national legal framework and good practices based on country-specific and global innovations. These principles are a guide for meeting the needs of the management of elections.

Independence

EMB independence is one of the most hotly debated issues in election management administration, yet there is still no clear, accepted view on what EMB independence really means. Partially, this is because the term 'independent' embraces two different concepts: that of structural independence from government and that of the fearless independent expected of all the models, in that they do not bend to governmental, political, or other formal and partisan influences on their decisions. The two are separate issues, one being formal and the other normative; nonetheless, they are seen as being linked in that an independent EMB is regarded in many parts of the world as the model likely to ensure the EMB's independence of decision and action.

It is of crucial importance for a country's electoral process that the EMB managing the elections be seen to be independent of any party and of the sitting government. If the EMB does not have this confidence of independence; the entire electoral process and the election results might be questioned. For natural reasons, an EMB cannot be independent in every aspect; in many cases, the financing of the EMB and the appointment of key personnel are dependent on the legislature, but it is essential that the EMB at the least be structured to protect it from political influences. In many cases, both a culture of independence and commitment of EMB members to independent decision making are more important than formal structural independence.

Institutional or structural independence can only be found in the constitution or law. The simplest way to

promote independence of decision and action in an EMB is to create a legal framework that embeds EMB independence, as provided in the constitutions and principal EMB laws of many countries. This may not be feasible, depending on the EMB model, but to merely cherish and respect the independence of an EMB without further measures being taken to safeguard that independence is in critical times often insufficient.

Every EMB is expected to manage elections impartially. Irrespective of the EMB's model, source of accountability, management control, or funding, it should treat all election stakeholders fairly, without giving advantage to any political tendency to interest group. It is not a demand that an EMB be entirely non-partisan and capable of operating in political environment.

EMB is responsible for conducting an impartial election administration, impartial treatment of parties and candidates, and impartial and valid poll. Impartiality is also required for the recruitment of personnel, for the allotment of public funds to political parties and candidate, for the election campaign and for voter education programme, if such programme exists.

Integrity

The EMB is the primary guarantor of the integrity and purity of the electoral process and the EMB members have the direct responsibility for ensuring this. Integrity may be easier to maintain if the EMB has both full independence of action, and full control of all essential electoral process. The electoral

law or EMB regulations benefits having clear powers for the EMB to deal with electoral officials who threaten electoral integrity by acting to benefit political interests and credibility than will the public use of disciplinary powers. To the extent possible, it is the EMB's interests to ensure that breaches of electoral laws, rules and codes of conduct are followed by appropriate sanction.

Transparency

If transparency is not a prerequisite for accountability, it is at least a principle that makes way for an accountable administration and one that promotes trust in the electoral process. Every electoral administration has a need for openness at all stages of the electoral process, and transparencies in operational and financial management are basic good practice for all EMB activities. Transparency helps ensure that electoral managers are held accountable for the decisions made during election administration and that electoral expenses are accounted for. Stakeholders in the electoral process, whether political party, candidate, voters, must have the right to demand justification for the decisions made by electoral authorities.

An open and transparent process that lays out for public scrutiny the decisions and reasoning of the EMB, will promote the understanding of the electoral process and increase the public credibility for its management. Transparent procedures eliminate the appearance of impropriety, limit the possibility of electoral fraud, corruption and/or favouritism towards particular political tendencies, and promote public

confidence in electoral authorities- which effectively will encourage participation and help build public or stakeholder support for the EMB.

Accountability

Confidence in the integrity of the electoral system requires accountable administrators for each stage of the electoral process. An accountable electoral administration is one where both the EMB as an institution of government and the electoral managers, without whom the election does not take place, are responsible to their constituents. The electoral management body should be accountable both before the stakeholders. Accountability is vital; for parties, and candidates, the ordinary voters and the press must all have reasonable assurance that the EMB and the electoral process have obeyed the rules. If authorities responsible for managing elections are able to explain and justify their procedures electoral fraud can be avoided.

Service Orientation

Election management is essentially a service industry, and people have rising expectations of the ability of the industry to deliver a quality service. Elections are all about providing the public with democratic governance and to endow the voters with this service, the EMB and electoral administrators must work to achieve for every voter the highest quality service possible. The voters must have the right to adequately understand the election process as well as being able to exercise their rights with the least possible inconvenience, regardless of given

circumstances and of the legal frameworks. Disabled citizens and people with special needs must be provided with necessary help to vote. The use of technology can in some cases be used as a means of assistance to facilitate and smoothen the electoral procedure for the voters.

Professionalism

An EMB must recognize the importance of professionalism and the need to have a properly trained and motivated staff. All stakeholders in the electoral process-the voter, the candidate, the media, and observers- feel their own contributions are vitally important, but in reality the people in the process are the electoral managers, without whom the election would not take place. Professionalism has to great extent to do with election management as a vocation. It is essential that an electoral official acts in a professional manner. They should be properly trained and disciplined as well as being committed to treating electoral materials with care and respect.

A professional EMB needs to ensure that all candidates, parties, and voters are treated equally and fairly and that electoral resources and facilities, like technical means are used as efficiently as possible. A professional EMB should also faithfully administer and tutor candidates, and voters about the electoral process. He/she should also consider how best to inform and educate the voters about the electoral process.

Rule of Law

The success of an election depends on the extent to which the stakeholders in the political process accept it as a legitimate and binding procedure. If the participants accept the outcome of an election, the public will not question it too. In order to hold legitimate elections, the election administrators must comply and demonstrate respect for the laws of a country. If the election administration does not follow the law, and apply it equitably and clearly explain the legal rationale for its decision, the support for the election process may be weakened.

An EMB needs to ensure that within the legal framework of the country, laws relating to elections are fully implemented in an impartial and equitable fashion. It is also crucial to ensure that every party, candidate, voter or other stakeholders are equally treated and provided with level playing ground.

Conclusion

Election demands an informed and active stakeholder that understands how to voice its interests, act collectively, and to hold election officials accountable. For the success of election, it is pertinent for stakeholders to know their rights, when, how stakeholders can take action involve and how much capacity they should take.

The objectives of election stakeholder relations management are to influence their attitudes, decisions, and actions of election management body for mutual benefits. The stakeholders need to gain from the relationship or they may not be sufficiently motivated to co-operate. Effective management of

relationships with stakeholders is crucial to resolving issues facing election management bodies. By using their influence, election stakeholders hold the key to the environment in which election management body operates and subsequently their operating performance. In addition, stakeholder approach helps to define and shape our understanding of how good management practice really is based on relationships with stakeholders who both comprise or are affected by the activity. These relationships are fundamental to the success of election.

Election management body needs to develop an operational culture that makes it responsive to the expectation and needs of its stakeholders. This will generate support for, and goodwill toward the election management body's policies and practices and enhances its credibility.

Recommendations

Drawing from the foregoing, the study recommends as effective strategies dealing with stakeholder's relationship:

a) EMB (Election Management Body) should maintain open, two-way communication with stakeholders.

b) They should maintain the highest standard of ethics, respect for human rights, impartiality and neutrality with the stakeholders; and

c) Treat stakeholder equitably so that none is unfairly advantage or disadvantage the Election Management activities.

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