2019 General Elections: Need for Human and Institutional Capacity Development for Political Parties

Alfred Charles (Ph.D)[1] & Goodnews Osah (Ph.D)[2]

[1] Department of Democratic Studies,
National Institute for Legislative Studies (NLIS),
National Assembly
charles.alfred@nils.gov.ng
[2]Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria
osahg@babcock.edu.ng

Abstract: Since Nigeria traced back its way to democratic governance in 1999, the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) has registered 67 political parties has well over 80 more application for consideration for registration before the deadline. Some of these parties are in comatose while others are struggling to survival in the hash political environment. Given that political parties are the livewire of democracy, there is need to enhance and support their grow both in their human and institutional capacities. Thus study recommends that for the immediate INEC should make the human and institutional capacity development that _National Institute for Legislative Studies_ (NILS) is currently providing compulsory for all the political parties that are ready to field candidates in the 2019 elections. While the long term actions should include that _a_fter the 2019 elections, the National Assembly should amend the electoral law to include a clause that will make the human and institutional capacities' development compulsory for political parties; and also a clause that spelt-out the required educational qualification of executive members of political parties should be added to the electoral law too. All executive members of political parties should have a second degree that is not more than 50 years old.
Keywords: Elections, Human capacity, Institutional capacity, Development, Political Parties

1. **Introduction**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in January 2018 said it has over 80 political parties that submitted applications for registration ahead of the 2019 elections… that there are currently 67 political parties already registered…. "As it is today, 80 more groups are seeking registration as political parties, and "we will continue to register them until the time scheduled by the Electoral Act for us to stop.… (*Premium Times,* 2017).

The above news item culled from the *Premium Times* shows that more political parties will be registered before 2019 general elections. There is nothing diametrically and constitutionally wrong with INEC registering more political parties. What is wrong, however, is to leave the political parties in comatose, as virtually all the political parties currently in operation in Nigeria need help in sundry forms in terms of capacity and institutional development. For instance, most of the political parties' executive members do not have any idea on how to raise funds, manage inter and intra political conflicts and they also lack basic equipment such as modern computer and database of vital information including membership list.

That political parties in Nigeria, in all material details, need capacity and institutional development have been highlighted in various studies conducted by Jeremy and Jibrin, (2013); Omotola, (2010); Omotola, (2009); Jinadu (2011); Samuel, (2016); Taiwo, (2016); Antonia, (2015) and many other international organizations including the UNDP (2010). However, what most of these studies have not squarely covered is how best to immediately improve the dismal conditions of the political parties in terms of human and institutional capacities which is preventing the parties from contributing their own quota to the positive democratization process that is currently going on in Nigeria.

As expected, ahead of the general elections scheduled for 16th February and 2nd March 2019, several countries and development agencies including the United States of America, United Kingdom, Japan and the UNDP have pledged to support Nigeria to achieve free and fair election. This study is therefore, interested in proffering long and short terms measures that will help to build the capacities of the executive members and the institutions that made political parties viable.

II Review of Literature
Compulsory Human and Institutional Capacity Development

Generally and technically, political parties in Nigeria do not need capacity building because, in modern development discourse the term 'capacity development' is preferred to the term capacity building. Capacity building assumes that no capacity exist (Angela, 2016) thus building up from scratch including starting up a structure step-by-step (OECD, 2006). Although, Morgan (1996) observed that capacity building is "the ability of individuals, groups, institutions and organizations to identify and solve development problems over time". On the other hand, capacity development starts from the premise that capacity exists and can be strengthened. Thus, capacity development recognizes that there is no situation in which capacity does not exist.

Venner (2014) explains that the concept of capacity building (later replaced by capacity development) gained prominence in development circle in the

1990s as a better way of 'doing' development. While little was written in academic literature on capacity development in the previous decades, the 1990s and subsequent years saw a geometric increase in references to capacity development.

Before the 1990s, capacity development was mainly seen as an intervention linked to teaching and training directed at individuals working in organisations. Today there is huge interest and tremendous advancement in both capacity development as a concept and field of intervention. This interest has also provided more conceptual clarity especially as it involves processes of change that aims to enable organisations and institutions resolve, innovate and respond to society's need.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) views capacity development as "….the how of making development work better and is in essence about making institutions better able to deliver and promote human development (Angela, 2016). The UNDP consequently hinged capacity development as the cornerstone of its development approach, especially as her specific role is to support and strengthen governments in developing countries.

It appears that from the UNDP explanation of capacity development cited by Angela (2016) above, much of the concentration is still on the development of human capacity while little interest is placed on how to develop the institutions which the political parties' executive members will outlive. Capacity development, as explained by the UNDP, is what all political parties in Nigeria need, it also appears that virtually all the political parties in Nigeria need and want is a comprehensive human and institutional capacity development package that will be applicable in the long and short terms since the nation is still actively enjoying the registration of new political parties almost on quarterly basis.

Another notable interest in the capacity development discourse was by the OECD/DAC Govnet who defined it as:

> "Capacity is the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully ... Capacity development is the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time" (OECD, 2006).

Other definition is presented in the table below:

Table 1- Definitions of capacity development

Author and date	Definition
Cohen (1993)	".. Any system, effort or process... which includes among it's major objectives strengthening the capability of elected chief executive officers, chief administrative officers, department and agency heads and programme managers in general purpose government to plan, implement, manage or evaluate policies, strategies or programs designed to impact on social conditions in the community."
1995 UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/50/120	"....that the objective of capacity-building and its sustainability should continue to be an essential part of the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, with the aim of integrating their activities and providing support to efforts to strengthen national capacities in the fields of, inter alia, policy and

	programme formulation, development management, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and review"
CIDA (1996)	"A process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organizations and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable manner".
ISS, Support for Capacity Development, The Hague, June 2005).	'the approaches, strategies and methodologies used by developing countries and/or external stakeholders to improve performance at individual, organisational, network/sector or broader system level"
UNICEF-Namibia (1996)	"Any support that strengthens an institution's ability to effectively and efficiently design, implement and evaluate development activities according to its mission".
SIDA, Manual for Capacity Development, Stockholm, October (2005)	'the conditions that must be in place e.g.: knowledge, competence, and effective and development-oriented organisations and institutional frameworks, in order to make development possible".
UNDP (1998)	"a concept which is broader the organizational development since it includes an emphasis on the overall system, environment or context within which individuals, organizations and societies operate and interact (and not simply a single organization)".

Morgan (2006) identifies five core capabilities that enables an organization to fulfil a function, these include: the capability to act, the capability to generate development results, the capability to relate, the capability to adapt and the capability to achieve coherence.   These core capabilities provide the basis for assessing the capacity of an organization to define its baseline for evaluating changes in capacity and performance over time.

Walters (2007) observed that what has not changed is that capacity development is firmly anchored in development paradigms and is linked to the development process of individuals, organisations, institutions and societies at large. Viewed from this perspective then, capacity development would involve strengthening of the individuals, organisations and institutions concerned to perform optimally. However, capacity development must be well designed and executed in order to produce sustainable effects.

Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) was developed by the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) to help United Nations Agency for International Development (USAID) integrate Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) into its development assistance programs (USAID, 2010:7).

The USAID (2010) informs that, HICD can be successfully applied to any type of organization including government organizations, non-profit organizations and professional associations. HICD will enable these organizations to responsibly meet the needs of their countries and their citizens. The ultimate goal of HICD is to help improve performance in critical areas leading to measurable results in achieving the organization's goals and objectives (USAID, 2010:7). Therefore, for political parties in Nigeria, the adoption of continuous HICD will adequately compensate for the lack of human capacities and the institutional

deficiencies of the political parties that are endangering the consolidation of democracy. It will variously reduce to bearable minimum the visible lapses of political parties in Nigeria. Hence, in this study compulsory HICD simply means, HICD should be made mandatory for both new and old political parties. Since when there is a clear vision, a broad-base commitment and active stakeholder participation, capacity building would be beneficial to the individual, organization and institution strengthening.

Of course, capacity is not developed in a vacuum, Jeremy and Jibrin, (2013:4) observed that, deepening democracy requires going beyond elections to building strong institutional foundations including the rule of law, constitutionalism, strong media and civil society, and, perhaps most importantly, political parties. This implies that political parties are the tap-roots of all the types of democracies currently in operation globally. Even in the "closed" type of democracies being practiced in places like China and Cuba, the "Party" is still the ultimate.

Democratic theorists, according to Pippa, (2005:3) have long debated the most appropriate role and function of political parties. Jinadu (2011:2) noted that a political party helps to (a) structure electoral choice and (b) conduct the business of government, under a party label or banner. Besides the primary responsibility of political parties globally that he conceptualized, Jinadu also observed that in Nigeria, the secondary functions or responsibilities of political parties are:

i.   recruitment or reproduction of the political class;
ii. membership recruitment;
iii. patronage disbursement;
iv. organization--party bureaucracy;
v.   involvement in policy formulation;
vi. voter education and mobilization; and
vii. protecting and defending the country's constitution.

Also Ukase (2006) has explained the importance of political parties thus:

> Party system and party politics constitute the sub-structure or foundation of any viable and durable democratic order, for this provides insight into how programmes of actions are articulated and how interests are formed and aggregated in the society. Given these enormous responsibilities, the success or failure of any political arrangement depends to a large extent on the nature and character of its political parties and party system (Ukase, 2006: 184).

This means that democratic consolidation works hand in hand with the strengthening of political parties. This explains why in even matured democracies the human and institutional capacities of political parties are still constantly developed. In this study, political parties' executives include all the personalities that directly manage the affairs of registered political parties.

III. Why Nigerian Political Parties Need Human And Institutional Capacity Development

In terms of ordinary ranking, to Femi (2016:2) the most fundamental right next to the right to life is perhaps the right to vote. But in reality, the quality of the right to life often depends upon the quality of the circumstances under which the right to vote takes place…..A desecration of the right to vote may therefore translate to a desecration of all other democratic rights, if it is accepted that the essence of democratic elections

is to guarantee the protection of the rights of the majority.

The summation by Femi (2016) is so germane to this study that it can now be safely concluded that, the non-improvement and the non-strengthening of the capacities of political parties can be classified as an infringement of the rights of the whole citizenry in a country. The lack of continuous development of the human and the institutional capacities of the political parties has triggered various problems, which have made them to be weak.

Most liberal theorists believe that political parties are essential to the practical workings of representative democracy. To them modern democracy in mass societies, that is, multi-ethnic and multi-religious nations like Nigeria and others in Africa, is unworkable without political parties playing their functions very well, as it were (Pippa, 2005). Political parties all over the world do serve a wide variety of functions which include:
1) Conducting election campaigns,
2) Mobilizing and channeling supporters,
3) Aggregating interests,
4) Structuring electoral choices,
5) Linking leaders and activists,
6) Selecting candidates for elected office,
7) Developing policy platforms,
8) Organizing legislatures, and
9) Coordinating the formation and activities of government. (Pippa, 2005:3).

Besides all the above mentioned functions, the key distinction, however, is that only political parties have the ability to aggregate demands, which they can facilitate compromise among diverse groups, to offer the electorate a programme of alternative policy proposals designed to meet these demands, to recruit candidates for elective offices, and, if elected, to pass legislation and to oversee the implementation of public policies.

One major omission in literature that covers political parties' functions in Nigeria is the fact that political parties in Nigeria also provide varieties of jobs for the citizens directly and indirectly. They also help to unite the nation in diverse ways by bringing together people from different ethnic, educational, class, social and religious backgrounds to work together. This means that political parties are a requisite in the developmental process in Nigeria and they should not be left in their current weak forms. The identified challenges of the nation's political parties should be dealt with as soon as possible.

In 2013, the Democratic Governance for Development Programme of the UNDP conducted a comprehensive study that shows that political parties in Nigeria could not carry out their traditional functions because they lack human and institutional capacities in the areas outlined in Table 2:

Table 2: Challenges confronting political parties in Nigeria
1) Human resource capacity at the state and local level. The largest parties have local leadership that is politically strong at the community level or the state level but often lack key professional skills.
2) Parties frequently fail to generate effective internal communication between their national and sub-national branches.
3) Related to this challenge are parties' limited abilities in use of technology.

Although some parties have demonstrated successful use of technology in campaigning, most party leadership, due partly to its age, are yet to take advantage of technological innovations like text or WhatsApp messaging to party leaders and members for organizational and information sharing purposes, raising money through mobile money or online fundraising, and generating on-line policy debate on key party policy issues.

4) Parties have also yet to attempt to build national, data-rich, and computerized membership databases, partly due to weak linkages between national, state, local government and ward party offices, and partly due to the political manipulations of party membership used by party candidates to exclude their opponents within the party.

5) Developing a uniform, consistent and accessible way of recruiting, admitting, and managing members is also lacking, with a number of observers insinuating that the PDP has made it extremely difficult for members to join and frequently manipulates membership when parties hold primaries.

6) Parties raised concerns about their abilities to mobilize resources and raise funds, thereby limiting their activities that require significant resources. These concerns were voiced most strongly by the non-parliamentary parties.

7) Parties have yet to demonstrate competence in research and analysis that looks at their own performance and develop clear plans and strategies that provide national frameworks for addressing their challenges and building the party

8) Parties have yet to develop an inclusive and research-based policy and manifesto development process that provides a clear policy framework for them to govern; nor have parties developed a consistent way of monitoring and evaluating the extent to which their elected leaders are realizing their manifestos during their terms of office

9) Related to this, parties lack ideological or institutional identities outside their ethno-regional or religious affiliations, or their leading figures

10) Internal democracy in all of Nigeria's political parties is limited. While there are rules on primary and internal party elections, parties often ignore, twist or subvert the rules to arrive at candidates through processes of selection, negotiation, or manipulation. The principle of zoning, in terms of providing equal opportunities based geographical area, sometimes disenfranchises candidates who may wish to contest.

Source: Compiled by Authors (2018) from UNDP (2013:12)

Besides the ten broad challenges Nigerian political parties are facing enumerated in Table 2; the political parties also need to:

1) Establish training institutions to train both new and old members;

2) Design mechanisms to attract well-educated young members;

3) Provide some sorts of material benefits for new and old members;

4) Own a well-resourced means of mass communication such as a radio station; and

5) Own few "cash cows" (some means of investments that provide constant stream of income).

According to Jinadu (2011), some of the challenges faced by the Nigerian political parties include, but not limited to:

1) Absence of mechanism for public- and self-assessment of extent of democratic values in handling in-house matters in the party. Issues such as how parties choose their nominees, conduct their primaries, and handle official matters

requiring the services of a technocratic which only career bureaucrats can handle, are a source of continuous challenge to the parties.

2) The recycling nature of Nigerian politicians that not only disallow young upcoming politicians to develop but also gradually take over the control of the parties is a challenge. For the same reason, the continued existence of the old orders at the detriment of younger ones precludes the new focus from the present adverse politicking to positive and nation-building character to politics.

3) Lack of ideology-based politics and excessive emphasis on personalized politics.

Other challenges identified by Taiwo (2016:12) are:

1) Patrimonial politics, which connotes the issues of godfatherism, violence and political insecurity have been manifest in the Nigerian polity from the colonial periods to the present political dispensation.

2) Power of incumbency of the ruling party to control the appointed electoral bodies to the detriments of other parties reduces the integrity of electoral process, create mutual suspicion, disquiet among the parties and the defection syndrome that ultimately eliminate competitive politics.

3) Military-initiated democratic transitions and constitutionalism which have made observance of the ideals of democracy observable by the rulers and the ruled.

4) Ethnicity-based politics and campaign of calumny for the sole purpose of gaining political advantage.

5) Poor funding of the parties from the INEC, which more often than not reduced the parties to seek financial succour from rich Nigerians or, for the parties in power, from government official, have continued to compromise the virulence of the parties to pursue purely public goods.

6) Constitutional and statutory lacuna that have rendered the political parties as willful assailants during election periods or victims of attack because there is neither constitutional nor statutory provisions for prosecuting election offenders.

It appears, the ongoing exercise to amend the 2010 electoral law will take care of some of the challenges that are purely legal that have been raised in this section. However, most of the issues raised can be taken care of through obligatory human and institutional capacity development that particularly target the managers and founders of the political parties.

IV Political Parties' Human and Institutional Capacity Development: Global Supports

The need for political parties' capacities to be comprehensively developed in emerging democracies has propelled some international organizations to provide the necessary help. This section will just list the international organizations that are helping to provide capacity development for political parties directly all over the world. The contents of this section were culled from studies done by Michael, (2014:23); Leni, and Alan (2009); UNDP, (2010) and Ann and Levan (2012). Some of the international organizations that are

essentially helping to build political parties capacities world-wide are:
1. National Democratic Institute,
2. Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD),
3. DemocraShe,
4. Department for International Development (DFID),
5. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)
6. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
7. United Nations Agency for International Development (USAID).

Several projects have been initiated by the UNDP and intended to strengthen capacity that will bring stability, national unity and meaningful participatory democracy to Nigeria's political system. One of such projects its establishment of the Political Party Leadership and Policy Development Centre (PPLPDC) at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS).

The Economic Commission for West Africa States ECOWAS is another body that regularly organizes capacity development workshops to member states. One of such, is the review and validation of training modules for political parties in the member states.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The major highlight of this study is about how political parties which are the livewire of democracy in most developing nations such as Nigeria can be enhanced and supported to grow both in their human and institutional capacities. Of course, the needed capacity development would bring about institutional change. This summation also flows from Jinadu's (2011) formulation that, party reform to deepen democracy in the country (Nigeria) remains an unfinished business. In the

view of Omotola (2009) no democracy can survive without strong political parties. Nigeria should without delay do something drastic to immediately develop the weak political parties that dots its political firmament.

Currently, Nigeria has 67 registered political parties, which means since the recent return of liberal democracy to the country in 1999 an average of three political parties are registered every year. The fact that most of these political parties are just paper tigers because of poor human and institutional capacities is no longer news to all concerned authorities and personalities (Antonia, 2015; Olanrewaju, 2015; Akubo, and Yakubu, 2014; and Ademola, 2015). What is urgently needed therefore is a comprehensive and compulsory immediate and long terms HICD. Of course, capacity development is necessary to make political parties more competent to withstand the strong wave of domestic and global push for institutionalization of the democratization process. More so, that some of these parties are in comatose in the hash political environment. The instant and long term actions are presented below:

Immediate action needed:
1) INEC should make the human and institutional capacity development that National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS) is currently providing compulsory for all the political parties that are ready to field candidates in the 2019 elections.

Long term action needed:
1) After the 2019 elections, the National Assembly should amend the electoral law to include a clause that will make the human and institutional capacities'

development at NILS compulsory for political parties;

2) Also a clause that spelt-out the required educational qualification of executive members of political

parties should be added to the electoral law too. All executive members of political parties should have a second degree that is not more than 50 years old.

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