



Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Conduct of 2023 General Elections in Nigeria: A Discourse

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Abstract

The study analyzes the conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The 2023 general elections were conducted by INEC on 25th February, and March, 18th 2023. INEC was constituted in 1998 by Abdulsalam Abubakar. The roles of INEC are, delimits the country into constituencies for the purpose of electing representatives into government, organizes/conducts elections into various levels of government, registers political parties wishing to contest elections, register voters, recruits, trains and deploys officials to different part of the country to assist in the conduct of elections. The perpetration of electoral violence by desperate politicians, late arrival of electoral materials and some officials of INEC to polling units, malfunctioning of electronic machines in some places and vote buying by politicians, among others were examined by this paper. This paper adopts system theory propounded by Gabriel Almonds, David Easton and Von Bentallaffy. This study uses the qualitative method of research, relying exclusively on secondary source of data such as textbooks, newspapers, journals, magazines, among others. The data gathered were summarized. The findings of the study shows that the presidential election conducted on 25th February by INEC was won by Bola Ahmed Tinubu of All progressive congress (APC). In the Governorship election held on March 18th 2023, APC won in 16 States, PDP won in 10 States, NNPP won in One State while Labour party won in Abia State. The paper recommends that; INEC, politicians and the electorates should adhere strictly to the laws, rules and regulations guiding the conduct of general elections in Nigeria. INEC should make adequate preparations before embarking on future general elections.

Key Words: Voters; General Elections; Electoral Violence; Democracy.

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Introduction

In preparation for 2023 general elections in Nigeria, INEC registered eighteen political parties and constructed about 176,000 polling units across the nation. Eligible voters are Nigerian citizens who are eighteen years old and above, registered by INEC and collected their permanent voters cards (PVC). According to Ogu and Chimuru (2020), “the roles of INEC include; delimits the country into constituencies for the purpose of electing representatives into a government, organizes/ conducts elections into various level of government throughout the country, registers political parties wishing to contest elections, registers votes, recruits, trains and deploys officials to the different part of the country to assist in the conduct and supervision of elections. The commission also enlightens the public on the system of voting, publishes regulations for the conduct of elections, fixes dates of elections, provides electoral materials, count votes and announces results of elections”.

The core issues of elections in Nigeria revolve around the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which is mandated to conduct elections at federal and state elections. Established in 1998 by the General Abdulsalami Abubakar, INEC has conducted general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023. The controversies surrounding the impropriety and controversies necessitated by the successive general elections in Nigeria’s fourth republic correspond with the assertion of Crespo (2004) cited in Peter (2011) that hegemonic parties conduct regular multi – party election in order to avoid the label of one – party system and to preserve certain democratic legitimacy. To this end, Jinadu (2006) posited that the existence of weak democratic institutions has not been able to ensure an entrenchment of an acceptable pattern of political succession in Africa. This has made political succession and leadership recruitment problematic in Nigeria.

Election ought to ensure competitions among political parties, help to measure the level of citizens’ political commitment to the political system, promote sense of belongings, serves as a means of ensuring that political sovereignty is vested on the electorates, promote good governance and reduce dictatorial tendencies of the government (Udu, Nkwede, and Ezekwe, 2015). It is expected to be a period of accountability among political office holders. The major political parties that participated in the 2023 general elections namely; the All Progressive Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic



Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP), among others. The 2023 general elections presented an interesting scenario as many of the youths and people who probably have not voted since the commencement of the fourth republic in Nigeria registered and got their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) in their determination to participate in the process of electing their leaders at different levels. The mass media helped greatly in the political education and sensitization that got the number of registered voters to about 93,000,000 Nigerians. Despite the massive surge in the number of registered voters, only about 25,000,000 people voted (Olalekan and Dickson, 2003). The poor voters' turnout has thrown up a number of issues. The questions there are; what were responsible for the poor turnout of voters during 2023 general elections? There were electoral violence in some polling units. There were also some invalid votes in some polling units (Okonkwo, 2003:8). This paper is aimed at achieving the following objectives.

- *To assess the conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria.*
- *To examine the problems/challenges encountered in the conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria.*
- *To recommend measures that can ease the problems encountered so as to ensure credible conduct of future general elections in Nigeria.*

Methodology

This paper largely relied on the qualitative method of research. The qualitative method is critical to the appreciation of the issues in this paper. It is central on a situation where a researcher attempts to make sense of or interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them in natural settings (Peter, 2023; Peter, 2018). The implication of this is that a good comprehension of the opinions of other producers of knowledge necessary in the interpretation of the issues covered by this paper. According to Peter (2018:1), in doing so, "the researcher must be detailed and exhaustive in terms of the volume of information sourced". The application of the views of other scholars to a current reality is a tedious one, particularly if the issues addressed by those people and the issue at hand are not similar. Issues surrounding the conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria contained robust qualitative information that can be aggregated and articulated.



The qualitative data was sourced from published documents such as textbooks, journal, articles, newspapers and others. The data were analyzed using the qualitative method of data analysis. Qualitatively, the content analysis of several documents was used. Efforts were made towards appropriate aggregation, articulation and interpretation of the information sourced from documentary evidences that support the focus of the paper.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted system theory and supported by the theory of the state in post-colonial society as theoretical framework. System theory was propounded by Gabriel Almond, David Easton and Von Bentallafy “The central and guiding concept in the general system theory is the concept of system”. Systems are generally relationship or better still a whole which is composed of many parts. It emphasizes relationship and not individuals, the three elements that guide the understanding of this approach include the following:

- (a.) Parts ,
- (b.) The parts must be related to the whole and
- (c.) Each part makes certain contributions towards the survival of the whole. This third element is called the functions. This is the essence of functionalism. The central guiding of the approach is the assumption of equilibrium, that is, the whole will need the co-operation of the parts to keep it mobile. In relation to human society, any named political system is made up of several Sub-groups-economic, political, cultural, educational, social etc. These sub-groups perform different functions and it is a combination of these functions that keep the entire system moving” (Olaniyi, 2001: 57).

Conduct of general elections in Nigeria is the function of INEC. The Other Stakeholders in Nigerian politics also contribute in the conduct of general elections. Such Stakeholders include, Executive, Legislature, Security agents, etc. For free and fair elections to be conducted in Nigeria, it requires



effective cooperation of INEC and other stakeholders in Nigerian democracy. Conduct of general elections in Nigeria is a system.

It was supported by the theory of the state in post-colonial society which presupposes among other things that access to political offices provide the avenue for primitive accumulation of wealth. This theory is indispensable in its explanatory capacity of the character of the post-colonial state in Africa. The usefulness of this theory is predicated on the fact that since the post-colonial state has stifled development. The scenario painted above has been responsible for the often flawed election, as the political class continue to see access to political offices as the necessary pathway to accessing the resources of the state. Desperate desire of some Nigerian politicians to win elections and accumulate wealth, leads to electoral violence. Electoral violence is undemocratic attitude in the conduct of general elections in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Conduct of 2023 General Elections in Nigeria

General election is the period/process by which Nigerian citizens elect their leaders/representatives into the Executive and Legislative arm of government once every four years. Election is one of the features of democracy. Democracy is the government of the people by the people and for the people. Electoral violence is desperate desires of politicians to win elections by all means. Electoral violence manifest in various ways such as; snatching of electoral boxes, snatching of voting materials, fighting in polling units, burning of offices/houses, molesting electoral officers and others. Voters are Nigerian citizens who are eighteen years old and above, registered by INEC and collected their permanent vote's cards. Such citizens (voters) are qualified to participate in voting during general elections in Nigeria. In preparation for the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) registered eighteen political parties to contest the elective positions in Nigerian democracy. The elective positions in Nigerian democracy include office of the President, House of the senate, House of the Representatives, State Governors, State House of Assembly, Local Government Chairmen and Councilors (Ogu, 2021). INEC constructed about 176,000 polling units and acquired electronic machines such as Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BIVAS). The conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria began on 25th February with Presidential



and National Assembly elections while Governorship and State House of Assembly elections took place on March 18th, 2023.

In conducting the 2023 general elections, security agents were deployed in various polling units. Local and International Observers monitored the conduct of the elections. INEC recruited Ad - hoc staff in the conduct of 2023 general elections. Saturday Sun Newspaper went round and interviewed some Nigerians across the nation about the performance of INEC in the conduct of 2023 general elections.

According to Dada, Femi, Bere, Olanrewaju, Alloysius and Paul (2023:4), “how was the performance of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in last Saturday's presidential election? That was the question posed by Saturday Sun. Nigerians reacted in different ways”. “INEC failed Nigerians Completely - Ajang Daniel Social activist Jos. As a person, I am not pleased with the manner in which the election was conducted. INEC told the world that they were ready for this election and President Muhammadu Buhari provided all that is needed for the polls, but INEC failed Nigerians through the provision of Malfunctioning BVAS. And the claim by INEC that it was after collation of results that it posted the results on the server is something that is unacceptable. As an observer, I left Jos North down to Shendam, ad-hoc staff were on ground, no mobility to convey them to their places of primary assignment. There were other numerous challenges that marred the election. I can tell you confidently that INEC did not perform up to the expectations. They failed Nigerians completely”.

“INEC performed below Nigerian's expectations-Douglas Francis, Journalist, Jos. The performance of INEC in the presidential election was below expectations of Nigerians because at the build up to the election, INEC told Nigerians that they were ready for the election and that they have trained their personnel and the electoral materials are ready. INEC also told Nigerians that they will use BVAS for accreditation and transmission of results from the polling units. But on the day of elections, there was late arrival of election materials and malfunctioning of the BVAS. They also failed to upload the results on their server as promised Nigerians. Therefore INEC performed below average in the last election”.



“INEC did a difficult task - Prof Olu Aina, ex-Registrar, National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB), Otan Ayegbaju, Osun State. INEC did a very difficult task. As an academician that has conducted examinations across the entire nation, I know how difficult it is to ensure that exams take place at the right time and date intended. The job that INEC faced is bigger than conducting examinations. So INEC did excellently well in the circumstances they found themselves”.

“INEC didn't succumb to threats from politicians - Chief Abiola Ogundokun, businessman Osogbo, Osun state. Those of us that know the antics of politicians will commend INEC for the maturity with which they handled this year's election and not succumbing to the threats and stunts of politicians. The result declared showed that INEC is not biased, at least for daring to declare the opposition winner of the president's state and presidential candidate's state while the other candidates won their respective states”.

“INEC did well but there were lapses - Muhammad Lawal, civil servant, Birin Kebbi, Kebbi State. INEC has performed well, except that there were few lapses in different places across Nigeria. If not because of that, the election would have been considered most credible, free, fair and the best ever in Nigeria. Some of the lapses include late arrival of election materials, malfunctioning of BIVAS, inducement of voters in different forms as well as violence as evident in different polling units, I would also commend INEC for introducing new innovation in the nation's election process and I am urging the commission to sustain the tempo to take Nigeria to next level of development where the electorates would have total confidence on the electoral body”.

“There was little improvement from the past - Sanusi Ibrahim, businessman, Birin Kebbi, Kebbi State. The performance by INEC had improved a little bit apart from the late arrival of the electoral materials. The BVAS machines were used to accredit people and nobody could be impersonating anybody. I think they have done well but the late arrival of electoral materials frustrated many people in Kebbi State”.

“Failure to deploy BVAS damaged INEC integrity - Timothy Egbonoje, civil engineer, Yenogoa. The poor performance of INEC when it comes to Collating election results is a perennial saga. The discrepancies between exit polls and actual election results over the years made calls for reforms



strident over the years in this political dispensation. These calls for reform have in turn birthed new buzzwords or concepts; INEC server, card reader, BVAS etc. All these concepts have worked elsewhere except in Nigeria. For INEC to have appropriated a budget of in excess of 400 billion Naira to put in place a system where election results will be transmitted electronically real time to its servers so that we all can tab the results as they come and then jettison the use of this system for spurious reasons is suspect. In this 2023 election cycle, the failure to deploy BVAS in upload of results has irreparably damaged the integrity of INEC”.

The reactions of some Nigerians on the performance of INEC in the conduct of 2023 general elections proved that some desperate politicians and some voters did not adhere strictly to the laws and rules governing the proper conduct of 2023 general elections. Some Nigerians in some places did not vote due to late arrival of electoral materials and INEC officials. The malfunctioning of the electoral machines was a serious problem too.

“There was a report of substantial failure of presiding officers to transmit the presidential elections to the IReV from the polling unit as required by law including non - use off BVAS for accreditation in some states” (Godwin, 2023:14)”. “INEC should cancel the entire Presidential and National Assembly elections because they were not able to substantially comply with the provision of the Electoral Act on the transmission of results from the polling units. The BVAS has turned out to be fraud” (Hagher, 2023:24). All Stakeholders in Nigerian politics are expected to adhere strictly to electoral laws. According to Clifford, Vincent, Samuel, Ndahi, Umah, Marie, Bashir, Rotimi, Nwabueze, Chioma, Chinonso, James, Huruna and Musa, (2023:8). “Some of the supplementary elections for two governorship, five senatorial, 31 House of Representatives and 57 state assembly seats across 17 states were marred by violence, vote buying and other glitches leading to the death of four persons yesterday”. Electoral violence, vote buying/selling are undemocratic practices”.

Moreover, according to Olalekan and Dickson (2023:11), “N207 billion may have been expended on 68 million Nigerians who registered to vote in the 2023 elections but for one reason or the other ended up not being able to perform that civic responsibility. The inability to vote has been blamed on alleged shoddiness on the part of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) whose officials arrived late for polls commencement and could not attend to most of the potential Voters



who had stormed polling units across the nation before election closed”. Late arrival of INEC officials to the polling units was a serious problem, many electorates did not vote. Out of 93,000,000 that registered, only 25,000,000 voted during the presidential and National Assembly elections while about 21 million voters voted in Governorship and State House of Assembly elections held on 18th March, 2023. The Electorates legitimize the electoral processes (James and Alafuro, 2009). The turnout of voters in 2023 general elections was poor when compared with the previous years.

According to Olalekan and Dickson (2023:11) “Meanwhile, turnout was 39 million in 2011, reduced to 29 million in 2015, remained at 29 million in 2019 before moving to 25 million (Presidential and National Assembly polls) and 21 million (Governorship and House of Assembly polls in 2023”. The Electorates are the people that Legitimize electoral processes. They should not be discouraged rather they should be encouraged to perform their civic responsibility of casting their votes on the parties/candidates of their choice during general elections. The presidential and National Assembly elections were conducted on 25th February 2023 and the results were announced by INEC.

The Presidential/National Assembly Elections

The presidential candidate of APC in 2023 presidential election in Nigeria was declared the winner of the presidential election. According to Akowe (2023:4), “Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu will succeed President Muhammadu Buhari on May 29th. His march to Aso Villa to become Nigeria's fifth president in the fourth Republic followed his victory in Saturday's presidential election. The results were announced by Independent National Election Commission (INEC) Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu at 4.10 a.m in Abuja.

Table 1 Showing 2023 Presidential Election Results in Nigeria

HOW THEY STAND

STATE	APC	LP	NNPP	PDP
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Ekiti	201,494	11,397	264	89,554
Kwara	263,572	31,166	3,141	136,909
Osun	343,945	23,283	713	354,366
Ondo	369,924	44,405	930	115,463
Ogun	341,554	85,829	2,200	123,831
Oyo	449,884	99,110	4,095	182,977
Yobe	151,459	2,406	18,270	198,567
Enugu	4,772	428,640	1,808	15,749
Lagos	572,606	582,454	8,442	75,750
Gombe	146,977	26,160	10,520	319,122
Jigawa	421,390	1,889	98,234	386,587
Adamawa	182,881	105,648	8,006	417,611
Katsina	482,283	6,376	69,386	489,045
Niger	375,183	80,452	21,836	284,898
Benue	310,468	308,372	4,740	130,081
FCT	90,902	281,717	4,527	74,194
AkwaiBom	160,620	132,683	7,796	214,012
Edo	144,471	331,163	2,743	89,586
Abia	8,914	327,095	1,239	22,676
Kogi	240,751	56,217	4,238	145,104
Bauchi	316,694	27,373	72,103	426,607
Plateau	307,179	466,272	8,869	243,808
Bayelsa	42,572	49,975	540	68,818
Kaduna	399,293	294,494	92,969	554,360
Kebbi	248,088	10,682	5,038	285,175
Kano	517,341	28,513	997,279	131,716
Zamfara	298,396	1,660	4,044	193,978
Sokoto	285,444	6,568	1,300	288,679
Nasarawa	172,922	191,361	12,715	147,093
Cross River	130,520	179,917	1,644	95,425
Delta	90,183	341,866	3,122	161,600
Ebonyi	42,402	259,738	1,661	13,503
Anambra	5,111	584,621	1,967	9,036
Taraba	135,165	146,315	12,818	189,017
Borno	252,282	7,205	4,626	190,921
Rivers	231,591	175,071	1,322	88,468
Imo	66,406	360,495	1,552	30,234
	8,794,726	6,101,533	1,496,589	6,984,520

Source: Akowe (2023:1): The Nation Newspaper, March 1st, 2023.



Looking at the table above, showing the 2023 Presidential election results, out of 93 million Nigerians that registered, only 25 million voted. Can the conduct of 2023 Presidential/National Assembly elections which took place on 25th February be described as free and fair election? What were responsible for poor turnout of voters in 2023 general elections? Undemocratic attitude by some desperate politicians created political apathy among some voters.

The candidates of Political parties who were not satisfied with the conduct of the 2023 general elections and the outcome of the elections went to courts. Looking at the result announced by INEC above, Peter Obi, the presidential candidate of Labour Party won all the states in South East, he is an Igboman from the South East. Tinubu Ahmed, the presidential candidate of APC won most of the states in the West, Tinubu is from the South West. Atiku Abubakar, the presidential candidate of PDP won most of the states in the North, while Musa Kwankwaso the presidential candidate of NNPP won Kano state. Musa Kwankwaso hails from Kano State. This result proved that many Nigerians play ethnic politics. Tribal politics is not good for Nigeria now.

The National Assembly election took place on the same 25th February 2023. According to Badejo (2023:5), “the All Progressive Congress (APC) is far ahead of other political parties that participated in the Saturday 25th Senatorial election. In Nigerian presidential democracy, the House of Senate is composed of 109 members, three from each of the thirty six states and one from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The House of Representatives is composed of 360 members. Nigeria operates bicameralism. In Nigerian presidential democracy, the President and the Legislature are directly elected by the Electorates in general elections. Electorates should not sell their votes to the desperate politicians/political parties. Electorates should vote only credible and competent candidates into power.

According to Ejike (2023: 3), “Obi and Atiku had called for the cancellation of the results of the election, alleging malpractices following the electoral umpire's failure to electronically upload results immediately from its polling units to the INEC result viewing portal. Obi, who came third in the contest, filed his petition at the registry of the Presidential Election Petition Tribunal Sitting in Abuja on March 20”.



Governorship Election

The Governorship election was held on 18th March, 2023. The election was held in 28 states. APC won in 16 states, PDP won in 10 states, NNPP won in one (state) while Labour Party won in Abia state (INEC, 2023). In Governorship election in Rivers state, the total vote cast was 494,604, total valid votes was 483,934 while the total number of rejected votes was 10,670 (Okonkwo, 2023: 8). The numbers of invalid or rejected votes were so high. INEC and all the political parties are expected to offer political education to the electorates. Political education will enable Nigerian electorates to be abreast with the methods of casting votes during general elections. Many Nigerians are illiterates, therefore, political education to the electorates are necessary. High number of invalid votes or rejected votes in general elections is proved that electoral body and political parties need to do more in offering political education to the voters.

Election Observers

The Conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria was observed by local and international Observers. According to Obalonye, Kalu and Uzoaru (2023: 29):

The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) which deployed 774 roving Observers across the 774 local government areas in the country in the February 25th presidential and Legislative election in Nigeria has declared that the result of the presidential poll was manipulated.

Mr. Barry Andrew, the European Union (EU) chief Election Observation Mission (EOM) officer, said obstruction and organized violence were responsible for poor turnout of voters at Saturday's Governorship and Assembly elections, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported" (Nigerian Tribune 2023: 13). The views of the local and international observers are very important in conduct of general elections. "Following complaints over the collation of the results of the presidential and National Assembly elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), three days after the poll was conducted, Former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on Monday called for the cancellation of the election where it did not pass credibility and integrity test" (Olayinka and Taiwo,



2023: 3). The Laws/rules guiding the conduct of 2023 general elections should be strictly adhered to “The International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) joint Election Observation Mission (IEOM) has said that despite the 2022 electoral reforms, the 2023 election has so far fallen short of citizens' expectations. The Joint Election Observation mission, which was led by the former president of Malawi, Dr. Joyce Banda, said logistic challenges and multiple incidents of political violence overshadowed the electoral process” (Nnabuife, 2023: 4). The opinions of the local and international election observers are very important in assessing conduct of general elections.

Challenges of 2023 General Elections in Nigeria

There were some challenges encountered in the conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The problems are examined below:

Electoral Violence: One of the major problems of this study is electoral violence by desperate politicians/political parties aimed at winning elections by all means. According to Aguiyi (2023:4), “the election process was ruined by lapses ranging from violence, ballot box snatching and delayed voting”. Electoral violence is undemocratic attitude. Nigerians should not see general elections as do or die affairs. Electoral violence removes the credibility of elections conducted. Politicians are expected to be peaceful in pursuing their political ambitions.

Vote Buying: Votes buying/selling are undemocratic attitude by desperate politicians aimed at winning 2023 general elections by all means. Electorates/voters are expected to cast their votes wisely on the qualified, credible and competent candidates of their choice on the days of general elections. Vote buying and selling are evil (Nkwede and Abah, 2019). According to Clifford, *et al.*, (2023:8), “some of the supplementary elections for two governorship, five senatorial, 31 House of Representatives and 57 State Assembly Seats across 17 states were marred by violence, vote buying and other glitches leading to the death of four persons yesterday”.

Late arrival of some INEC Officials to the Polling Units: Due to late arrival of some INEC Staff to the polling units, some eligible voters did not cast their votes. According to Olalekan and Dickson (2023:11), “the inability to vote has been blamed on alleged shoddiness on the part of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) whose officials arrived late for polls



commencement and could not attend to most of the potential voters who had stormed polling units across the nation before election closed”.

Poor Voters Turnout: The turnout of the voters in 2023 general elections was the poorest when compared with the previous general elections in Nigeria. Out of 93,000,000 Nigerians that registered, only 25,000,000 voted during Presidential and National Assembly election and about 21,000,000 voted in Governorship and State House of Assembly elections (Olalekan and Dickson, 2023). Poor turnout of voters has negative effects on general elections. What are the factors responsible for poor turnout of voters in 2023 general elections?

Invalid or Rejected Votes: There were many invalid or rejected votes during 2023 general elections. In governorship election in River State, the total vote cast was 494,604, total valid votes was 483,934 while the total number of rejected votes was 10,670 (Okonkwo, 2023). Availability of many invalid votes is a sign of poor voter’s education. Political education to the electorates is very important before the conduct of general elections. Political sovereignty resides with the electorates.

Conclusion

The Independent National Electoral Commission conducted general elections in Nigeria in 2023. Presidential and National Assembly elections were held on 25th February 2023 while the Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections were conducted on March 18th. Eighteen Political parties contested the various elective positions. INEC constructed 176,000 political polling units across the country, acquired electronic machines (BVAS), recruited and trained Ad-hoc staff. Security agents were deployed to various polling units across the Country, INEC Staff and Ad-hoc staff were deployed in various polling units across the country for the conduct of the general elections. The outcome of the presidential election was the declaration of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the APC scored total of 8,794,726 votes as the winner. Mr. Peter Obi, the presidential candidate of Labour party scored total of 6,101,533, Atiku Abubakar, the Presidential candidate PDP scored total of 6,984,520 votes while Musa Kwankwaso, the presidential candidate of NNPP Scored 1,496,589 votes. In the House of Senate election announced by INEC, APC got the highest number of seats. In the Governorship election held on March 18th in 28 states, APC won in 16 states, PDP



won in 10 states, NNPP won in one State while Labour Party won in Abia state. Candidates who were not satisfied with the outcome of the election results went to court.

The problems associated with the conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria were, the laws, rules and regulations governing the proper conduct of 2023 general elections in Nigeria were not strictly adhered to by some desperate politicians and some voters. There were electoral violence and vote buying in some places. There was poor turnout of voters in 2023 general elections. There were many rejected or invalid votes in some places. The existence of many invalid votes in election is a sign of poor voters' education in Nigeria. Some voters did not vote due to late arrival of some INEC officials at polling units. The major findings of this study were; electoral violence by some desperate politicians, poor turnout of voters during the elections, rules/regulations guiding the proper conduct of general elections were not strictly adhered to by some stakeholders in Nigeria's politics. There were some invalid or rejected votes in some polling units. The problems associated with the conduct 2023 general elections should be addressed so as to improve on the future conduct of general elections in Nigeria.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are necessary.

i. Strict adherence to Electoral Laws.

Independent National Electoral Commission, Candidates of political parties, and the Electorates should adhere strictly to the laws, rules and regulations governing the proper conduct of general elections in Nigeria. INEC should make adequate preparations before conducting general elections.

ii. Adequate Security in all the Polling Units.

There should be adequate security in all the polling units across the country. The presence of Security agents will checkmate electoral violence and other malpractices.

iii. Need for electoral laws.



The National Assembly of Nigeria should come up with electoral laws that can effectively address the lapses in the conduct of general elections in Nigeria.

iv. **Need for Voters' Education.**

INEC and Political Parties should embark on voters' educations across the country. There were many invalid votes during 2023 general elections. The turnout of voters in 2023 general elections was the poorest when compared with the previous elections. Voters' education is necessary for effective conduct of general elections in Nigeria.

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