

Research Article

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Post-election litigations outcome and the credibility of the election management institution in Nigeria, 1999-2019

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Abstract: Over the years, Nigeria has continued to search for better ways of consolidating her fragile democracy. This study therefore, seeks to examine how the electoral process, particularly post-election litigations have contributed to strengthening democratic governance in Nigeria within the period under study. To achieve this, the study adopted the Liberal Democratic Theory as a theoretical guide and ex-post-facto research design. The Documentary Method of data collection was employed for collecting data while the Qualitative Descriptive Method was used for analyzing the data. The study found that the credibility of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has been truncated at different periods. Again, both the post-election litigations outcome and the credibility of the election management body (INEC) were dependent on the credibility of the leadership of INEC at different periods. In order words, if the leadership of INEC lacks credibility, it will definitely impact on the credibility of the elections, the post-election litigation outcomes and the overall credibility of INEC as an institution. The study therefore recommends that proper scrutinizing of the leadership of INEC be always done before appointment, to ensure that people of integrity are appointed into such office since their actions immensely shape the electoral process.

Keywords – Credibility of INEC, Democratization, Election Management Institution, Electoral Process, Post-election Litigation

1. INTRODUCTION

Democratization which is derived from democracy, essentially involves the process of making democracy work in a political setting and ensuring that the principles and guidelines for democratic practice which do not exist in other forms of government are upheld. This basically starts from ensuring that the people, who are the repository of power, own and participate in governance. According to Yagboyaju (2011), democratization is aimed at substituting an existing undemocratic and autocratic rule with one that is participatory and having other democratic characteristics. Ekwowusi (2001) stated in this vein that the unique element of democratization is popular participation in government through social mobilization, citizens' activism, referenda, elections, and political education. Thus, the core of democratization is to generate opportunities for citizens, cultural background or ethnic lineage, and ideological leaning notwithstanding, to participate in the political process (Ekwowusi, 2001 cited in Nyewusira & Nweke, 2012: 3). What this position entails is that democratization involves popular participation of the people in the choice of their leaders and in decision making by those leaders. For the people to

choose their leaders, therefore, frequent elections which form part of the electoral process are very necessary in the democratization process.

It is on the above base that Akamere (2001) construes electoral process as activities connected with how the electorates choose those who represent them in government. These processes include among others, registration of voters and political parties, resolution of pre and post election disputes, and swearing in of elected members of the public into government seats. Globally, election is seen as a necessary means to the end which is democratization and good governance. Thus, scholars have expressed the position that democracy without constant free and fair elections is as good as having no democracy (Dansadau, 2005; Alemika, 2011; Omotola, 2012). By implication, it is generally believed that elections and the electoral process in Nigeria will help in making smoother the democratization journey and also usher in good governance in the country since the electorates are expected to elect good leaders through the ballot who will in turn bring about good governance. More so, scholars have also maintained that while free and fair elections cannot alone guarantee democratic and good governance, democratic governance, cannot exist outside elections as it forms the necessary ingredient for constituting a democratic order (Garuba, 2007; Bogaards, 2007; Nnadozie, 2007; Adigbuo, 2008; Hounkpe & Gueye, 2010; Omotola, 2010; Inokoba & Kumokor, 2011). This study therefore, seeks to ascertain if post-election litigations outcome undermined the credibility of the electoral institution (INEC) in Nigeria between 1999 and 2019.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1. Literature survey

Several scholars have researched on the electoral process, elections and democratization in Nigeria (Momoh & Thovoethin, 2001; Ezeani, 2004; Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2006; Adereti, 2007; Chukwu, 2007; Ibeanu, 2007; Ibodje & Dode, 2007; Jinadu, 2007; Mohammed, 2007; Nnadozie, 2007; Oddih, 2007; Ogundiya & Baba, 2007; Okwechime, 2007; Adigbuo, 2008; Omodia, 2009; Animashaun, 2010; Ihonvbere, 2010; Yakubu & Aderonmu, 2010; Alumona, 2010; Hounkpe et al, 2010; Ogundiya, 2010; INEC, 2011; Omotola, 2010; Osumah & Aghemelo, 2010). However, none of these authors focuses on post-election litigations and how it relates to the electoral process and in turn affects the democratization process in Nigeria. It is this identified gap in all these works which we intend to fill.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In Nigeria, elections have been a major problem of the democratization process as the periods before, during and after elections are usually very characterized by various forms of crimes, conflicts, uncertainties and suspense in different parts of the country (Reynolds, 2009; Hounkpe & Gueye, 2010; Animashaun, 2010; INEC, 2011). Thus, Omotola (2010, p. 535) declared that, Nigeria's effort to make her democracy sustainable and also achieve all round development built on good governance have been so discouraging as all efforts to achieve smooth power transition have failed.

From 1999 to 2019, Nigeria has conducted six general elections (in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019), but these elections have been criticized both locally and internationally on different grounds ranging from insecurity to not being free and fair. The controversial nature of Nigeria's elections has led to numerous post-election litigations flooding the courts and tribunals following the different elections that have been held in Nigeria. For example, Agbo (2009) citing the Legal Services Department of INEC, reported that the electoral tribunals sitting on governorship election, as well as the House of Assembly and National Assembly elections received 1,249 petitions after the 2007 general elections. This is clear demonstration of failure of the electoral process in Nigeria on account of poor preparation for and execution of the elections by the institutions and stakeholders involved.

Table 1: Post-election litigations and outcome in the 2003 Presidential Election

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/Appeal Court/Tribunal declared winner
Nigeria	Presidential	2003	Olusegun Obasanjo vs Muhammadu Buhari	Olusegun Obasanjo	Olusegun Obasanjo

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 2: Post-Election Litigations and outcomes in the 2003 Gubernatorial Elections

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/appeal court/tribunal declared winner
Anambra	Gubernatorial	2003	Ngige vs Peter Obi	Ngige	Peter Obi
Rivers	Gubernatorial	2003	Peter Odili vs Sergeant Awuse	Peter Odili	Peter Odili
Adamawa	Gubernatorial	2003	Boni Haruna vs NNPP	Boni Haruna	Boni Haruna

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 3: Post-Election Litigations and outcome in the 2007 Presidential Election

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/appeal court/tribunal declared winner
Nigeria	Presidential	2007	Umaru MusaYar'Adua vs Muhammadu Buhari	Umaru MusaYar'Adua	Umaru MusaYar'Adua

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 4: Post-Election Litigations and outcomes in the 2007 Gubernatorial Elections

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/appeal court declared winner
Ekiti	Gubernatorial	2007	Oni vs Fayemi	Oni	Fayemi
Ondo	Gubernatorial	2007	Agagu vs Mimiko	Agagu	Mimiko
Edo	Gubernatorial	2007	Osunbor vs Oshiomole	Osunbor	Oshiomole
Sokoto	Gubernatorial	2007	Muhamadu maigari vs Aliyu Wemakko	Wamakko	Wamakko
Rivers	Gubernatorial	2007	Amechi vs INEC	Omehia	Amechi
Osun	Gubernatorial	2007	Aregbesola vs Oyinlola	Oyinlola	Oyinlola
Adamawa	Gubernatorial	2007	Nyako vs Ibrahim Bapatel	Nyako	Outright cancellation (Ordered new election)
Delta	Gubernatorial	2007	Emmanuel Uduaghan vs Great Ogboru	Emmanuel Uduaghan	Outright Cancellation (Ordered new election)
Anambra	Gubernatorial	2007	Andy Uba vs Peter Obi	Andy Uba	Peter Obi
Kogi	Gubernatorial	2007	Ibrahim Idris vs Abubakar Audu	Ibrahim Idris	Outright Cancellation (Ordered new election)
Cross River	Gubernatorial	2007	Imoke vs Ukpo, Solomon, Ebri	Imoke	Outright Cancellation (Ordered new election)

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 5: Post-Election Litigations and outcome in the 2011 Presidential Election

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/appeal court/tribunal declared winner
Nigeria	Presidential	2011	Goodluck Jonathan vs Muhammadu Buhari	Goodluck Jonathan	Goodluck Jonathan

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 6: Post-Election Litigations and outcomes in the 2011 Gubernatorial Elections

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/appeal, court, tribunal declared winner
Abia	Gubernatorial	2011	Theodore Orji vs Reagan Ufomba	Theodore Orji	Theodore Orji
Adamawa	Gubernatorial	2011	Murtala Nyako vs Markus Gundiri	Murtala Nyako	Murtala Nyako
Akwa Ibom	Gubernatorial	2011	INEC, Godswill Akpabio vs Frank Okon	Godswill Akpabio	Godswill Akpabio
Borno	Gubernatorial	2011	Kashim Shettima vs Mustafa Baba Shehuri	Kashim Shettima	Kashim Shettima
Ebonyi	Gubernatorial	2011	Martins Elechi vs Julius Ucha	Martins Elechi	Martins Elechi
Kwara	Gubernatorial	2011	Abdulfatah Ahmed vs Dele Belgore	Abdulfatah Ahmed	Abdulfatah Ahmed
Nasarawa	Gubernatorial	2011	Tanko Al-Makura vs Aliyu Doma	Tanko Al-Makura	Tanko Al-Makura
Enugu	Gubernatorial	2011	Sullivan Chime vs Urokey Ezea et al	Sullivan Chime	Sullivan Chime
Imo	Gubernatorial	2011	Rochas Okorocho vs Ifeanyi Ararume & Ikedi Ohakim	Rochas Okorocho	Rochas Okorocho
Kaduna	Gubernatorial	2011	Patrick Yakowa vs Haruna Sae'ed	Patrick Yakowa	Patrick Yakowa
Kano	Gubernatorial	2011	Babangida Aliyu vs Sani Indabawa	Babangida Aliyu	Babangida Aliyu
Delta	Gubernatorial	2011	Emmanuel Uduaghan vs Great Ogboru	Emmanuel Uduaghan	Emmanuel Uduaghan
Rivers	Gubernatorial	2011	Chibuike Amaechi vs Felix Amadi	Chibuike Amaechi	Chibuike Amaechi
Kebbi	Gubernatorial	2011	Usman Dakingari vs Abubakar Abubakar	Usman Dakingari	Outright Cancellation (Ordered new election)
Ondo	Gubernatorial	2012	Olusegun Mimiko vs ACN & PDP	Olusegun Mimiko	Olusegun Mimiko
Bayelsa	Gubernatorial	2012	Seriake Dickson vs Timipre Sylva	Seriake Dickson	Seriake Dickson
Osun	Gubernatorial	2014	Rauf Aregbesola vs Iyiola Omisore	Rauf Aregbesola	Rauf Aregbesola
Ekiti	Gubernatorial	2014	Ayodele Fayose vs Kayode Fayemi	Ayodele Fayose	Ayodele Fayose
Anambra	Gubernatorial	2014	Willi Obiano vs Tony Nwoye & Chris Ngige	Willi Obiano	Willi Obiano

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 7: Post-Election Litigations and outcome in the 2015 Presidential Election

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/appeal court/tribunal declared winner
Nigeria	Presidential	2011	Goodluck Jonathan vs Muhammadu Buhari	Goodluck Jonathan	Goodluck Jonathan

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 8: Post-Election Litigations and outcomes in the 2015 Gubernatorial Elections

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme /Appeal court, Tribunal declared winner
Abia	Gubernatorial	2015	Okezie Ikpeazu vs Alex Otti	Okezie Ikpeazu	Okezie Ikpeazu
Akwa Ibom	Gubernatorial	2015	Udom Emmanuel vs Umana Umana	Udom Emmanuel	Udom Emmanuel
Benue	Gubernatorial	2015	Samuel Ortom vs Terhemem Tarzoor	Samuel Ortom	Samuel Ortom
Borno	Gubernatorial	2015	Kashim Shettima vs Goni Mohammed	Kashim Shettima	Kashim Shettima
Cross River	Gubernatorial	2015	Ben Ayade vs Joe Agi	Ben Ayade	Ben Ayade
Delta	Gubernatorial	2015	Ifeanyi Okowa vs Emerhor O'tega & Great Ogboru	Ifeanyi Okowa	Ifeanyi Okowa
Ebonyi	Gubernatorial	2015	Dave Umahi vs Edward Nkwegu	Dave Umahi	Dave Umahi
Ekiti	Gubernatorial	2015	Ayo Fayose vs Kayode Fayemi	Ayo Fayose	Ayo Fayose
Enugu	Gubernatorial	2015	Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi vs Okey Ezea	Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi	Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi
Gombe	Gubernatorial	2015	Ibrahim Dankwambo vs Inuwa Yahya	Ibrahim Dankwambo	Ibrahim Dankwambo
Kaduna	Gubernatorial	2015	Nasir El-Rufai vs Polycarp Danladi	Nasir El-Rufai	Nasir El-Rufai
Kebbi	Gubernatorial	2015	Atiku Bagudu vs Bello Sarkin Yaki	Atiku Bagudu	Atiku Bagudu
Kogi	Gubernatorial	2015	Sule Lamido vs Muhammad Abubakar	Sule Lamido	Sule Lamido
Kwara	Gubernatorial	2015	Abdulfatah Ahmed vs Simeon Ajibola	Abdulfatah Ahmed	Abdulfatah Ahmed
Lagos	Gubernatorial	2015	Akinwunmi Ambode vs Jimi Agbaje	Akinwunmi Ambode	Akinwunmi Ambode
Nasarawa	Gubernatorial	2015	Tanko Al-Makura vs Labaran Maku	Tanko Al-Makura	Tanko Al-Makura
Ogun	Gubernatorial	2015	Ibikunle Amosun vs Adegboyega Isiaka	Ibikunle Amosun	Ibikunle Amosun
Oyo	Gubernatorial	2015	Abiola Ajimobi vs Rasheed Ladoja	Abiola Ajimobi	Abiola Ajimobi
Plateau	Gubernatorial	2015	Simon Lalong vs Gyang Pwajok	Simon Lalong	Simon Lalong
Rivers	Gubernatorial	2015	Nyesom Wike vs Dakuku Peterside	Nyesom Wike	Nyesom Wike
Taraba	Gubernatorial	2015	Darius Ishaku vs Aisha Alhassan	Darius Ishaku	Darius Ishaku
Yobe	Gubernatorial	2015	Ibrahim Gaidam vs Ayuba	Ibrahim Gaidam	Ibrahim Gaidam

Zamfara	Gubernatorial	2015	Sabo & Ahmed Abubakar Abdula'Aziz Abubakar vs Mahmud Shinkafi	Abdula'Aziz Abubakar	Abdula'Aziz Abubakar
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Source: Compiled by the author

Table 9: Post-Election Litigations and outcome in the 2019 Presidential Election

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/Appeal court/Tribunal declared winner
Nigeria	Presidential	2019	1. Atiku Abubakar vs Muhammadu Buhari 2. Ambrose Owuru vs Muhammadu Buhari 3. Aminchi Habu vs Muhammadu Buhari 4. Geff Ojinika vs Muhammadu Buhari	Muhammadu Buhari	Muhammadu Buhari

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 10: Post-Election Litigations and outcomes in the 2019 Gubernatorial Elections

State	Election	Year	Case	INEC declared winner	Supreme/Appeal court declared winner
Abia	Gubernatorial	2019	Ogah Uchechukwu Samson vs Okezie Victor Ikpeazu	Okezie Victor Ikpeazu	Okezie Victor Ikpeazu
Adamawa	Gubernatorial	2019	Mohammed Umar Jibrilla vs Umaru Ahmadu Fintiri	Umaru Ahmadu Fintiri	Umaru Ahmadu Fintiri
Akwa Ibom	Gubernatorial	2019	Nsima Udo Ekere vs Udom Emmanuel H.E	Udom Emmanuel H.E	Udom Emmanuel H.E
Bauchi	Gubernatorial	2019	Mohammed Abdullahi Abubakar vs Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed	Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed	Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed
Benue	Gubernatorial	2019	Emmanuel Jime vs Samuel Ioraer Ortom	Samuel Ioraer Ortom	Samuel Ioraer Ortom
Borno	Gubernatorial	2019	<i>Idris Mamman Durkwa vs</i> Baba Gana Umara Zulum	Baba Gana Umara Zulum	Baba Gana Umara Zulum
Cross River	Gubernatorial	2019	Owan Enoch John vs Ayade Benedict Bengiousuye	Ayade Benedict Bengiousuye	Ayade Benedict Bengiousuye
Delta	Gubernatorial	2019	Great Ovedje Ogboru vs Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa	Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa	Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa
Ebonyi	Gubernatorial	2019	PDM vs David Umahi	David Umahi Nweze	David Umahi
Enugu	Gubernatorial	2019	Senator Anyogu Eze vs Ifeanyi Lawrence Ugwuanyi	Ifeanyi Lawrence Ugwuanyi	Ifeanyi Lawrence Ugwuanyi
Gombe	Gubernatorial	2019	Adamu Jungudo, Muhammad Ibrahim, and Aliyu Adamu vs Mohammed Inuwa Yahaya	Mohammed Inuwa Yahaya	Mohammed Inuwa Yahaya
Imo	Gubernatorial	2019	Emeka Ihedioha vs Hope Uzodinma	Emeka Ihedioha	Hope Uzodinma
Jigawa	Gubernatorial	2019	No records of challenge	Mohammed Badaru Abubakar	Mohammed Badaru Abubakar

Kaduna	Gubernatorial	2019	Isa Mohammad Ashiru vs Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai	Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai	Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai
Kano	Gubernatorial	2019	Abba Yusuf vs Ganduje Abdullahi Umar	Ganduje Abdullahi Umar	Ganduje Abdullahi Umar
Katsina	Gubernatorial	2019	Garba Yakubu Lado vs Aminu Bello Masari	Aminu Bello Masari	Aminu Bello Masari
Kebbi	Gubernatorial	2019	Isa Mohammed Galaudu vs Abubakar Atiku Bagudu	Abubakar Atiku Bagudu	Abubakar Atiku Bagudu
Kogi	Gubernatorial	2019	PDP, SDP vs Yahaya Bello	Yahaya Bello	Yahaya Bello
Kwara	Gubernatorial	2019	Razak Atunwa vs Abdulraham Abbulrazaq	Abdulraham Abbulrazaq	Abdulraham Abbulrazaq
Lagos	Gubernatorial	2019	Ifagbemi Awamardi, Salis Owolabi vs Babajide Olusola Sanwolu	Babajide Olusola Sanwolu	Babajide Olusola Sanwolu
Nasarawa	Gubernatorial	2019	David Emmanuel Ombugadu vs Audu Alhaji Sule	Audu Alhaji Sule	Audu Alhaji Sule
Niger	Gubernatorial	2019	Umar Mohammed Nasko vs Sani Abubakar Bello	Sani Abubakar Bello	Sani Abubakar Bello
Ogun	Gubernatorial	2019	Akinlade Adekunle Abdulkabir vs Adedapo Abiodun	Adedapo Abiodun	Adedapo Abiodun
Oyo	Gubernatorial	2019	Adelabu Adebayo Adekola vs Oluseyi Makinde	Oluseyi Makinde	Oluseyi Makinde
Plateau	Gubernatorial	2019	Jeremiah Timbut Useni vs Simon Bako Lalong	Simon Bako Lalong	Simon Bako Lalong
Rivers	Gubernatorial	2019	Biokpomabo Awara vs INEC, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike and PDP	Nyesom Wike	Nyesom Wike
Sokoto	Gubernatorial	2019	Ahmed Aliyu sokoto vs Tambuwal Aminu Waziri	Tambuwal Aminu Waziri	Tambuwal Aminu Waziri
Taraba	Gubernatorial	2019	Abubakar Sani Danladi vs Darius Dickson Ishaku	Darius Dickson Ishaku	Darius Dickson Ishaku
Yobe	Gubernatorial	2019	No records of challenge	Mai Mala	Mai Mala
Zamfara	Gubernatorial	2019	Bello Mohammed Matawalle vs Idris Mukhtar Shehu	Idris Mukhtar Shehu	Bello Mohammed Matawalle

Source: Compiled by the author

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OR METHODS

The study is basically qualitative research with data collected from secondary sources and analyzed using content analysis and descriptive statistics methods while conclusions were reached through deductive reasoning approach.

4.1. The Liberal Democratic Theory

The liberal theory of democracy is a product of scholars such as Baron de Montesquieu, John Locke, Jean Jacque Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, to mention but a few, These scholars, according to Oddih (2007), promoted ideas and practices among which are private ownership of property, social justice, natural rights, majority rule and others. Liberal democratic ideas rose when North America and Europe adopted capitalism as their major mode of production. Liberal democratic theory has the following as its major characteristics:

- a. Capitalism is recognized
- b. Availability of universal franchise which involves periodic free and fair elections.
- c. Respect for fundamental human rights is emphasized
- d. Multi-party system is encouraged to make room for healthy competition
- e. Existence of pressure groups

- f. The rule of law and supremacy of the law is in practice
- g. Principle of checks and balances and separation of powers are promoted
- h. Change of government through forceful or revolutionary methods is abhorred.

Furthermore, the major concern of the liberal democratic theorists is how to structure a system of politics that supports the participation of individuals while at the same time promotes citizens' moral development. Liberal democracies often possess universal franchise, giving the right to vote to all adult citizens without special consideration to the person's property ownership, gender or race. It comes in various forms including a federal republic, as seen in Nigeria, India, Germany and Brazil; a constitutional monarchy which exists in Spain, Japan and the United Kingdom. It can as well be a presidential or a parliamentary system.

Liberal democracy describes a political system where attempt to structure rules that optimise the good of all exists (Mbachu & Eze, 2009: 86). In this type of political system, democracy is a government by consent; there is the recognition of minority rights; there is constitutional government; and liberal democracy (Merki, cited in Mahajan, 2005: 814).

Ball (1988) cited in Mahajan (2005: 815), put forward some features of liberal democracy paramount among which is the existence of an election through voting process. Thus, it is the voting process that offers people the opportunity to exercise their will just as it was done in Nigeria in the late 19th century which brought an end to military rule and also led Nigeria into liberal democracy on May 29, 1999.

Furthermore, Liberal Democratic theory advocates that democracy must be characterized by fair, free, and competitive elections between many distinct political parties; political freedom and civil rights for everyone; distribution of powers among different arms of government; civil liberties; equal protection of human rights and rule of law. Liberal democracies usually have universal franchise, which offers every adult citizen the right to vote and be voted for without special consideration to the person's race, gender or property ownership.

In the same vein, liberal democracy does not require just periodic elections. It also demands the supremacy of law, respect for the freedoms of individuals, proper checks and balances as instituted in the constitution, good accountability and transparency system, and control of the armed forces by civilians (Mahajan, 2005: 16). Governments produced by elections may be inefficient, corrupt, short-sighted, irresponsible, dominated by special interests.... These qualities make such governments undesirable but do not make them undemocratic (Mahajan, 2005: 19). This implies that democratic procedures, such as freely contested elections, can sometimes lead to doubtful or even profoundly undemocratic outcomes. Thus, elections adjudged to be free and fair must be filled by a "bundle of freedoms", characterized by, but not confined to, the rule of law, the separation of powers and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property (Mahajan, 2005: 20). Lastly, in Liberal Democracy, both the rule of law and the individual take central position in politics.

Applying the above theory to our study, post-election litigations and institutional credibility are strictly part of the ingredients of the electoral process in particular and liberal democracy in general. The electorates and political parties cannot go to the courts to challenge election outcomes if the freedom to do such is not available to them and also respected by the government. Thus, the liberal democratic theory becomes very adequate in this research as it offers us the leeway for testing the credibility of INEC through the courts and how these have affected democratization in Nigeria within the years under study.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Post-election litigation outcomes and credibility of electoral institution (INEC) in Nigeria

The 1999 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections

The 1999 election was used mainly for ushering the country into democratic rule and disengaging the military from politics. Thus, people paid less attention to the credibility of the election and that of the electoral institution, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Nevertheless, INEC was alleged to have connived with both

candidates and parties to engage in electoral corruption. The transitional military regime was also not left out of this. This ugly situation posed serious challenge to the nature of electoral administration in the country especially as it concerns the accountability and impartiality of INEC as election administrator. Kew (1999) cited in Oromareghake (2013: 25) clearly explained the different ways through which INEC staffs engaged in rigging in the 1999 elections. But, more importantly, the rigging of the elections were not unconnected with the intention to avert a repeat of the problem witnessed in the First Republic where a coalition government was formed because no single party secured adequate number of seats required to form the government (Onuoha, 2003 cited in Oromareghake, 2013: 25). There was also an extraordinary monetization of politics as vote buying was the order of the day (Ojo, 2006: 105-23). The situation worsened to this level as a result of the failure of INEC to implement guidelines on financing elections. Nevertheless, Nigeria returned to civil rule on 29th May, 1999, having elected Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo as the president.

Based on the fact that the 1999 elections were seen by Nigerians as a desired way of welcoming democracy into the country and ending military rule, little were politicians ready to do things that will give the military signs to come back to power. Thus, even though the electoral process and the elections conducted by Prof. Maurice Iwu-led INEC did allow many things to go wrong, politicians and especially those who contested various positions were not ready to contest the results in the courts by way of post-election petitions. As a result, we do not have records of post-election litigations after the 1999 elections.

After the elections, the Presidential seat was won by Olusegun Obasanjo (PDP) while out of the 36 states of the federation, PDP won all except 14 states at the gubernatorial level while other parties won in other states as follows: Zamfara (ANPP), Yobe (APP), Sokoto (APP), Lagos (AC), Borno (APP), Ekiti (AD), Gombe (APP), Kebbi (APP), Kogi (APP), Kwara (ANPP), Osun (AD), Oyo (AD), Ondo (AD), Ogun (AD). Thus, the competitive nature of democracy was not fully ignited in the 1999 elections and the democratization process in Nigeria was at low ebb and the credibility of INEC was not tested through the courts though observers condemned the elections totally.

The 2003 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections

The 2003 General Election was seen as an important election in the democratization journey of Nigeria. As a result, serious attention was given to making sure that all the processes were properly followed. However, the processes leading to the elections were not smooth as many issues were left unaddressed while some others were haphazardly addressed before the elections came (Omotola, 2004: 130). INEC registered many more political parties which made the number of parties rise to thirty parties from three. INEC, headed by Prof. Maurice Iwu also reviewed the existing voters' register. There were signals of fear and tension across the country which was higher than that witnessed in 1999 because hopes were high that Nigeria would get it better this time. The presidency was undoubtedly fully involved in the processes leading to the elections as various forms of manipulation were witnessed. Top among these was the surprising mutation by the President, in the sequence of election conduct in the country through the 2001 Electoral Bill. Whereas in 1999 elections were conducted in ascending order (local-state-national assembly-presidential levels), the 2001 Electoral Bill changed it to make the presidential election come first. Of course, this very act was not acceptable to the opposition parties who saw it as a predetermined strategy by the PDP to make way for the party to win other elections if they succeed in winning the first. More importantly, the governors in the states perceived it as a ploy to besiege their strongholds in the states. Summarily, the reason behind this sudden change was that the President and the National Assembly members needed to ensure that their re-election is secured before the governors are elected. This became necessary because the state governors could make critical changes to the political interests of the President and the National Assembly members which is their re-election, if they (the state governors) were first elected (Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2007: 33).

More so, Omotola (2004: 131) reports that the elections were highly militarized because heavy security forces were deployed which affected voter turnout and also made it possible for INEC to manipulate the elections for the benefit of the PDP which was the ruling party. At the end of the elections, the results as published by INEC showed

that the PDP won the elections at all levels with wide margins. Having won 75 of the 109 senatorial seats, the PDP had an overwhelming victory in the National Assembly elections, with the ANPP having 28 seats and AD having 6 seats only. The overwhelming victory of the PDP was connected hugely to the incumbency power that helped it utilize state machineries without hindrance. These machineries were the security forces, INEC, the state's treasury, and the mass media. Being the party in power, PDP also received a lot of financial good-will in different forms from opulent individuals and corporate institutions in exchange for the state's protection of their business interests.

Again, Omotola (2006: 157-67) in agreement with the reports of local and international observers on the 2003 elections, maintained that the elections were filled with electoral vices of all manners. He argued that these problems were witnessed largely because INEC never prepared properly which gave rise to hick-ups in the elections. Electoral processes such as voter registration and voter education were done very hurriedly and with less carefulness which created room for electoral malpractices of different forms. Another incident worth mentioning is the conflict created by the 2002 Electoral Law which stated that for one to be appointed as electoral commissioner, such person must also be qualified to be member of the House of Representatives. This created serious confusion which Adejomobi (2007: 14), understood as meaning that electoral commission members should also be party members. This led to strong mistrust of INEC by the electorates and led to many post-election litigations being fallout from the 2003 election. It also had serious implications for the credibility of INEC as an impartial electoral institution.

On the long run, the 2003 elections were conducted and results were published by INEC. The Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) went on to win the presidential seat as President Olusegun Obasanjo contested for a second tenure. The second tenure bid was also a bid of the ruling PDP. Thus the same thing was repeated in the states and PDP won all the states except 7 states. This means that PDP won 29 states in the gubernatorial race. Some states that were governed by AD and APP in the 1999 elections were also taken over by the PDP. These states include: Oyo (AD -PDP), Oyo (AD - PDP), Ogun (AD - PDP), Osun (AD - PDP), Kebbi (APP - PDP), Kogi (APP - PDP), Kwara (ANPP - PDP), Ekiti (AD - PDP), Gombe (APP - PDP). More so, Sokoto and Yobe retained their ruling APP while Zamfara also retained ANPP. Lagos and Borno states only changed to a new political party name due to merger issues: Lagos (AD - AC), Borno (APP - ANPP). However, PDP lost two states in 2003 to APP and ANPP in Jigawa and Kano respectively: Jigawa (PDP - APP), Kano (PDP - ANPP).

Because the ruling PDP which dominated in the elections wanted second tenure as a party bid, the 2003 elections generated more of internal party conflicts in choosing who runs for which post. At the end, the power of incumbency played a major role in determining who eventually ran for both presidential and governorship elections as majority of the governors retained their seats after the 2003 elections. This also contributed to less post-election litigations after the 2003 elections. Nigerians and politicians as well had to be patient with the governors and the PDP to serve out their second tenure as allowed by the constitution and the electoral act. Many Nigerians also blamed INEC under Prof. Maurice Iwu for helping PDP in achieving massive victory in 2003. Tables 1 and 2 give account of the little number of post-election litigations recorded over the 2003 gubernatorial and presidential elections in Nigeria.

It is seen in Table 1 and 2 that little post-election litigation was recorded in the 2003 elections. This does not imply, however, that the elections were free and fair as already stated by observers and election monitoring bodies. But, the few number of petitions witnessed could be explained on the grounds that there was less political competition both at the presidential and gubernatorial levels for the fact that majority of the incumbent governors and also the president contested for second tenure which made it easy for them to win the elections and it was also their second tenure as allowed by the electoral act and the constitution of Nigeria. It was only in Anambra state that we recorded a challenge to the election results and Chris Ngige who was declared winner by INEC was removed by the Supreme Court while Peter Obi was declared winner by the Supreme Court. In other post-election litigations both at the presidential and gubernatorial levels (Adamawa and Rivers states), the courts upheld the results

declared by INEC. A total of 560 post-election petitions were received after the 2003 elections but these were more from the angle of the legislative seats.

The 2007 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections

The 2007 general election was the third in Nigeria's democratization process from 1999. The expectations for an improvement on the past elections was very high and the desire for change was also beginning to build up following the failure of the ruling party (PDP) at the federal level to offer the people the desired dividends of governance and democracy per se. Yet, PDP was bent on holding onto power at all levels.

Thus, amidst other ugly incidents that took place during this period, President Obasanjo unequivocally did not mince words in declaring that for him and his party, the PDP, the 2007 election was 'a do or die affair' (Unger, 2007: 1). Thus, instead of putting its energy on preparing for the elections, Prof. Maurice Iwu-led INEC was busy engaging in litigations against opposition candidates. The height of it all was its obduracy in preventing Atiku Abubakar from contesting for the Presidential seat, not minding that the electoral law did not give it such powers. Even though INEC assured Nigerians of its readiness to conduct free and fair elections, the opposite actually played out as events before and after the elections showed. The political atmosphere showed much skepticism over the actual impartiality and independence of INEC.

Against all these odds, Nigerians still participated in the elections with much expectation. The governorship and state Houses of Assembly elections took place on 14th April while the Presidential and National Assembly elections were conducted on 21st April. The results of the elections surprisingly favored the PDP to a very large extent following the fact that for the past eight years of her leadership in the country, the PDP has not performed creditably to deserve such landslide victory. Adebayo and Omotola (2007: 201-16) reported that there were all manner of electoral malpractices which took place during the elections such as falsification of results, ballot box stuffing, intimidation of voters, and rigging to the extent that voting never took place in some places. This was most prominent in the south-east, south-south, and south-west geo-political zones of the country. This is so because the PDP believed that these areas were the stronghold of the opposition parties. INEC in some cases went as far as disqualifying candidates on the eve of the elections, as was the case in Adamawa, Anambra and Kogi states, in total neglect of court orders. Even candidates who won party primaries in some states were also substituted; a major example was the gubernatorial candidates in Rivers state, Amaechi and Omehia.

The aftermath of the elections saw worldwide condemnation of the elections by local and international observers. A major indicator of how bad the elections were could be seen in the protests by Nigerians in the streets followed by massive post-election litigations recorded. According to Aiyede (2007: 50), a total of 1,250 post-election petitions emanated from the 2007 elections: 8 from the presidential election, 105 from the gubernatorial elections, 150 from the Senatorial elections, 331 from the House of Representatives elections, and 656 from the state Houses of Assembly elections. The outcome was the annulment of many elections in many different levels and states as shown in tables 3 and 4.

It can be seen that out of the 11 post-election litigations which reached the final outcome after the 2007 elections, 9 of them were cancelled by the courts and another candidate was declared winner in some while new elections were ordered in some others as shown in tables 3 and 4. This shows an 81.8% percent cancellation of the cases that were brought to the tribunals and courts. It was only the presidential election and gubernatorial election results of Sokoto and Osun States that were upheld by the courts. This is a proof that the credibility of INEC was greatly marred in the 2007 elections.

The 2011 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections

The 2011 general elections which took place in April that year, was an improvement on the 2007 elections and other previous elections. Though there were some issues with the process, yet the elections were generally acclaimed to be free and fair. This election was conducted under the watch of Prof. Attahiru Jega as the INEC Chairman. Before

this election, Nigeria witnessed two important developments which one way or the other shaped the elections in 2015. These two developments included the emergence of a new opposition party with a national outlook in February 2013. The new party in question was the All Progressive Congress (APC) which was a product of an amalgam of four political parties: the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). Again, there was rising insecurity in the country following the threat of Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalist group in the Northern part of the country.

Eventually the elections were conducted and results announced. After the elections, both local and international organizations (the Nigerian Labour Congress, the US etc) applauded the elections and confirmed it better than the 2007 elections. They also expressed concern on some recorded irregularities connected with ballot box snatching, under-age voters' registration and ballot stuffing and others (Oromareghake, 2013). It is also believed that the result collation process was manipulated since the electorates were not allowed to monitor the collation of results. This created room for manipulations in that process. Generally, the elections in 2011 were far better than that of the 2007 elections. The 2011 elections eventually gave Nigerians hope for a better future in democratic practice.

One important factor that impacted heavily but negatively on the 2011 elections was the power of incumbency of Governors together with the arrogant display of wealth by these Governors which they used to influence who wins the elections. Unfortunately, Nigerian electorates find it difficult to reject these material inducements. Tables 5 and 6 contain the outcomes of the post-election litigation in 2011.

From the data tables 5 and 6, the 2011 presidential and gubernatorial elections and other elections in the years before the 2015 elections witnessed high level of post-election litigations. However, this does not mean that the elections were highly marred with violence or did not follow the right guideline as the election was adjudged free and fair by the electorates and observers. Rather this shows increase in awareness by Nigerians on the rights they have in a democratic setting and their readiness to challenge any infringement on those rights in the courts. Thus, though there was increase in the number of post-election litigations in 2011 compared to the 2013 elections, the outcome of the litigations show that INEC demonstrated a high level of credibility in 2011 under Prof. Attahiru Jega as Chairman of the commission. The outcome of all the 15 post-election litigations in the gubernatorial elections in 2011 including the presidential election shows that the courts upheld all the elections results as declared by INEC.

Furthermore, the results of the gubernatorial elections conducted in 2012 and 2014 elections were also upheld by the highest courts where the cases were taken to. This demonstrates that INEC did their work very well and in line with the electoral guideline. We therefore conclude that in 2011, INEC demonstrated higher level of credibility than in the previous elections. This was a plus to Nigeria's democratization process.

The 2015 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections

In preparation for the 2015 elections, INEC liaised with important organizations to guarantee the readiness of the institution for the elections. INEC considered some of the environmental challenges it could battle with in planning and executing the elections such as infrastructure, huge population, strong political competition and security condition. Thus, it made plans to handle all these. Following the security situation in the country as at then, INEC postponed the initially scheduled elections for 14th and 15th February and extended the time by six weeks following the statements and advice given by the country's Armed Services and Intelligence Chiefs, that they should be given more time to conclude military operations in the North-East where Boko Haram terrorist activities held sway.

A vital improvement from INEC in the 2015 elections was the introduction of Smart Card Readers (SCR). This aided in plummeting significantly the level of electoral malpractices since it was not easy for politicians and officials to manipulate. Thus, the 2015 general elections proved to actually have contributed positively to building Nigeria's democracy. It gave plausible elections, rejuvenated citizens' trust in the electoral process and also brought renewed possibilities for enhancement in better election delivery in the country.

After the elections, results were declared by INEC with surprises across the country as many states where PDP was ruling were taken over by the APC and even the incumbent President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan under PDP was defeated by President Muhammadu Buhari who represents APC. The height of it all was that Goodluck Jonathan accepted defeat even before the results of the elections were announced. Tables 7 and 8 contain the results of the elections as declared by INEC and the outcomes of the post-election litigations that followed.

Out of the 24 gubernatorial elections that went through legal scrutiny after the 2015 general elections and 2014 gubernatorial election (in Anambra state), none of the election results as declared by INEC were cancelled by the last court of arbitration, that is a 100% score. This is a confirmation that INEC was credible in the 2015 election. Less political violence and protests were also recorded after the elections which shows wide acceptance of the results by the electorates in Nigeria. It also demonstrates great height of improvement in the electoral system and democratization process in Nigeria.

The 2019 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections

The 2019 elections came with great expectations from the both local and international stakeholders. It was expected to be a great improvement on the previous elections especially the 2015 elections which offered good improvement from the 2011 elections.

However, the elections could not perform up to the people's expectations as it was marred by so many irregularities, serious operational failures, transparency issues, problem of security during elections, and low voter turnout. Nigerians were dissatisfied with manner INEC administered the elections by INEC. The election management institution battled with a lot of logistical hiccups and administrative malfunctions that had serious negative impact on the quality of the elections (Onapajo & Babalola, 2020).. The logistical challenges caused a sudden shift of the presidential election barely six hours to beginning of the election on 16 February 2019. Expectedly, the sudden postponement largely dampened public trust on the electoral process.

The 2019 general elections took place on 23 February for federal positions: the president and vice-president, senators and members of the House of Representatives. These were followed two weeks later, on 9 March, by state elections for 29 of 36 state governors, who are powerful heads of the executive, and for the State Houses of Assembly. On 23 March, there were supplementary elections for five governorship and 40 state assembly seats following elections being declared inconclusive due to the cancellation of polling units during the 9 March elections.

INEC implemented different improvements on the electoral process, part of which is ensuring simpler electoral participation through more simplified voting procedures. It also tried strengthening the integrity of the electoral process through the issuance of various regulations and also making the use of smart card readers mandatory for the accreditation of voters. The elections took place in a complex security environment, with insurgencies in the North East geopolitical zone centred on Boko Haram and Islamic State Western African Province, agitations for independence by some in the South East zone, and high levels of violence due to the farmer-herder conflicts in the Middle Belt.

According to Onapajo and Babalola (2020), the security personnel deployed for the elections were alleged to have been partisan, which threw up a lot of controversies in the process to such extent that both the electorates and electoral observers interpreted the large presence of the security personnel as a calculated strategy aimed at intimidating voters. More worrisome is that fact that despite the large presence of security personnel, the 2019 election was still characterized by violence that resulted in the death of some persons as well as burning of some INEC facilities.

More so, great number of disenfranchisement reports characterized the elections following from arbitrary poll results cancellation by INEC on flimsy reasons. It is even more worrisome that these cancellations took place in polling units perceived to be opposition parties' strongholds. Expectedly, this affected voter turnout negatively in comparison with previous elections. According to Ojetunde (2019), voter turnout stood at 35% which is the lowest

turnout ever recorded in the history of the country and the African continent at large. The situation also points to the level of disenchantment and mistrust which the people have developed for the electoral process. Based on this, Akinyemi (2019) submitted that Muhammadu Buhari's second term was handed over to him by just 18% of the registered voters.

The ability of the judiciary to work independently was questioned when, three weeks before the scheduled election day, the chief justice of Nigeria was suspended by the president. According to the European Union Election Observation Mission (2019), the suspension did not follow due process, was divisive, and to some extent undermined confidence in the electoral process and opportunity for remedy. The Chief Justice of Nigeria has a key role to play in deciding the Supreme Court bench that hears final appeals on pre-election matters, as well as governorship and presidential petitions. On 25 January 2019, the president followed a controversial order by the Code of Conduct Tribunal and suspended the chief justice, and made the next most senior Supreme Court justice the acting chief justice.

Unarguably, the judiciary in Nigeria has contributed immensely in reaffirming the quality and credibility of elections. However, it is important to also note that the institution has also contributed good amount electoral controversy in the electoral process. This, unsurprisingly, accounts for the large criticisms from the public over various judgments on petitions from the 2019 which has also impacted negatively on public confidence in the judiciary.

The elections generated a lot of post-election litigations as expected. According to the European Union Election Observation Mission (2019: 44), a total of 807 post-election litigations followed the 2019 general elections. Out of this number, 582 were dismissed by the tribunals and courts and 183 of them were withdrawn by the petitioners. In a number of constituencies, the elections were upturned and certificate of return issues to petitioners by orders of the Tribunals. However, in 30 cases, the Tribunals ordered for re-run elections in a few polling units or entire constituencies. There were 4 petitions on the presidential race and 101 for governorships.

The nullified elections come to 1.92% of the total number of elections conducted in 1,558 constituencies compared to 80 (5.37%) annulled in the aftermath of the 2015 General Election. The successful conduct of the re-run elections held on 30th November 2019 and 25th January 2020 in two Senatorial Districts, 13 Federal Constituencies and 15 State Constituencies across 12 States of the Federation. This marked the end to all litigations arising from the 2019 General Election and the conclusion of the process (European Union Election Observation Mission (2019: 138).

The presidential election was challenged at the Supreme Court by Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as shown in table 9 but the petition was dismissed and the presidential election was upheld by the apex court. Again, out of the 31 gubernatorial elections recorded in table 10 above, only one state (Zamfara State) had its governorship election out rightly cancelled by the Supreme Court following post-election litigation. This suggests that the electoral umpire performed creditably in following the electoral guideline in its decisions in the electoral process. This result also shows a great improvement on what was obtainable in the 2015 general elections and other previous elections which saw more state results cancelled by the courts. Thus, the credibility of INEC in relation with the court judgments was very high after the 2019 elections.

Generally therefore, it is glaring that the democratization process in Nigeria has witnessed several election-related issues especially the credibility of the elections and acceptance of same by the electorates, parties and the contestants. The election management body, INEC, was less credible or almost incredible in the 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections under the chairmanship of Prof. Maurice Iwu as shown by the number of elections cancelled by the courts in relation to the number upheld. However, INEC started regaining its credibility from the 2011 elections under the chairmanship of Prof. Attahiru Jega and the peak of it was witnessed in the 2015 and the 2019 general elections.

5.2. The impact of post-election litigations outcome on the credibility of the election management body (Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC]) in Nigeria

The outcome of post-election litigations can go a long way to either strengthen or weaken the trust which the government, the electorates, international partners, groups and indeed all stakeholders place in the electoral process and the election management body (EMB) or institution in any political system. This section is discussed with particular reference to INEC which is the institution charged with managing the electoral process in Nigeria.

In the first place, the most critical aim of instituting an election management body is to ensure that elections are conducted in a smooth and peaceful manner with the outcome being free and fair in line with democratic practice. Thus, the election management body (EMB) in Nigeria is expected to be transparent and credible from the time it was established. Part I, (3a) of the Independent National Electoral Commission establishment Act states that the chairman as well as members of the commission has to be people with unquestionable character. Thus, when post-election litigations emanate out of the activities of the election management institution, this can have both positive and negative implications on the credibility of the institution.

More so, if the result of an election declared by the election management body (EMB) is challenged in the tribunals and courts, the credibility of the electoral institution is weakened especially when such result is cancelled by the courts. It not only affects the integrity of the institution but also puts both the government and the electorates in doubt on the capacity of the electoral institution to conduct future elections. On the other hand, if the outcome of the litigation upholds the results as announced by the EMB, it goes a long way to boost the integrity and credibility of the institution.

Again, in the case of a national election conducted at various states or regions of the country, the credibility of the election is marred when majority of the election results across the states as announced by the EMB are cancelled by the tribunals and courts. The case is even made worse when the elections are out rightly annulled and fresh elections ordered by the courts. However, a general election result is more acceptable when majority of the results are not contested in the courts and when majority of the ones contested in the courts are upheld by the courts. This goes a long way to boost the credibility of the EMB. The 2015 elections in Nigeria were adjudged relatively free and fair and also credible because out of the 24 elections that were challenged at the courts, none was cancelled but all were upheld by the courts. This also boosted the credibility of INEC in that year.

Another important side to this is a situation when a concluded election is challenged at the courts based on technical grounds and not necessarily based on the results. Such technical ground could be based on omission of a candidate's name from the ballot papers or wrong application of a section of the electoral law of the country. If for any of the above reasons or any other reason not mentioned above, the EMB is taken to court after the elections, this does not represent a good name for the electoral institution. This situation becomes worse when the courts fault the actions or inactions of the EMB and cancels the elections and order new elections. It not only makes a negative mark on the EMB but also puts a lot of doubt on its legal department who are supposed to guide the EMB legally in the course of the electoral process. Examples of such cases abound in Nigeria like the case of Peter Obi and Dr. Chris Ngige in Anambra State in 2003 where the Supreme Court removed Ngige and installed Peter Obi. Another case was in 2007 where Omehia was removed by the Supreme Court and replaced with Chibuke Amaechi in Rivers State.

6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study shows that the credibility of the electoral process and the election management institution can be marred to a great extent if post-election litigations are on the high side in any political system. Thus, governments all over the world should as a matter of policy step, ensure that necessary positive support is given to election management institutions to ensure that they conduct elections which are to be seen to be free, fair and credible at all times. This will go a long way to strengthen democratization process across the globe.

7. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has made significant contribution to the scholarship on elections and election management as a broad area, and particularly on the impact of post-election litigations on both the electoral process and the election management institution. The study has thrown up various issues that will spur further research by scholars. It is expected that further research topics will spring up from this study in future.

8. CONCLUSION

From the study, it is deducible that the credibility of INEC has been greatly marred by the outcome of post-elections litigations as this credibility has also been fluctuating at different times. Thus, Nigeria's democratization journey is still derailing from expectations. Based on this premise, we therefore make the following recommendations:

1. INEC should ensure that it plays its role in the electoral process with strict transparency, fairness and in accordance with the electoral act and the Nigerian constitution. It should shun all acts of corruption and unconstitutional behaviours. This will ensure that the elections and their outcomes are more credible. It will also reduce the quantity of pre and post- election litigations often witnessed in the country as well as frequent cancellation of elections by the courts and electoral tribunals.
2. The government on its part should play its role in providing good atmosphere required for smooth conduct of elections as well as adequate funds, security and other resources to INEC. Political leaders and politicians should always endeavour to play the game of politics according to the rules and reduce the penchant for electoral manipulations and rigging. This will also help to reduce post-election litigations in the Nigerian polity.

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