

Voters Apathy and Revival of Genuine Political Participation in Nigeria

Sylvia Uchenna Agu Ph.D

*Department of Public Administration and local Government,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu, State.*

Okeke, Vincent Onyekwelu Sunday Ph.D

*Department of Political Science
Anambra State University, Igbariam, Anambra State University*

Idike, Adeline N.

*Department of Public Administration and Local Government,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu-State*

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Abstract

Voters' apathy has become increasingly serious globally indicative of the need to build a sustainable society with minimal voters apathy. The study investigates the causes of voters' apathy. Questionnaires were distributed to 1,120 respondents. The mean age was 24.89, SD=1.70. The gender mean was 1.46 and occupation mean was 1.80. Result revealed that there exist a relationship between voter's age, occupation and gender and voting in general (P=0.000). The age of voters, the occupation and gender are all significantly related to voters apathy. What could be done to revive genuine political participation was therefore discussed.

1. Introduction

The third wave of democratization in the 1990's led to the conduct of elections in many developing nations/countries. To a very large extent elections and electoral processes shape the face of the bourgeois modern nation state. Elections provide the medium by which the different interest groups within the bourgeois nation state can take and resolve their claims to power through peaceful means. (Iyayi, 2006: 1).

Electoral participation is one of the three main indicators of democratic performance (Powell, 1982). According to Dalton (1988), citizen involvement in the political process is essential for democracy to be viable and meaningful. Voting, though it requires little initiative and cooperation with others, is the most visible and widespread form of citizen involvement. This notwithstanding, electoral turnout is declining in most democracies (Blais 2000; Gray and Caul; 2000). Moreover, voters turnout varies considerably both overtime and across countries and individuals (Lassen; 2005). This variation is not random and electoral participation seems to be highly unequal and biased in favor of more privileged citizens—those with higher incomes, greater wealth and better education, and against less disadvantaged citizens. (Iiphart 1997). According to Vergue (2009), this may prevent elections to properly perform their three key functions—to discipline the elected officials by threat of not being reappointed (accountability effect), to select competent individuals for public office (legitimacy effect), and to reflect the preferences of a large spectrum of voters (representative effect). The accountability effect is straightforward. Elections affect the incentives facing politicians. When officials anticipate that they would not be reelected if they did not perform, it makes them not to shirk their obligations to the voters in the present (Verge, 2009; Marin 1997; Ferejohn; 1986; Fiorina 1981; and Baro 1973). Election is therefore seen as a sanctioning device that induces elected officials to act in the best interest of the people. However, one vital condition that affects political accountability is the competitive electoral mechanism and at the core of the electoral mechanism is the vote. The vote is the primary thing for citizens to make their governments accountable. If a large fraction of citizens don't create their opinions, elections would create no incentives for politicians to espouse or implement policies in the public interest (Dalton 2007; Rakner and svsand 2005; English 2005; Chinisinger 2004; Ezeani; 2004 Ballington 2001; and Ragoff 1990).. All this notwithstanding, elections in developing nations have been characterized by lack of feeling of personal

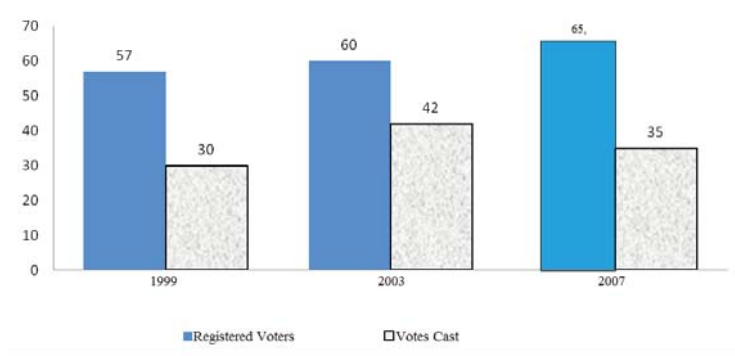
responsibility, a passivity and indifference for political affairs which could be viewed as apathy. The paper therefore, attempts to examine the causes of apathy in developing nations using Nigeria as a case study and what could be done to revive a genuine political participation. The survey was designed to measure a wide variety of explanations for not voting both in general and in reference to the increase in not voting that has occurred in the last four elections in Nigeria. The report examines the reasons survey respondents gave for not going to the polls in the 1999, 2003 and ,2007 general elections in Nigeria. The report then examines a series of correlates of not voting starting with socio-demographic factors. Here and throughout the report, particular attention was paid to the factors of age, gender and occupation. Pammet and Leduce 2003 was adopted with slight modifications. This, we did by investigating the political attitudes of youths and the way in which young people might be encouraged to take a greater interest in politics. The second is the possible improvement in the voting rate and thirdly how to revive a genuine political participation in governance and elections.

Electoral Trends in Nigeria since the Return of Civil Democratic Rule (1999)

An analysis of electoral trends in the country since 1999 at three levels, namely, national, state and senatorial levels.

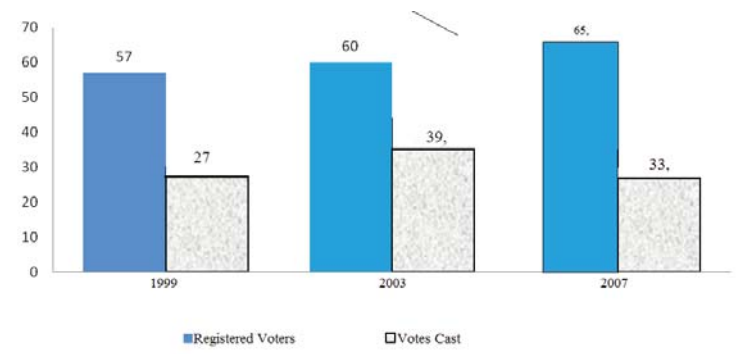
The aim was to assess the decreasing trends in valid votes which may be viewed as apathy since the return to civil democratic rule in Nigeria.

Figure 1: Bar Chart showing total votes cast against registered votes from 1999 – 2007 (Presidential election) Presidential Election (Million)



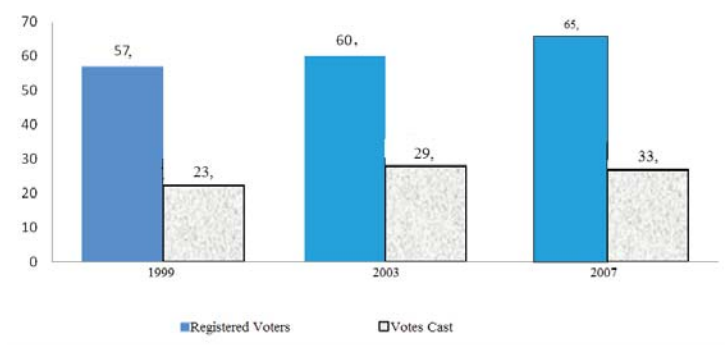
Source: Calculated From Government Election Result Gazette

Figure 2: Gubernatorial Elections (Million)



Source: Calculated from Government Election Result Guarantee

Figure 3: Senatorial Elections



Source: Calculated from Government Election Result, Gazette

The three bar charts above present electoral trends at National and State levels since the return of civil democratic rule. Voters turnout in the 1999 general election was not quite impressive since 59, 938, 945 registered and only 30, 280, 052 cast their votes properly. In 2003, the number of registered voters increased to 60, 823, 022 and the number of voters' turnout also increased to 42, 018, 735. But in 2007, despite the increase in the number of registered voters, the total votes cast dropped significantly to 35, 397, 627 representing just half the number that registered. The same phenomenon was applicable in the gubernatorial and senatorial elections. The bar charts clearly indicated that there had been similar pattern of voters' turnout across all the two regions. The voters' turnout pattern at the national level was a mirror image of the state level pattern. This survey gained wide acceptance by recent observation by Afrobarometer (2007), which pointed out that support for democracy diminished moderately after the political transition (from 80% to 71%) and had been relatively steady since 2001.

From the survey carried out by the Afrobarometer, Nigerians consistently support democracy but are much less enthusiastic about the way that democracy actually worked in their country- From a high percentage of 84% in 1999, immediately after the transition to democracy. Popular support for democracy plummeted to a low of 25% in 2005 before rebounding in 2007 to 39%. This observation by Afrobarometer reflected the votes cast in 2007.

In the same research, the confidence in Nigerians that election served as a mechanism of political change was also tested. About two thirds of Nigerians believed that elections did not enable voters to remove ineffective leaders. Only about a quarter believed that elections served as a vehicle of political change. It did appear that such believe lend credibility to voters' apathy since it was believed that voting makes not much difference in the choice of candidates.

Figure 4: National Elections held in Nigeria

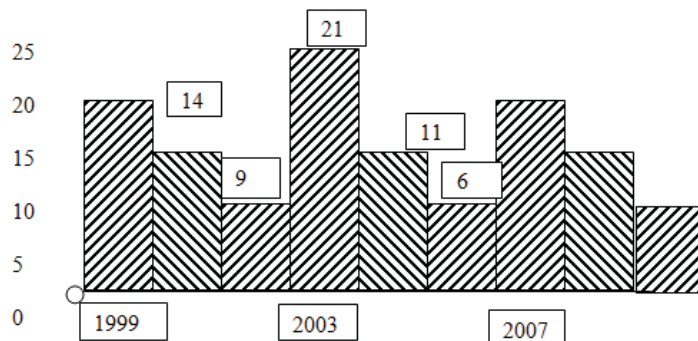
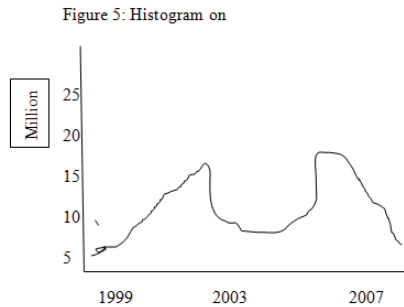


Figure 5: Histogram on



The Histogram and the graph above indicate that there had been a similar pattern of voting. The northern region had consistently registered higher voter turnout in all the three general elections while the southern region came second and the western region third. During the collation of the voters' turnout we discovered that states in the northern region were very much interested in elections than did the southern and western states.. This could explain the reason for the high voters' turnout in the northern states. However, we discovered that there was actually apathy as the number that registered did not actually cast their votes.

However, this phenomenon is not restricted to Nigerians alone. For instance, Botswana's voter turnout had been consistently below 50% of the total eligible voters since 1989 and Kenya's 68% voter turnout since 1999 election was celebrated as the highest Maunden,(2005). The same experience was recorded from Malawi voters' turnout. According to Chinisingha, the voter turnout dropped significantly from 78% to 61% in June 2004 , in Great Britain and United states, voter participation remains consistently below corresponding levels. This however showed that there was something fundamentally wrong with the overall electoral process that had disenchanted and disenfranchised voters in large numbers. This we intend to find in this study.

Methodology

What actually guided the study was that voters' turnout constituted an important aspect in the practice of democracy. Poor voter's turnout undermined the premise of democracy in democratizing countries. Therefore, voters' turnout was a prerequisite for practice of a functioning democracy; hence it reflected the will of the majority. In contextualizing this study, the research seeks to analyze the voters' registration percentage, and voters' turnout percentage. Voters' registration percentage refers to the percentage of voters that actually registered while Voters cast percentage refers to the percentage that turnout in an election day to cast their votes.

We employed Content analysis of available data on elections as well as relevant materials from elsewhere within Nigeria. Government officially gazette election results were used to assess voters' turnout trends at the national and state levels. However, compendium results of the 1999, 2003 and 2007 general elections were used to assess voters' turnout trends and registered voters at the national and state level. The insight from the secondary sources was complemented with fieldwork from Lagos district. The focus group discussion was carried out in Lagos because it was one of the districts that had registered the lowest average voters' turnout in the three general elections at 37.79%. Chinisingha's method of grouping was adopted. The fieldwork was carried out with groups of 8 – 10 men, women and youths (boys and girls) in each site separately. The rational for categorizing the FGD as such was to access whether there would be differentiated experiences, knowledge and perception among these groups about voting in general and voters' apathy in particular.

Materials and Methods

The focus of this study was Lagos state. Lagos state was situated in the western part of Nigeria and is made up of the local governments. The demographic characteristics of the population showed that they were 433 males (54.1%) and 367 females (45.9%). The study comprised mainly of politicians, civil servants and undergraduates. The rational behind the use of politicians, civil servants, and undergraduates was based on the obvious assumption that when compared to others, were better placed to understand the content of the questionnaires. The sample size for the present study

consisted of eight hundred respondents who were mainly literates. Four urban and four rural local governments were selected in Lagos state and respondents were selected from these local governments with the help of the town union leaders. The town union leaders considered those that understood the procedures and processes of politics in the current dispensation (the new millennium). The mean age was 24.89 and SD = 1.70. The gender mean was 1.46 and SD. 499 while the occupation mean was 1.80, SD.749

Procedure

The researcher distributed 140 questionnaires in each local government comprising 1, 120. The town union leaders used their discretion and distributed the questionnaires to those who they felt would understand the implication of the questions. The respondents were required to circle "Yes", "No" and "don't know". There were also open ended questions. A total of eight hundred relevant responses were retrieved for an overall response rate of .71.43%.

1.1 Independent Measure

Increase in voters' turnout as an implication for revival of genuine political participation was measured using strict adherence, non adherence, and partial adherence to the various provisions of the laws put in place. The assumption here was that "strict adherence" to the various postulations put in place would help to revive genuine political participation while "none" and "partial adherence" would eventually led to voters' apathy. The mean for the respondents in the 4 urban and 4 rural local governments was approximately 24.89. Equal number of survey was sent to all the eight local governments using the stratified random sample. The choice of local governments used in the study was based on their sizes and importance in the state being studied.

1.2 Findings and Discussions

Descriptive Data on Perceptions/ views of voters on voters' apathy.

Item	Yes	%	No	%	Don't know	%
1	600	75%	150	18.75	50	6.25
2	368	46	336	42	96	12.
3	480	60	320	40	-	-
4	447	54.9	353	44.1	-	-
5	337	42.1	367	45.9	96	12.
6	385	48.1	320	40.0	95	11.9
7	528	66.0	272	34.	-	-
8	431	53.9	240	30	129	16.1
9	448	56	352	44	-	-
10	447	55.9	192	24	161	20.1
11	239	29.9	336	42.0	225	28.1
12	351	43.9	304	38.0	145	18.1

The data above depicts responses from respondents on voters' apathy in Nigeria. It did appeared from item 1 that majority of respondents knew what voters apathy was. About 75% answered perfectly well the meaning of voters apathy .However, in item 2 about 46% agreed that Nigeria is experiencing voters' apathy while 60% sees it to be somewhat of a trend in Nigeria and other countries. In item 4, 54.9% of the respondents believed that voters' apathy was a worrying trend in other continents as well. In addition 48.1% of the respondents also believed that INEC had failed in her duty since the inception of civil democratic rule while 40% believed that INEC had not failed in performing her duties. Again 66% also traced voters' apathy to unemployment and the political environment. About 53.9% of the respondents believed that there was a problem with voter registration while 30% claimed that there was no problem with voter registration. 11.9% of the respondent appeared not to know. (9) A whopping percentage about 56% answered that the violence associated with the electoral processes had created an atmosphere of fear in the electorate. Consequently, many voters now either vote on the basis of fear and coercion or stay away from polls altogether. More than half the number also answered that poor management of elections contributed to irregular turnout of voters, while almost half the number responded that political parties were the most important institution in a democracy

Discussion

A study of the election from 1999-2007 had yielded important results. The study traced four major factors associated with voters apathy to include a) INEC's incompetence (b) unemployment, (c) the political environment and d) electoral violence. According to the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), INEC had failed to function as an independent, competent, autonomous, and impartial arbiter of the electoral process. Some of the respondents both in the rural and urban groups categorically asked "Does voting really make any difference". Phrases like "INEC had already printed the results," "the power of incumbency will always prevail" and so on, were freely used to express their opinion. This according to them had promoted and entrenched among voters in Nigeria the belief that a single vote is not important since the return of civil democratic rule in 1999. INEC administration of election had witnessed massive riggings, in favor of the incumbent and election results were concluded before elections in most states of the federation.. The implication of this was that the majority of the voters stayed away from poll thereby disenfranchising them. This has practical implication since it signaled the progressive weakening of the democratic culture of a political system and lack of confidence in those in power. It also suggests that election could hardly act as an agent of change and those elected will no longer feel indebted to the people.

Furthermore, most FGD participants observed that the reason for voters' apathy was because of the violence associated with the electoral process that had created atmosphere of fear in the electorate. The violence is either intra or inter-party. The intra-party violence was particularly pronounced during primary elections while the interparty violence took off during the electoral campaign activities. Unfortunately, the violence did not only end between party supporters and members but, it was perpetrated against members of the general public and prospective voters. The magnitude of the violence that characterized the 2007 general elections was unprecedented. The inter-party violence was aggravated by the controversies surrounding the proposal for constitutional amendments to allow Obasanjo contest for a third term. Similarly, the battle as to whether Atiku should be allowed to contest in another party was also part of the problem. According to the focus group discussion in both the rural and urban local governments, elections were violent and they would not want to be part of the activity.

It was interesting to note that most FGD participants in the rural groups observed that voters were not interested to participate because of the degree of unemployment in the country. According to the majority of them in the rural and urban groups, they said that since the return of civil democratic rule in 1999, no single industry was established. Governments were busy setting up their own private establishments with our money, sending their children to study abroad and converting our already public enterprises to private use in the name of privatization. We have many unemployed graduates who had resorted to kidnapping and stealing as a result of unemployment just to make ends meet. Poverty sing choruses in most homes opined majority of the FGD group .However, all these points to voters' apathy because voters were not happy with those in authority. Some said that they were anxiously waiting for God's intervention in Nigeria. The major problem is that voters no longer have the urge to vote and this has serious implication in a developing country. With this type of situation,, the democratic process and development would be adversely affected. Little wonder, since the return of civil democratic rule, the country had not made much progress. The country had persistently been considered as one of the most corrupt and poor countries in the world.

Again the political environment had a lot of role to play in voters' apathy. Unfortunately the political parties of the present dispensations were quite different from the old order political parties. The majority of the respondents believed that this had tremendously impacted negatively on voting. Our findings gained wide acceptance when Iwu (2008) posited that our society was presently being sucked into a maelstrom of social and political disorientation and worse still, there did not seem to be any appropriate concern or response for stemming the grave tide. He opined that the old political parties developed their rules and a guideline based on their philosophies and no member of any of the parties was above the law or beyond reproach within his/her group. Not any more Iwu (2008). Respondents overwhelmingly asserted that one of the most features of the contemporary politics and the conduct of politicians in the Nigerian environment had been the absence of order within the political parties.

Furthermore, most FGD participants opined that voters were forced to stay away from polls because parties in Nigeria imposed candidates on them to contest in the election, Unfortunately, in more than eighteen states in the country, it had been the tradition for one to run two terms in office and then ascend to the next position irrespective of the person's capability or performance in the previous regime. The selection of acceptable candidates through primary elections had failed in Nigeria hence selection was based on patronage and followership as regards the party. This had led to imposition of unqualified candidates who had consistently failed to deliver. This phenomenon is certainly not restricted to Nigeria. In Malawi, Chinisinga noted that this practice was quite pronounced in the May 2004 general elections. A wide

body of literature Kadzamarina (,2000),, Magolowonado,(2003),and (Dulani) ,2005) observed that primary elections had failed to produce acceptable results in many cases because they were often marred by a lot of irregularities.

However, we tried to find out from the respondents on what could be done to ameliorate the problems of low voters' turnout.

An analysis of variance was performed to find out if there was any difference among the ages, occupation, and gender in reviving genuine political participation.. The result of the ANOVA revealed that age, gender and occupation had a lot to do with voters' apathy. The F calculated value for the differences among the different ages are shown below.

ANOVA. Grand mean

What is your age	Mean	N	Std dev.
18 – 30 years	1.6746	288	.40981
31-50 years	1.8980	257	.34916
51 years and above	1.7728	255	.48445
Total	1.7777	800	.42718

ANOVA

Grand Mean			Mean	F sig
	Sum of squares	df	square	19.000
Between groups	6.786	2	3.393	453
Within Groups	139.019	797	.174	
Total	145,805	799		

The F calculated value was 19.453 which is significant at .000. This value is also significant $0.05 < .000 < P < 0.05$. An inspection of the mean difference indicated that the mean between 31 years was the highest (1.8980) and this was the highest among the multiple comparisons of ages indicating that those within this age group had lost interest in voting and political parties while those in the ages between 18 -30 and 51 years and above were the least (1.6746, 1.7428) $P < 0.05$ (.22340, .9823) = .000. The mean difference was significant at 0.05 level. It did appear that the other age comparisons were significant but the differential effects of voters' apathy on the ages were in favor of 31-50 years. It did appear from the analysis that the revival of genuine political participation may have a better effect on those between the ages of 31-50 years. This, therefore, suggested that the youngsters seemed to have lost interest in politics depending on what was happening. This findings gained wide acceptance when in a question posted by ACE through the "ask a question" function in electoral advice, Dalton(2007) clearly indicated that there is declining voter participation among the youths. Donald Stokes and Mark Franklin supported this view by suggesting that most people establish their pattern of electoral participation (or not) by roughly the third election after they reach voting age. According to them, once each successive generation of people who join the electorate reach the age of about 30-35, their inclination to participate or not to participate will be set until they leave the electorate through death.

An ANOVA was also performed to know the differential effect on gender and occupation. The F calculated value for the differences among the different gender and occupations were (-4.358, - 4.419) = .000 $P < .05$ (-26429 - 22054) = .000 $P < .05$ (-26429, -48482) = .000 $P < .05$ (.22054, -48482) = .000 respectively. The mean difference was significant at 0.05 levels. We could not run the multiple comparison tests for the gender but we ran a t test because it was only two items. T. test Group statistics

What is your gender	N	Mean	Std dev	Std Error
Male	433	24.05	6.349	.305
Female	367	25.88	6.356	.280

There is significant difference among the three groups.

1.3 Independent Sample Test

T- Test for Equality of means

	t.	Df	Sig. (t tailed)	Mean difference	Std Error
Grand mean	Equal variances assured .4358	798	.000	=1.829	.02997
	Equal variances assured .4419	797.983	.000	-1.829	.02956

They were all significant at .000 indicating that gender influences voters' apathy and revival of genuine political participation. On gender, females were the most favorable taking an acceptable means of 25.88 and they were the parties that did not usually cast their votes. This finding is not strange because in the recent past, women were regarded as second class citizens. The place of the women was in the kitchen and elections were exclusive preserve of the male folk. In the northern part of the country, the pudah system inhibits the women in taking active part in the society. We ran a multiple comparison test (Scheff) for occupation.

1.4 Variable voters

ANOVA

Voters	sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	Sig
Between groups	5310.900	2	2655.450	90.961	.000
Within	23266.975	797			
Total	28577.875	799	29.193		

Post Hoc Tests

What is your occupation	What is your occupations	Mean Diff (1 – j)	Std error	Sig.
Politicians	Civil servants	3.700+	.427	.000
	Undergraduate/grad	-3.087+	.523	.000
Civil servants	Politician	-3.700+	.427	.000
	Undergraduate/grad	-6.787+	.523	.000
Undergraduates	Politicians	3.087	.523	.000
	Graduates	6.787	.523	.00

F calculated value is = 90.961 which is significant at 0.000, sig at 0.05 (0.05 < P < 0.000) indicating that there was a significant difference among the three groups on voters' apathy and revival of genuine political participation. The Post hoc test revealed that the difference lies between politicians and civil servants, politicians and undergraduates and civil servants and undergraduates. It does appear from the analysis that revival of genuine political participation may have a better effect on the three groups in the society. In addition, it revealed that local governments in the western zone do not participate actively in elections and also do not adhere religiously to the rules of voting for genuine political participation. They already had a different mindset about elections, voters and voting in general.

The majority of the respondents believed that some sections in the constitution had actually led to voters' apathy since these sections bestowed on the president the power to control INEC. For instance section 158 (1) of the 1999 constitution provisionally guaranteed that INEC and other federal executive bodies should not be subjected to the direction or the control of any other authority or person.

The same constitution section 156 (1) (a) provided that those to be appointed as electoral commissioners must be qualified to be members of the House of Representatives, implying that the persons must be members of political parties. Such a provision does not in anyway insulate INEC from being an institution that is autonomous in its dealings which had also serious implications on its functions as an independent and impartial umpire. (Adejumobi, 2007).

Section 14 (2) a in the 3rd schedule part one relating to the federal executive bodies empowers the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to appoint Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) for all the 36 states of the federation and the federal capital territory Abuja, without recourse to the National Assembly for approval. This provision would make it visible for the president in power to appoint members of his party as RECS across the country. However, former president, Obasanjo actually did this during the 2007 run up elections. The chairman of INEC and 37 RECs were not only

appointed by Obasanjo but they also reported to him on how the commission was managed. Furthermore, the financial fate of the commission also lay at the federal minister of finance who is the appointee of the president. The executive does not only determine the level of funding and disbursement to the commission, they also determine when and how the allocations to INEC were to be released. With these structural and institutional challenges, INEC was susceptible to manipulation and control. These and many more influence the decisions of voters in the Nigerian society.

A survey of election mindset of three groups by Iyayi; 2006 showed that voters were displeased with the political environment and this had disenfranchised and disenchanted voters from the poll.

According to the people, elections do not act as an agent of change as the majority of the respondents believed that INEC functions within a highly policed milieu, which continues to threaten its independence, accountability, transparency, legitimacy and by implication, the consideration of electoral democracy in Nigeria. INEC, an Assumed Independent Commission receives funds from the president and reports to the president. Some of the sections in the constitution as reported by many led to this great vice –voters' apathy. This has practical implication. It suggests that if Nigeria continues this way, it may jeopardize the processes of democratization and democracy altogether would be threatened. These fears are further reinforced by recent observation in 2007 election and Iyayi(2006), pointed out that each set of elections in Nigeria seemed to deepen the cultures of violence, barbarism, authoritarianism abuse of human rights, corruption and class materialism among the political elites and these have consistently disenfranchised and disenchanted voters turnout. The declining quality of electoral administration therefore, presents a big challenge to democratic institution, alienation, and consideration in the country. Chinisingha (2004) also opined that Malawi suffered from such problems.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this article was to empirically find out the factors behind voters' apathy and the measures for the revival of genuine political participation. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Nigerians should change some of the sections in the constitution for the independence and development of INEC officials. The commitment to this initiative should be clearly articulated and should form a key plan for the executive game plan. Given the violence state of the politicians, Nigerians should rewrite the constitutions to take care of this violence that characterizes the environment of the present day politics. The empirical evidence reflects the degree of violence, threats, abuse of human rights which threaten, to a large extent, credible, free, and fair election and disenfranchises voters from poll on voting days. There is evidence to suggest that countries where order prevails were more committed to encouraging voters. The adherence to rules and law of the game seem to enjoy strong support. Conversely, there appears to be a lack of cohesion demonstrated by the absence of order, transparency and accountability.

Arising from the foregoing, the following recommendations have been proffered.

There is need to restructure and revitalize the Independent National Electoral Commission: The role of INEC in election management should be positively reformed. Urgent need for honest, qualified and sincere personnel to handle the affairs of INEC is imperative. Voters' registration, electoral complaints, and disputes should be urgently addressed.

Clauses which compromised INEC's independence in the constitution must be removed.. INEC is meant to be an independent, autonomous, transparent, and accountable organization not answerable to no-one but to the general public. For the president to elect the 37 recs and for INEC to report to him is not tidy. We therefore suggest the removal of the clauses in the constitution..

Political party reform is an indispensable tool in dealing with voters' apathy. Political parties should develop policies that address the needs of the people Political parties should also explore the intra and inter party strategies that could contribute in curbing electoral violence. The magnitude of electoral violence that characterized the 2004/2007 general elections was unprecedented and needs to be checked to avoid its repetition.

Nature of Representation: The fieldwork revealed that voters stay away from poll because of the imposition of candidates that may not deliver. We therefore suggest that the primary elections should be carried out in line with the rules and regulations to enable parties elect capable candidates that can deliver.

Compulsory voting: This we believed could help to tackle the low turnout in election. Franklien, 1999 pointed out those countries where this was applied, the average turnout was 89%(Franklin, 1999).He argued that such a change would surely increase turnout.. During the FGD discussion, many said that they had consistently registered without voting, this was done in-case government rise tomorrow to demand for voter's registration cards. They wouldn't want to lose their jobs. Law could be introduced in the system thereby prioritizing voting. In the findings, we discovered that the

youngsters had lost interest in voting. Compulsory voting could arouse their interest. Women should also be made to participate actively in election. The introduction of 35% representation is quite commendable.

Introduction of civic and voter education: This should be carried to the rural areas not only in television and radio sets because many don't listen to televisions and radios.

Poverty and unemployment should be urgently addressed: Policy makers should take up these challenges to address this twin malaise in the country. Nigeria is a country of paradox in the sense that in the midst of plenty, Nigerians lack so much. Those in authority should think of establishing industries and establishing effective measures to handle this grave monster called poverty.

We also suggest a free, credible and fair election to enable voters build confidence in the electorate and to see election as an agent of change. This will go a long way in increasing voters' turnout.

Government should also devise suitable measures on how to permanently bring an end to this issue of ethnic conflict which is seemingly becoming a permanent feature in Nigeria and the culprits go scot free all the time. Also, concerted efforts should be made from all relevant stakeholders to correct this problem.

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