



## **The Impact of Electoral Malpractice on Democratic Process in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

By its very nature, electoral malpractice is a subversion of the constitution and the democratic form of government instituted by the Constitution of any given country. Election is one of the most important pillars of democracy. Indeed, it is a necessary condition for democracy

because it provides the medium for the expression of the core principles and purposes of democracy such as the sovereignty of the citizens; freedom, choice and accountability of political leaders. In order to serve these purposes of democracy, elections must be free, fair and devoid of manipulation, violence and fraud as well as a guaranteed impartiality of the election management authority with an effective participation by the electorates at all stages of the electoral process. This paper attempts an analysis of the impact of electoral malpractice on the democratic process in Nigeria with specific focus on the 2003, 2007 and the 2011 elections in the country. It adopts a quantitative research method with a questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The study discovered that the one of the major challenges of the democratic process in the country is electoral malpractice usually committed by politicians in league with party officials, electoral officers and security agencies. It recommends the need to strengthen the internal democracy in political parties and the combat of the syndrome of godfatherism and impunity from incumbent office holders and concludes that a committed implementation of these recommendations will stem the tide of electoral malpractice in the Nigeria's democratic process.

**Key Words:** Electoral malpractice, Impact, Democratic process, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

The major challenge of Nigeria's democratic process is electoral malpractice. Electoral malpractices are usually committed by the politicians with the connivance of political parties, electoral management body and even security agencies. This collaboration often supports manipulation of electoral results for selfish interest. Electoral process in many respects can be seen as the lynchpin of democracy as it plays a key role in safeguarding the quality of elections in a democratic state. Democracy involves far more than holding of free and fair elections, yet if credible elections are not a sufficient condition for democracy, they nevertheless remain a condition for any country to be considered democratic.

The Nigerian state is a victim of high level corruption, bad governance, political instability and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. National economic growth is retarded and the political environment is uncertain. The country's authoritarian leadership faces a legitimacy crisis and political intrigues in an ethnically differentiated polity where ethnic competition for resources drive much of the pervasive corruption and oligarchy thereby creating room for political gladiators to constantly manipulate the people and political process to advance their own selfish agenda while the country remains pauperized and its people wallow in abject poverty thus, obstructing political and economic stability and growth, a development which leads to weak legitimacy as the citizens lack faith in their political leaders and as well as the political system.

Political culture was and is still low since the people perceived it as irrelevant to their lives and in the absence of support from the civil society, the effective power of government was eroded and the patron client relationship became the order of the day playing a prime role over the formal aspect of politics such as the rule of law, well-functioning political party system and credible electoral contestations. All these needs to be reversed in order to break this and engender good governance, accountability and transparency alongside political and economic growth of Nigeria. Claud Ake (1995) locates the genre of these problems in the incumbents' political and social conditions in developing countries which manifests in poor planning and implementation, lack of entrepreneurial abilities, the stiffening of market forces, falling of commodity price and unfavorable terms of trade, poverty of ideas, the dependency syndrome, corruption and indiscipline. The lack of participation and consensus building

which Mayer et al (1996) called lack of a sense of national community is a factor which hinders national political and economic growth. Meaningful development and political stability require the collective identity of citizenry and where this is lacking, development programs are regarded with suspicion indifference or even hostility and at best a resultant exploitation which becomes something to be taken advantage of rather than something to be committed to.

Lack of accountability and transparency becomes the order of the day as corruption as an efficiency are concealed as observed with the spate of abandoned projects. The African state which we know that Nigeria is not an exception in the words of Ayittey (2006) has evolved into a predatory monster or a gangster state that uses a corrupt system of regulation and control to pillage and rob the productive class (the peasantry). It is common knowledge that heads of States, ministers and highly placed African government officials, loot the treasury and misuse their positions in government through inflated contracts, commissions on foreign loan, and award of contracts to cronies at inflated cost for kickbacks. These are the very people who are supposed to protect the peasants; but are instead engaged in institutionalized looting, money laundering abroad of sums of money they and their unborn generation cannot expend through their lifetime. It is against this backdrop that this study elects to examine the impact of electoral malpractice on the democratic process in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The major challenge of Nigeria's democratic process is electoral malpractice. Electoral malpractices are usually committed by the politicians with the connivance of political parties, national electoral body, security agencies etc. This collaboration often supports manipulation of electoral results for selfish interest. Electoral process in many respects can be seen as the lynchpin of democracy as it plays a key role in safeguarding the quality of elections in a democratic state. Democracy involves far more than holding of free and fair elections, yet if credible elections are not a sufficient condition for democracy, they nevertheless remain a condition for any country to be considered democratic. The Nigerian state is a victim of high level corruption, bad governance, political instability and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. National economic growth is retarded and the political environment is uncertain. Electoral rigging and other fraudulent electoral practices frustrate the democratic aspirations of Nigerians whose votes have never counted in elections as genuine winners are often substituted for losers. The inability to conduct "free, fair and credible" election has made the country the butt of bad jokes in the international community. These developments in the political scene are clear indications that there is no end in sight to the crisis and instability that characterized Nigeria's nascent democracy. Why it that no improvement has been made in the way elections is conducted in the country? The principal forms of rigging and fraud were perfected in the elections of 1964, 1965, 1979, 1983, 1999, 2003 and 2007 and even 2011. The elections so far conducted by the various federal electoral bodies since independence, namely, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) have been marred by serious allegations of fraud and violence. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo famously declared the election of 2007 as a "do or die affair,". This declaration became quite disturbing as politicians have made this a reality and will do anything to win elections.

The history of Nigeria is replete with the absence of moral and ethnic values in the conduct of ruling elites that has adversely affected the political and economic growth because it gives the people the feeling of less security and bias judgement over the social structure or system. As corruption 'impacts negatively on economic growth, it is also politically destabilizing,

corruption and abuse of power have long been features of Nigeria's economic and political landscape. The National Planning Commission has identified systematic corruption which engenders low level of transparency and accountability as the major source of failure. Scholars have described Nigeria as an unfinished state (Joseph et al 1996) and as truculent African in the midst of abundant human and material resources which are propelled in virtuous cycle of poverty and autocracy. With enormous wealth, from oil resources and enormous economic, political and social strength, Nigeria was qualified to be called Giant of Africa but has been brought to its knees by several years of corrupt military leadership, which left a legacy of executive dominance and political corruption in the hands of the so called god fathers and thus governance is viewed as an instrument of their self-enrichment.

Convincingly, electoral malpractices originated from social deprivation with violence as the only way to dominate power. The ruling class with little or no knowledge of politics and economy seized power via electoral malpractices without the vote of the masses, a development which makes office holders to feel accountable to nobody but to themselves, they appoint ministers, commissioners and heads of government parastatals who are either their brother or someone they can manipulate; since most times in the history of Nigeria such heads of government parastatals have no idea of what they have been appointed to do. All these in turn hampers the economic and political growth of the country since people see government as means of self-enrichment other than service for the people. These forms the teething problem of this study and energize us to examine the impact of electoral malpractice on the democratic process in Nigeria with a focus on the three electoral contests Kesselman et al (199of 2003, 2007 and 2011 respectively).

### **Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to analyse the impact of electoral malpractice on the democratic process in Nigeria. Based on the general objectives, the study will accomplish the following specific objective:

- i. To identify problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process
- ii. To investigate how electoral malpractice hamper democratic process in Nigeria.
- iii. To determine the role of the government and relevant stakeholders in curbing electoral malpractice in Nigeria.

### **Research Hypotheses**

For the successful completion of the study, the following research hypotheses were formulated by the researchers;

**H<sub>0</sub>**: there are no problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process

**H<sub>1</sub>**: there are problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process

**H<sub>02</sub>**: there is no role of the government and relevant stakeholders in curbing electoral malpractice in Nigeria

**H<sub>2</sub>**: there is role of the government and relevant stakeholders in curbing electoral malpractice in Nigeria

### **Definition of Terms**

The under listed terms as used in this study were operationalized.

**Democracy:** For the purpose of this research, the definition of Obiyan and Yamah (2005) will suffice. They defined democracy as a “representative government with a competitive electoral system”. Central to the idea of democracy is the idea of mass participation in governance, checks and balances, rule of law, and people oriented government that makes the welfare of the people the ultimate essence of the state. Thus, in the democratic setting, access to power depends on how much the electorates (the people) believe a particular person or group could advance their welfare. This confidence in a person’s ability to advance their welfare is expressed at regular intervals through elections.

**Elections:** Simply in this research, elections can be seen as democratic avenue through which the people or groups express their preference for a particular person or group whom they feel can best protect their welfare. It can thus be seen, that the election is the very soul of democracy. This is because it is the major avenue through which the people exercise their sovereign right to govern themselves by deciding who they want to govern them for a pre-determined period.

**Electoral Malpractices:** For the purpose of this research, electoral malpractice simply refers to the manipulation of electoral processes and outcomes so as to substitute personal or partisan benefit for the public interest. These include any unapproved and unethical, actions, attitudes, behaviour that violate laid down electoral rules and regulations (i.e. violate Electoral act) which usually manifest during elections.

**Electoral Process:** Often confused with election, the electoral process refers to all the activities and procedures involved in the election of representatives by the electorates (Akamere, 2001). Electoral process refers to all the pre and post election activities without which an election is either impossible or meaningless. These include the registration of political parties, review of voters’ register, delineation of constituencies, resolution of electoral disputes, return of elected representatives, swearing-in of elected representatives, etc. In addition to these, the term also refers to the rules that guide electoral conducts. Needless to say that election is merely one, albeit the most important, of the activities that make up an electoral process.

**Free and Fair Election:** The notion of free and fair election in this research expresses several conditions, including absence of manipulations, irregularities, violence and fraud as well as impartiality of election management authority and effective participation by the electorate at all stages of the electoral process

## **Conceptual Review of Related Literature**

### **The Concept of Democracy**

The general consensus among scholars in the recent time appears to support the view that the concept of "democracy" has attracted an overwhelming influx of interpretative connotations and that there are now almost as many definitions of democracy as there are writers on the subject. This development no doubt makes precise definition of democracy a herculean or highly elusive task. The lack of precision and accuracy in the definition of democracy may have prompted Cnudde (cited in Obah-Akpowoghaha 2013), to assert that "the language of democracy is particularly clustered". Therefore, democracy in its clusteredness has produced diversity and variation both in conceptualization and practice throughout ages. For instances,

and as rightly observed by (Obah-Akpowoghaha 2013), “the Athenian democracy was substantially different from nineteenth century English democracy which in turn, is different from democracy in the United States in the 1960's”. In similar fashion and stemming from the general distortion over the concept of democracy, democratic practice has equally assumed various forms as it is clothed in many names direct and indirect democracy, people or popular, authoritarian, consociational, grassroots and guided democracies, that the concept of democracy has become somewhat confusing, if not misleading. Perhaps, it is in recognition of the general confusion and distortion over the concept of democracy that Cnudde (cited in Awuudu 2012) made the following observation: ‘Democracy is an inherently difficult concept. It means many things to many people. As a general summary concept, it holds numerous implications and connotations which are frequently complex and often contradictory’. To this, the conceptualization and definition of democracy held by individual scholar over the world have been greatly influenced by their local environment as dictated by prevailing political circumstances. Sadaro (cited in Ojie 2006) in an opinion survey, based on repeated empirical data have buttressed the fact of environmental circumstances of individual conceptualization of democracy when he observes in the following words, that: “People around the world have different conception of what democracy means: when asked to define the term, a typical American may conjure up images of election campaigns and voting booths, but a typical Russian may define democracy mainly in terms of prosperity and relative economic equality.

For a Chinese student, democracy may above all mean freedom of speech or safeguards against arbitrary arrest, for Japanese, it may mean more power for elected officials and less for the unelected bureaucracy. For a black South African, democracy may mean the absence of white domination, for an Italian, it may mean a system of government that is free of political corruption. To be sure, people in all countries may agree that democracy entails a combination of such things as voting, rights, economic opportunity, free speech, parliamentary lawmaking, etc. Even so, people will often differ about what democracy primarily mean to them, depending on the political circumstances under which they live” In the liberal perspective of democracy, Ojie (2006) describes democracy in the following words: “The essential idea of democracy is that the people have the right to determine who governs them. In most cases they elect principle governing officials and hold them accountable for their action. Democracy also impose legal limit on the government's authority by guaranteeing certain rights and freedom to their citizens”.

This conceptualization of democracy no doubt captures several of the core notions most often associated with democracy: legitimacy based on popular free and fair determination of periodically elected government; accountability of those in political office, limited government and guaranteed civil right and freedoms, majority rule as well as minority protection, judiciary independence and economic development. Thus, literally, democracy signifies “the rule of the people”. Abraham Lincoln’s definition of Democracy is very close to its literal meaning. It reads: “Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. To him, Democracy as a form of government implies that the ultimate authority of government is vested in the common people so that public policy is made to conform to the will and serve the interests of the people. Democracy is government by consent of the people. Rational consent can be obtained by persuasion for which an atmosphere of free discussion is essential. Any regime where the consent of people is sought to be obtained without freedom of expression of divergent opinions, does not qualify for being called democracy even if it maintains certain democratic institution

## **Democratic Consolidation and Electoral Malpractices in Nigeria**

The concept of democratic consolidation applies differently to different societies at various stages of democratic development. Democratic consolidation may be defined as a status of democratic maturity such that it can no longer be threatened or truncated by reactionary forces whether internal or external. But, the nice thing with the term “democratic consolidation” according to Schedler (cited in Inokoba & Kumokor 2011) is its seemingly infinite patience and malleability. It is a term that contains few semantic constraints, and talk about democratic consolidation pre supposes that a democratic regime exist from the beginning to the end of the process. Democracy is at the same time the indispensable starting point of democratic consolidation (inform of a “consolidating democracy”) and its hopeful outcome (inform of a “consolidated democracy”). Then, “consolidation is the term that denotes both movement and arrival, both progress and achievement, and that accounts for the teleological nature of democratic consolidation”. It express goal is soliditing i.e. firmness, robustness, stability, qualitative, more qualitative and valuable. In the view of Schedler (cited in ObahAkpowoghaha 2013), democratic consolidation is the process by which a new democracy matures, such that it is unlikely to revert to authoritarianism.

It also assumes two things, the first being that there is already in existence a state of democracy characterized by all democratic features via periodic election, security of life and property, fundamental human rights and freedom, constitutional stability as a fulcrum of society and governmental stability and also opportunities for equality, justice and fair play. On the other hand, it assumes that there is a need to consolidate the base of the existing democracy. This implies making firmer, more solid and more resilient the base of the existing democracy. Diamond (1999) sees democratic consolidation as the process of achieving broad and deep legitimation such that all significant political actors believe that popular rule is better for their society than any other realistic alternative they can imagine. For him, it also connects the act of reducing the probability of the system to the point where democracy can be said that it will persist. Democratic consolidation was meant to describe the challenge of making new democracy secure, of extending their life expectancy beyond the short term, of making them immune against the treat of authoritarian regression, or building dams against eventual “reverse waves”. While, electoral malpractice is a process by which the rule and regulations that govern the conduct of election are manipulated to favour specific interests. This can also assume several methods and strategies including outright rigging and falsification of electoral result. However, electoral malpractice can take place before, after and during election. In the same vein, Bamisaye & Awofeso (2011) defines electoral malpractices as the reflect determination of politicians, political actors and political parties to capture power by all means and at all cost. For him, politicians involve all sorts of electoral malpractices such as rigging of elections and the intimidation of voters in order to subvert the electoral process.

Certainly, governance implies the exercise of power by a person or group of persons for the benefit of the populace. The government in power dictates the form of relationship it established between it and the people as well as the goals of the state in economic, political and social terms. In theory, power resides with the people; and in a normal democratic situation, it is transferred to the leaders by a process of election which in theory also means that leader should exercise the power in the interest of the states. However in some cases, government becomes tyrannical and does not fulfill its own side of the bargain. In this situation, the burden of correcting this responsibility rests with the people Dauda & Avidime

(2007). This brings in the issue of electoral process and the soul of which is the ballot system. The people are aware that each ballot paper represents an individual sovereignty. In an ideal situation, the totality of the vote signifies that popular sovereignty can vote an unpopular government out of office. Therefore, the responsibility of directing the future of the state lies with the people. This ideal situation hardly operates in Nigeria because of the intervention of many factors among which is the ignorance of the people of their right and responsibility under a democratic system. Consequently, the politicians being conscious of the spoils of offices, adopt various means to ensure that they capture power by influencing electoral officials, buying votes, rig election and commit other electoral malpractices designed to subvert the people's will to choose leaders capable of leading the state towards growth and development.

### **Obstacles to Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria**

Electoral frauds have been one of the major challenges to the growth and development of the country and these has grown steadily worse and more daring. The 2003/2007 general elections have been described by both the local and international observers as the worst ever election conducted in the history of the country and these have made it difficult in consolidating the nature and significance of democracy (Ebirim 2013). However, some of the challenging issues of democratic consolidation in relation to electoral malpractices will be discussed as follows. Corruption as one of the major obstacle to democratic consolidation in Nigeria is defined as the exploitation of public position, resources and power for selfish gain. Similarly, Obayelu (2007) views corruption as “an effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense, or a misuse of public power for private benefits”. Apparently, corruption may be classified into three broad categories, namely; bureaucratic, economic and political corruption, but this analyze will discuss more on political corruption. Gyekye (1997) defines political corruption as the “illegal, unethical and unauthorized exploitation of one's political or official position for personal gain or advantage”.

Thus, this means that the most prominent victims of political corruption include the citizens of a political community and public interests in general. Drawing from the above explanations, it will be appropriate to state that political corruption includes electoral fraud, favouritism, nepotism and even illegal seizure of political power. Consequently, consolidating democracy remains grossly unstable and the future seems to be very bleak due to the rampant bureaucratic and political corruption in the country. This is because corruption in Nigeria has reached a high crescendo. An average Nigerian associates corruption to democracy in the name of “sharing of national cake”. An example of such was witnessed during the 2011 voters' registration and the conduct of general elections in the country (Ebirim 2013). Poverty is also seen as an impediment to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. This is because the high rate of corruption in the country has put a good number of the citizens in an abject poverty and this has also increased the rate of electoral frauds during the conduct of elections. Poverty according to the United Nations statement says “it is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. This is why Ake (cited in Kwasau 2013) states that “a society of beggars' parasites and bandits cannot develop. He further said that such society cannot know peace or stability and cannot be democratic. This shows that an individual deprived of the basic wherewithal cannot participate effectively in a democratic system. Lack of internal democracy and party defection has negative impact in the process of democratic consolidation in Nigeria.



The guiding principle of political party organizational structure, democratic system and internal party democracy signifies the active participation of all party members to contest any position both within the party and for public office. Since the transition of democracy in 1999, political parties have faced the problem of nondemocratic practices. The expectation generally is that political parties must be democratic not only externally in their goals but also democratic internally in their organizational practice and behaviour. However, the absence of internal democracy in Nigerian political parties has become a persistent threat to the country's nascent democracy. This is because various political parties have failed to adopt the provisions of the party's constitutions to all party members who are eligible and want to run for office in their party primaries. Also, the unwarranted situations of plethora of defections among legislators, governors, deputy governors, and other party member has make caricature of democracy and belittles the spirit of democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Mbah 2011). Recently, most chieftains and big wigs of people's Democratic parties (PDP) have decamped to All Progressive Congree (APC) due to crackers going on in the party. Also the defection of Imo state governor Rochas Okorocha to APC from All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) has made him to sack some of his commissioner who refused to join him in APC. Thus, this attitude of our politicians will not only belittle our democratic consolidation but will not move it forward.

Finally, absence of free and fair election is also one of the major challenges to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. This has discouraged a large number of qualified citizens in participating in any election. This is because participation is meaningful when the votes of the participants count but not when their votes are subverted for the interest of the few (Osinakachukwu 2011). In Nigeria, leaders that emerged victorious in her elections rigged themselves into the corridors of power and this restricted the chances of true candidates from winning the election even though they are people's choice. In a society where candidate(s) is imposed against the will and choice of the people, democracy cannot be consolidated there. Also, election riggings over the years in Nigeria have aided to the violation of the principle of fundamental human rights which A.V Dicey advocates as the right to life for every citizen born in a country.

### **Research Methodology**

The researcher used descriptive research survey design in building up this project work the choice of this research design was considered appropriate because of its advantages of identifying attributes of a large population from a group of individuals. The design was suitable for the study as the study sought the impact of electoral malpractice in democratic process in Nigeria. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources was made up of materials of statistical investigation with the use of questionnaire while the secondary sources were obtained from textbooks, journals, newspapers and magazines as well as internet sources among others. handset etc. they arise as byproducts of the same other purposes. Example administration, various other unpublished works and write ups were also used. The population of the study was taken from 200 staff of INEC office in Anambra state selected randomly by the researcher.

### **Sample and sampling procedure**

Sample is the set people or items which constitute part of a given population sampling. Due to large size of the target population, the researcher used the Taro Yamani formula to arrive at the sample population of the study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{200}{1 + 200(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{200}{1 + 200(0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{200}{1 + 0.5} = \frac{200}{1.5} = 133.$$

### Method of data Analysis

The data collected was not an end in itself but it served as a means to an end. The end being the use of the required data to understand the various situations it is with a view to making valuable recommendations and contributions. To this end, the data collected has to be analysis for any meaningful interpretation to come out with some results. It is for this reason that the following methods were adopted in the research project for the analysis of the data collected. For a comprehensive analysis of data collected, emphasis was laid on the use of absolute numbers frequencies of responses and percentages. Answers to the research questions were provided through the comparison of the percentage of workers' response to each statement in the questionnaire related to any specified question being considered. Frequency in this study refers to the arrangement of responses in order of magnitude or occurrence while percentage refers to the arrangements of the responses in order of their proportion. The simple percentage method is believed to be straight forward easy to interpret and understand method.

The researcher therefore choosed the simple percentage as the method to use.

The formula for percentage is shown as.

$$\% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100/1$$

Where f = frequency of respondents' response

N = Total Number of response of the sample

100 = Consistency in the percentage of respondents for each item

Contained in questions.

## Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

### Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with simple percentage for easy understanding.

A total of 133(one hundred and thirty-three) questionnaires were distributed and 133 questionnaires were returned.

#### Question 1

Gender distribution of the respondents.

TABLE I

**Gender distribution of the respondents**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	77	57.9	57.9	57.9
Valid Female	56	42.1	42.1	100.0
Total	133	100.0	100.0	

From the above table it shows that 57.9% of the respondents were male while 42.1% of the respondents were female.

#### Question 2

The positions held by respondents

TABLE II

**The positions held by respondents**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Presiding officers	37	27.8	27.8	27.8
Returning officers	50	37.6	37.6	65.4
Valid Observers	23	17.3	17.3	82.7
Junior staff	23	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total	133	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that 37 respondents which represents 27.8% of the respondents are presiding officers 50 respondents which represents 37.6 % are returning officers, 23

respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents are observers, while 23 respondents which represent 17.3% of the respondents are junior staff.

### Test of Hypotheses

There are no problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process

**Table III**

**there are no problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process.**

Response	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agreed	40	33.3	6.8
strongly agreed	50	33.3	16.8
Disagreed	26	33.3	-7.3
strongly disagreed	17	33.3	-16.3
Total	133		

### Test Statistics

	there are no problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process .
Chi-Square	19.331 <sup>a</sup>
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 33.3.

Decision rule:

There researcher therefore reject the null hypothesis there are no problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process as the calculated value of 19.331 is greater than the critical value of 7.82

Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted that there are problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process

### Test of Hypothesis Two

There is no role of the government and relevant stakeholders in curbing electoral malpractice in Nigeria

Table V

**there is no role of the government and relevant stakeholders in curbing electoral malpractice in Nigeria**

Response	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Yes	73	44.3	28.7
No	33	44.3	-11.3
Undecided	27	44.3	-17.3
Total	133		

### Test Statistics

	<b>there is no role of the government and relevant stakeholders in curbing electoral malpractice in Nigeria</b>
Chi-Square	28.211 <sup>a</sup>
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 44.3.

Decision rule:

There researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis there is no role of the government and relevant stakeholders in curbing electoral malpractice in Nigeria as the calculated value of 28.211 is greater than the critical value of 5.99. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is

accepted that state there is role of the government and relevant stakeholders in curbing electoral malpractice in Nigeria.

### **Curbing the Menace of Electoral Malpractice in Nigeria: The Way Forward**

Indeed, it is certain that Nigerians desire democracy above any form of authoritarianism, but their perception of democracy and even the sure in which it operates are distorted by numerous socio-political factors. Hence, solutions to the problem of democratic consolidation in Nigeria must be sought for at the level of political institutions, and the level of individual citizens. At the individual level, political office holders should be made accountable to the people they represent. This should be one of the functions of the political party; whereby regular forum of interactions should be organized between the people and their representatives at the various levels. While at the masses level, more political awareness and education is needed to transform the people into democratic citizens, whereby they can stand up for their rights against the government, including the capacity to demand for accountability. Another way forward out of electoral malpractices towards consolidating democracy in Nigeria is to embrace political unity and encourage political participation by avoiding all forms of electoral malpractices. Accordingly, democracy can be conceived in theory or created in practice without the creation, recognition, encouragement and expansion of the opportunities for participation. For instance, in Nigeria the type of political culture that was exhibited during the 2003 general election may cause the emergence of largely non participatory attitude or political apathy in the country. The outcome of elections conducted in 1983, 1999, 2003 and 2007 has been fiercely contested that the survival of the democratic order has been compromised in many ways. These results have therefore been sub- version of the democratic process rather than its consolidation.

Additionally, there is need to combat godfatherism and incumbency, violence, corruption and impunity so as to enhance the electoral process. Thus, unless the political leaders strictly adhered to the application of rule of law, constitutionalism and democratic values, the legitimacy of government and consolidation of democracy may not be sustained. It is suggested that further studies be carried out to focus on corruption as it also challenges democratic consolidation in Nigeria's fourth republic.

### **Conclusion**

The progress of democratic consolidation in Nigeria is circuitous and dilatory with an indeterminate pattern, tainted with excessive personalism. This is because the rule of law is not institutionalized; human rights are sometimes brazenly, and sometimes subtly abused; even elections are not only violent, but are administered unfairly to the benefit of the party in power. It is however believed that Nigerians desire a true democracy and the best way to restore the people's confidence in the electoral system and democracy is by creating an enabling environment for free and fair elections. To this, various stakeholders such as the independent national electoral commission (INEC), the judiciary and the politicians should rise to the challenges preventing democratic consolidation in the Nigeria. Also, the political leaders and the elite should respect the constitution of the country

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

### INSTRUCTION

Please tick or fill in where necessary as the case may be.

#### Section A

(1) Gender of respondent

A male { }

B female { }

(2) Age distribution of respondents

a) 15-20 { }

b) 21-30 { }

c) 31-40 { }

d) 41-50 { }

e) 51 and above { }

(3) Marital status of respondents?

(a) married [ ]

(b) single [ ]

(c)divorce [ ]

(4) Educational qualification off respondents

(a) SSCE/OND { }

(b) HND/BSC { }

(c) PGD/MSC { }

(d) PHD { }

Others.....

(5) How long have you been in INEC?

(a) 0-2 years { }

(b) 3-5 years { }

(c) 6-11 years { }

(d) 11 years and above.....

(6) Position held by the respondent in INEC

(a) Presiding officer { }

(b) Returning officer { }

(c) Observer { }

(d) Junior staff { }

(7) How long have you been working in INEC

(a) 0-2 years { }

(b) 3-5 years { }

(c) 6-11 years { }

(d) 11 years and above.....

## SECTION B

(8) There is no democracy in Nigeria?

(a) Agrees { }

- (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }
- (9) Always electoral malpractice in Nigeria?
- (a) Agrees { }
  - (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }
- (10) Always election violence in plateau state?
- (a) Agreed { }
  - (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }
- (11) There is problems associated with Nigeria's electoral process
- (a) Agreed { }
  - (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }
- (12) electoral malpractice hamper democratic process in Nigeria.?
- (a) Agreed { }
  - (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }
- (13) Godfatherism is the cause of malpractice
- (a) Agreed { }
  - (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }

- (14) There are no rules in INEC
- (a) Agreed { }
  - (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }
- (15) Electoral malpractice affect democracy
- (a) Agreed { }
  - (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }
- (16) There is no relationship between violence and the electoral process
- (a) Agreed { }
  - (b) Strongly agreed { }
  - (c) Disagreed { }
  - (d) Strongly disagreed { }