

**THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND ELECTORAL IRREGULARITIES  
ON VOTERS TURN OUT: A CASE STUDY OF 2019 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION  
IN  
ABIA STATE**

**BY**

**OGAMBA QUEEN NKIRUKA**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY**

**DECEMBER, 2019.**

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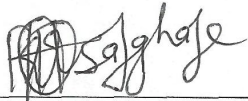
**OGAMBA QUEEN NKIRUKA**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
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ADMINISTRATION (PGDA) OF THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC  
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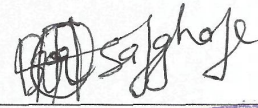
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**CERTIFICATION**

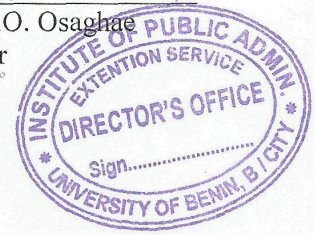
We the undersigned lectures certify that OGAMBA QUEEN NKIRUKA of the institute of public administration and extension services, University of Benin, Benin City, carried out this Research or project work



Dr. F.S. O. Osaghae  
Project supervisor



Dr. F.S.O. Osaghae  
Director



22-01-2020

Date

22-01-2020

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
External Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty the healer and the creator of the universe who made it possible for me to complete this programme.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My sincere gratitude goes to my beloved husband for his encouragement, provisions and support throughout this programme, may the good lord continue to bless him. My profound gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. F.S.O. Osaghae, the director of institute of public Administration and Extension services (IPAES) University of Benin, Ekehuan Campus.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Elections are integral in any democratic process. It is the process by which leaders are chosen to superintend the affairs of a particular geographic location politically for a defined period of time. In Nigeria however. This all important democratic culture is being threatened by a persistent culture of violence and wide ranging irregularities orchestrated to mastermind a less than whole some. The Nigerian electoral system has been rigged in favour of the rich, the powerful, the ruling party and those with access to state resources. The culture of violence and irregularities is affecting public confidence in the system with many announcing publicly, their aversion to politics and anything that has to do with governance. The people's apathy to politics and anything that has to do with governance. The people's apathy to politics and governance is the reason there are too many mediocre in politics with the attendant lack of vision and productivity. This study took a holistic study of the menace of electoral violence and how it affect voter's turnout. Issues plaguing voter participation in the country were trashed out and examined. Possible remedies were look into with a view to improving

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Violence has remained a constant feature in Nigeria's elections since pre-independence days. It has been cited by electoral observers, political researchers and development experts as one of the factors hindering the blossoming of Nigeria's democracy. Many researchers attribute the collapse of the first republic to the violence that greeted the 1962/63 elections in western Nigeria. Violent elections also played into the hands of the military coupists who toppled the second republic in December 1983.

Since the return of the 4<sup>th</sup> republic twenty years ago, various forms of violence have greeted each election cycle. On each occasion, lives are lost during the pre-election, election and post election cycles as thugs on the payroll of politicians and their parties work overboard to secure victory at all costs.

Beyond the loss of lives, property worth hundreds of millions are vandalised, houses set ablaze, individuals maimed and many flee their communities as they try to avoid death in the hands of assassins, political thugs or sundry criminals. Even more, many are scared as they begin to equate elections with war, violence, bullets, gunshots and other dangerous weapons. This continuing trend has made politics unattractive to decent individuals who are committed to service to the community and even more frighteningly, create voter apathy as the electorates try to avoid exposing

themselves to the dangers associated with going out to participate in electoral campaigns, vote or to celebrate with victors.

There is little doubt that violence during election is costing the country a great fortune on several scores including the quality of individuals elected into public office, death of electoral officials, security agents and voters and more pathetically, dampens the enthusiasm of the voters in the general cycle of electioneering. All of these have severe impact on the quality of governance, ability to deliver on the terms of social contracts and deploy the extensive resources of the nation towards uplifting the quality of lives of the populace.

To begin, a proper understanding of Nigeria's political history and the interest region shall be established to guide the research undertaking.

### **Nigeria's Politics, Economics and History in Brief**

On Saturday, October 1 1960 at what is now known as the TafawaBalewa Square (originally called the Race Course in Lagos Island), Nigeria celebrated its Independence from the British by the lowering of the Union Jack and the rising of the nation's green-white-green flag. The Independence celebration was greeted with lots of expectations as the country was tipped to join the league of developed nations by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1). Plans were put in place to build Africa's first truly great nation- a land where justice and peace shall reign.

At Independence, Nigeria opted for the Westminster styled parliamentary system of governance with three major parties with regional leanings dominating its politics. In the North (made up of what today has

morphed into three geopolitical zones- the North West, North Central and North East), the Northern Peoples Congress- NPC- controlled the reins of power, in the East (made up of today's South East and large part of the South-South states), the National Council of Nigerian Citizens- NCNC- was the leading political party while in the West (today's South West region), the Action Group- AG- was the party of choice for the majority (2).

AbubakarTafawaBalewa from today's Bauchi State and leader of the NPC in the House of Representative- had been elected the country's prime minister (head of government)after forming a coalition with the NCNC led by NnamdiAzikiwe who became then the country's governor general- a representative of the British Crown- and officially, the head of state (3). The leader of the Action Group- ObafemiAwolowo- officially became the leader of the opposition in the House of Representatives in Lagos.

In the years preceding the 1960 Independence, the regions were governed by the local political leaders who set out development blueprints for the respective regions with strong emphasis on education, infrastructure development, manpower training and expanding the frontiers of the export markets in their regions.

Every region at the time explored products (mostly agricultural) for which it had comparative advantage over other regions of the world and encouraged its development in commercial quantities for large volume exports in the international markets. In the East, palm produce (palm oil, kernels and the extracts) were the major produce which the region sold globally and earned the resources to develop the region. In the North,

groundnut, cotton, animal hides were the principal produce and the region continued to expand a trade relationship that started with neighbouring countries as far back as the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the West, cocoa was the export product of choice and its production in large volume was encouraged (4).

Using the funds earned by exporting agro-commodities, the regions made important investments in education and infrastructure- building such landmark projects as the University of Nigeria, Nsukka- Nigeria's first indigenous university, the cocoa house- a 25 storey building in the heart of Ibadan, South West Nigeria and several infrastructural projects in the northern parts of the country. The regions maintained efficient transportation and public service systems, children of school age in the Western part of the country had free education and in the east, the emphasis was building road infrastructure.

The idea of periodic elections, taking part in public affairs was beginning to gain popularity in several parts of the country as people were enlightened on the importance of voting, participating in political activities and engaging the political leadership. Nigerians were optimistic in the future of their country, they believed that the political leaders of the time had the best interest of the nation at heart and would steer Nigeria to greatness.

Things however unravelled soon after the British left in 1960, crises broke out in the Western House of Assembly in 1962 leading to open animosity amongst the region's leaders, the imprisonment of Obafemi Awolowo- the leader of the Action Group - followed quickly after

and it was not long before another round of election (1964) took place with allegations of massive rigging in favour of Chief S.L Akintola's New Nigeria Democratic Party- UNDP.

Allegations were rife that TafawaBalewa- Nigeria's Prime Minister- whose party the NPC – went into alliance with the UNDP manipulated the outcome of the election (using federal power- police, army and staff of the electoral commission under the control of the federal authorities) to favour its coalition partner after it ditched NnamdiAzikiwe's NCNC- NPC's 1960 partner.

TafawaBalewa's government's indifference or rather refusal to tackle the crises that engulfed the region (SW) led to political uncertainty and created doubt about the ability of Nigerians to run the country just a few years after the Britishleft. Emphasis on politicking, hunger for ethnic dominance, mutual suspicion and other vices dominated the first republic so much that the public began to grow weary of the pettiness that overshadowed national politics and wished things were different. Many actually wished the white man stayed behind to deepen the locals' appreciation of governance and how politics is played with decency (5).

In January 1966, a military coup took place and the Balewa- NPC government in Lagos was ousted by young army officers who convinced themselves that country was going adrift and needed saving (6).

Things quickly snowballed out of control when another coup took place at the end of July 1966. Like in the January 1966 coup, the head of

government- General Johnson Umunakwe Aguiyi Ironsi was also killed by a group of soldiers led by Theophilus Danjuma.

The Biafra war (1967-1970) was an offshoot of these ugly events and the effects still resonate in present day Nigeria. After the war, Biafra returned to Nigeria and the country remained one nation- albeit a very fragile one.

Military rule continued for the large part of 1970s following two military coups which also took the life of another head of state- Murtala Mohammed- who participated actively in the July 1966 coup. By 1979, Olusegun Obasanjo did the honourable thing by returning power to elected civilian with Shehu Shagari as president.

Soon after Shehu Shagari began ruling, it became clear that the ills that plagued the 1<sup>st</sup> republic were still very dominant in the polity. Corruption was rife and politicians acted with great impunity. There was little concern about the country and its future and the ruling party at the time- the National Party of Nigeria- NPN- was accused of rigging the 1983 election to perpetuate itself in power (7).

In December 1983, Muhammadu Buhari led a military coup that ousted Shagari and announced himself head of state. Very much like the January 1966 coup, Buhari also cited corruption as the reason for "his intervention." 20 months after, Buhari himself was accused of incompetence by fellow military officers who stepped in to sweep him aside.

Ibrahim Babangida replaced Buhari as military head of state and asked to be addressed as a military president. His reign lasted eight years and when Nigerians could no longer cope with his trickery following the annulment of

the June 1993 presidential election, Babangida knew the game was up and announced that he was stepping aside. He handed over to a contraption he called the Interim National Government headed by Ernest Shonekan. Shonekan was still struggling to find his way around Aso Rock when General Sani Abacha stepped in and forced him to announce his resignation.

Abacha took over the reins of governance and ruled Nigeria with iron grip for five long years before he eventually died in June 1997 in mysterious circumstances. Abacha's reign was characterised by politically motivated assassinations, political and economic uncertainties. General Abacha's death paved the way for Major General Abdulsalami Abubakar to step into the seat of power.

Like General Obasanjo in 1979, Abubakar handed over successfully to democratically elected individuals- coincidentally- Obasanjo- who was released from prison on false charges of plotting a coup was inaugurated as Nigeria's second democratically elected president. Obasanjo won the election under the banner of the People Democratic Party after defeating Chief Olu Falae of the All Peoples' Party. Obasanjo scored 18,738,154- representing 62.78% of the total votes cast. Obasanjo handed over to Umaru Musa Yaradua after 8 years in Aso Rock (8). Yaradua ruled until May 2010 when he died and his deputy- Goodluck Jonathan was inaugurated president.

Jonathan remained president after winning the 2011 presidential election (polling 22, 495, 187 votes). Goodluck Jonathan defeated 3 other frontline presidential candidates including Muhammadu Buhari of the Congress for Progressives Change- CPC- who scored 12, 214, 853 votes) in the 2011

presidential poll. The Bayelsa state born academic ruled till May 2015 when his second term ambition was quashed by Nigerians who felt that they have had enough of the PDP government after 16 years.

MuhammaduBuhari of the All Progressives Congress- became the first opposition figure in Nigeria's politics to become president. Buhari has stayed in power since 2015 after he won his re-election bid in 2019- even as the PDP continues to contest the outcome of the election- with their appeal now at the Supreme Court (9).

We have gone down memory lane to bring you an abridged version of Nigeria's political history. Nigeria has had 15 different individuals preside over its affairs. A lot of things have remained constant and these have come to define the history of Nigeria. Issues such as corruption, manipulation of the polity for unwholesome gains by the politicians, leadership incompetence, poor infrastructure, hunger, poverty, disunity, and mutual distrusts are some of the recurrent problems in Nigeria.

Nigerians- despite the very many problems and disappointments with the shape of things in their country have remained optimistic. The never-say-die disposition of Nigerians has continued to sustain a very fragile country. Scholars and researchers remained united in their assessment that Nigerians have kept faith in their country and its democracy despite the betrayals by its political leaders.

### **Abia State in Focus**

Abia state, created in 1991 under the military president of Ibrahim Babangidais a state in the south eastern part of Nigeria with Umuahia as its

political capital, while Aba- in the southern part of the state is its commercial nerve centre. The state was formerly a British colonial government outpost in the region, and is also one of the most populated areas in Nigeria. Abia is one of the constituent states of the Niger Delta region. It's also the 5th most industrialized state in Nigeria. Abia has the 4th highest index of human development in the country, with numerous economic activities and fast growing populations as recorded by the United Nations in 2018. The state also houses the biggest cattle market In Nigeria sited at the Enugu-ph highway in Umunneochi L.G.A- on the northern axis of the state.

The state occupies about 6,320 square kilometres, is bounded on the north and northeast by the states of Anambra, Enugu, and Ebonyi. To the west of Abia is Imo State, to the east and southeast are Cross River State and AkwaIbom State respectively and to the south is Rivers State. The southern part of the State lies within the riverine part of Nigeria, it is a low-lying tropical rainforest with some oil-palm brush. The southern region- dominated mostly by Ngwa and Ukwu people gets heavy rainfall of about 2,400 millimetres (94 in) per year and is especially intense between the months of April through October. The rest of the State is moderately high plain and wooded savannah. The most important rivers in Abia State are the Imo and Aba Rivers which flow into the Atlantic Ocean through AkwaIbom State

The state has a huge deposit of mineral resources including limestone, granite and others. The state also has substantial oil and gas deposits in the Ukwu region and this contributes immensely to the state's revenue profile. The

manufacturing sector is also active and creates thousands of employment for youths. The industrial centre of the state is in Aba, with textile manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, soap, plastics, cement, footwear, and cosmetics.

Agriculture, representing about 28% of GDP employs about 70% of the state workforce. With its adequate seasonal rainfall, Abia has much arable land that produces yams, maize, potatoes, rice, cashews, plantains, taro, and cassava. Oil palm is the most important cash crop.

Politically, the state is divided into 3 senatorial districts, 17 LGAs and 184 political wards. The state is currently governed by Okezielkpeazu of the Peoples Democratic Party. Two PDP and one APC senators are representing the state at the Nigerian senate while government appointed council chairmen and councillors run the area councils as transition committee chairmen and councillors. Since the return of democracy in 1999, the state has been ruled by Orji UzorKalu (1999-2007), Theodore Orji, (2007-2015), and the incumbent Okezielkpeazu who won his re-election bid in March 2019.

### **Critical Issues Plaguing Nigeria's Elections**

As excited as Nigerians are with the democratic system of governance, a few things give voters in Nigeria serious cause for concern and apparently slows down the country's democratic journey, waning enthusiasm towards it.

All forms of electoral violence including but not limited to political thuggery, ballot box snatching, intimidation of voters/electoral officials, arson, kidnap and murder of political rivals and their supporters, scattering and burning of electoral materials and so many other expressions of violence have remained constant in Nigeria's elections across states (regions)and federal

levels in Nigeria since Independence (10). Thousands of Nigerians have lost their lives through acts of political violence and electoral brigandage; many more have sustained life-threatening injuries.

Violence is not the only thing that dampens Nigerians' faith in democracy. Other forms of irregularities like manipulation of figures, diversion of electoral materials, bribery, vote buying, use of security agencies to intimidate and harass voters all contribute to the decline in voters' turnout in recent elections (11).

Voter turnout in 1999 when Nigerians had an opportunity to elect new leadership after 16 years of near-continuous military rule, was 54%, by the next round of elections in 2003, voter turnout peaked at 69%. The figures for 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 are- 57.5%, 53.68%, 43.65%, and 34.75% (12).

If one carefully looks at the trend, you will realise that after 2003, voter turnout began to decline and reached its lowest ebb in 2019.

The decline in voter turnout has been described as proof of peoples' waning faith in the promises of democracy. After many years of failed expectations, election results not reflecting the polling preferences of the electorates amongst several other disappointments, Nigerian voters- in their numbers- may have convinced themselves that democracy is not working and not worth the sacrifices.

### **How Violence And Electoral Irregularities Affect Political Outcome & Leadership**

There is little dispute that the prevalence of violence in Nigeria's elections has had a lot of impact on Nigeria's political evolution and trajectory. Is Nigeria's democracy threatened by the violent disposition of the average

Nigerian politician, political party or interested group? Yes. While many disagree on the magnitude of the impact these violent conducts have had on our body polity, there seems to be a consensus that the nation's electoral system could have thrown up better outcome had the interested parties been less inclined to violence (13). Just like violence, other irregularities like imputation of fictitious figures on the result sheets, bribery of electoral officials to influence the outcome of polls, use of corrupt judicial officials to issue illegitimate court orders, use of security forces to intimidate voters by political parties and groups amongst others all have varying impact on governance and pattern of leadership across all levels of governance in the West African nation.

Let's look at some of the most troubling fallouts of electoral violence and manipulation of political outcomes on development and leadership in Nigeria:

a) **Unpopular Leadership:** The aim of every politician or group who employs violence as means to acquire power is simply to impose themselves on the people without their input. Politicians foist themselves on the people when they realise that they are unpopular and would lose in a free and fair electoral contest. This tendency does a lot of damage to the system and throws up a leadership class that is lacking in vision, ideas and clear direction on how to propel the society forward.

b) **Looting of the Treasury:** A politician who got into power on the strength of his capacity to outdo his opponents in violence will be more inclined to loot from the public till than the one who earned his victory through a peaceful and orderly poll. Mobilising political thugs, bribing electoral officials and security agents, hiring or purchasing guns

from the black market and all the other logistics concerns needed to instigate violence in an electoral contest cost a lot of money. Whoever manages to pull this through and eventually wins will make it his primary duty in office to “recover whatever he has invested,” and stack up more for future contests. This could explain why most politicians and public officers in Nigeria are more disposed to stealing and looting of the treasury than they are to delivering public goods and services to the people.

c) **Loss of Faith in the Electoral Process:** As was pointed out in the preceding section, voter turnout in the country has continued to decline since 2003 and this can be traced to peoples’ loss of faith in the electoral system and the outcome it throws up each time they line up at the polling booths.

d) **Poor Development Trajectory:** Nigeria ranks very low on most indices of human development. Unemployment in the country is currently at an all-time high at 23.1%, Nigeria has the highest number of people living in extreme poverty and the highest number of out of school children in the world. Not so good for the world’s sixth largest exporter of crude oil.

e) **Disenchantment and Sense of Despair Amongst the Citizenry:** Yearly, thousands of young professionals leave the country in search of greener pastures in far-flung countries. While it has to be admitted that labour is greatly mobile, in reality, most of the professionals who leave Nigeria annually are simply frustrated with limited

opportunities in the country for career advancement or professional growth. The country is left in dire straits as these professionals are not easy to replace and the country is worse off for it. This situation could have been averted if the electoral system had been structured to produce the best candidates and peoples to lead with vision.

### **Forms of Electoral Violence And Irregularities in Nigeria**

Electoral violence and irregularities take various forms in Nigeria. The most pronounced include:

- a. **Thuggery:** Hiring of rascals by politicians and groups for the purpose of carrying out nefarious acts designed to confer some advantages on the sponsors.
- b. **Disruption of opponents' political events:** Politicians hire thugs with deadly weapons to create mayhem at political events hosted by their opponents and discourage people from attending.
- c. **Snatching of ballot boxes and stealing of electoral materials:** Politicians employ the services of youths (and sometimes electoral officers and security personnel) to steal electoral materials and stop people from voting their choice candidates
- d. **Non delivery of voting materials in certain places:** Often times, politicians and parties with the means manipulate the delivery of election materials by the election management body- (the Independent National Electoral Commission- INEC) to deny voters in communities where they are disadvantaged the right to vote candidates of their choices by under-supplying or election materials in their opponents strongholds.

e. **Torture, maiming and killing of electoral officers:** Several electoral officers including members of the National Youth Services Corps, members of security organisations and staff of INEC have lost their lives or sustained varying degrees of injuries after they were attacked in the course of their duties by the political thugs or individuals working to advance unwholesome political objectives.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The best known understanding of democracy is a system of government in which the rights of the citizens: are protected by the provisions of the constitution which guarantees the right of the people to have a say in who governs them and how they are governed through periodic elections. Conflict ridden situations have historically featured in all elections conducted in Nigeria and in Abia state. Violence in elections have remained a thing of great worry to political watchers as each electoral cycle brings fresh dimensions of violence.

With unprecedented political thuggery and uncontrolled violence characterized by wanton destruction of lives and property, election period in Nigeria is best described as warfare (13b). Incidence of intra – party and inter – party conflicts and violence, have led to endemic abductions, official rigging of election results and assassinations of opponents and innocent victims. Further violations of established process have invariably transformed election period in Nigeria as a-matter-of-do-or-die or as a-matter-of-life-and-death or that of by hook or by crook. Cycles of electoral violence has signalled serious dangers for democratic consolidation and partisan politics in Nigeria. Associated with the cycle of violence radiating around the polity and within the entire angles and

sides of the political divide, electoral violence in Nigeria has not provided a window of politics of rationality and tolerance, give-and-take, compromises based on win-win scenario.

Electioneering in Nigeria has since been reduced to a violent game of fierce confrontation and representations. Available facts show that ‘electoral violence of the forties and fifties had actually transformed political tension and crises and consequently wrecked all attempts by Nigerians to build and sustain democratic governance which returned in 1999 after several eyars of military rule. Elections conducted in 2019 in Abia state (as well in several parts of the country) were characterized by violence, irregularities and fraud- over-voting, inflation of figures, multiple voting and denying voters in opposition strongholds the opportunity to vote either by denying them electoral materials or sending thugs to disperse voters.

The outcome of the election is still being challenged in may courts across the land several months after the elections as many believe that the results announced by the election management body (EMB) did not reflect the electoral choice or rather- preferences of the people. In the light of the above, it became worth while for the researcher to ask the under listed questions:

1. Can democracy be sustained in an atmosphere of violence?
2. What factors gave rise to the series of violence that greeted the 2019 general elections in Nigeria?
3. What strategies and solutions can the relevant stakeholders including INEC, political parties and security agencies adopt in curbing electoral violence in Nigeria in future elections?

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this research is to identify how news of violence dampened voters' enthusiasm in the poll leading to record low turnout in most states across the country. Specifically, in order to achieve this, the research project will attempt the following:

1. To determine how violence and electoral irregularities affect voters' turnout at the polls.
2. To investigate how the prevalent political practices in Nigeria affect the country's development
3. To examine how electoral irregularities dampen voters' resolve to effect change of government through the ballot box.
4. To investigate how the nonchalance of voters encourage electoral irregularities.
5. To determine how political parties weaken internal democracy within their parties

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This research effort has is poised to be significant in a number of ways including creating a better understanding of the subject in focus and the role of various actors in sabotaging elections in the country. In the first instance, this study will contribute to the existing body of literature on incidence of electoral violence in Nigeria. It will serve as reference material for students, researchers and policy makers on issues concerning elections. It will also proffer practical solutions to conduct of campaigns, the type of incentives that mobilize party activities during campaigns and the essence of being involved in politics.

On the empirical front, this study will be useful to voters, politicians, electoral umpire and observer groups and the state. The study will enable this group of people identified above to determine the optimal stock level of electioneering and to implement universal best practices in pre, post and post electioneering seasons in the country. It will further enable individual, organizations and government to regulate, supervise and effective prosecution of election campaigns and voter choice. It will also provide insight into the problems encountered by those who are involved in partisan politics at various levels in the nation's body politic.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

1. How does violence and electoral irregularities affect voter turnout in polls?
2. How do the prevalent political practices in Nigeria affect the country's development?
3. How do electoral irregularities dampen voters' resolve to effect change of government through the ballot box?
4. How does nonchalance of voters encourage electoral irregularities?
5. How do political parties weaken internal democracy within their parties?

### **1.6. Hypotheses**

The hypotheses guiding this study are stated below:

1. There is no significant relationship between violence and electoral irregularities and voter turnout in polls

2. There prevalent political practices in Nigeria do not affect the country's development.
3. Electoral irregularities do not dampen voters' resolve to effect change of government through the ballot box
4. Nonchalance of voters does not encourage electoral irregularities
5. Political parties do not weaken internal democracies within their organisation.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This research effort is geared towards creating a better understanding of how electoral violence impede voter turnout in an election- using the 2019 guber elections in Abia as a case study. This study therefore is focused on Abia and much of the data used were pulled from survey carried out in certain voting communities where the election took place. The major object of interest was in finding out if the violence that greeted the presidential election held a fortnight earlier and previous elections in the state had any impact on the decision of the voters to present or abstain themselves from voting. The voters were the objects of interest and the getting their reaction to the rampant electoral violence that had greeted recent elections in the state and several parts of the country was the research drive.

### **1.8. Limitations of the Study**

Certain Limitations were encountered in the course of this study. Key among these include:

### **i) Unavailability Of Data:**

Access to centralized data is always a challenge for researchers- especially in Nigeria and several parts of the developing world. In the course of this research work, the researcher had to make do with information gathered from the newspapers, publications by election monitoring groups and foreign observers.

### **ii) Time And Funding**

Another limitation of this study relates to time, funds and logistics constraints, which limited the intensity of the spread or area of coverage of the study. The research work only focused on events relating to the 2019 polls.

### **iii) Resistance Of Respondents**

My research was affected by the reluctance of some respondents to complete the questionnaires promptly. There were also those who completely dumped the questionnaire even after promising to fill them. This limited the number of respondents involved and in most cases- the task of finding new respondents was daunting considering resources and time constraints.

## **1.9. Definition of Terms**

### **Elections**

Webster's Encyclopaedia Dictionary (2006) captures election as "the act or process of organizing systematic election (permitting mass participation in the method of choosing a person or persons by vote for a public office position(s) in which state authority is exercised."

Elections within the context of this research project shall be taken to mean the formal process of selecting a person (persons) for public office or political

position in a democratic setting. It is a method for the selection of persons (who meet certain criteria) to fill relevant offices through choices made by the body of electorates.

For clarity, let us state that “electorates” mean citizens who are qualified to vote under the rules and procedures of the electoral system. Elections ideally are organized channel for popular expression of democratic rights and privileges.

Periodic elections form the bedrock of genuine democracies. Elections are as the process through which the people choose their leaders and indicate their policies and programme preference and consequently invest a government with authority to rule (14).

### **Violence**

Violence connotes different things for different individuals. It has also been viewed from different perspectives by several scholars from different schools of thought. For the purpose of this exercise however, we shall approach the subject as it relates to the violation of human rights, causing bodily or emotional injuries to victims- the power to choose which connotes social injustice.

According to Gilula& Daniels, violence entails “destructive aggression.” Violence within this framework entails the use of physical force to injure persons or cause intense damage to their property (15). Violence connotes destruction and chaos which creates a sense of disorderliness within the subset of a society or in the larger society.

## **Electoral Violence**

Electoral violence according to Igbuzor (16), involves “any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities, including pre, during and post election periods. In Nigeria, electoral violence takes the following forms and shapes:

- a. Thuggery
- b. Use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations
- c. The use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process
- d. Bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes- poll personnel, security officials, party agents or voters.
- e. Assassination

From a wider perspective, electoral violence connotes all forms of violence (physical, psychological, administrative, legal and structural) engaged in by participants, their supporters, and sympathizers (including security and election management body staff) in the electoral process (17). These forms of violence take place before elections, during elections and after or post-election, and could also be intra- or inter-party.

We can go further to bring in Sead(18) who captures electoral violence to connote all forms of organized acts of threats aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder or opponent before, during and after an election with an intention to determine, delay or influence a political process.

In their views, Ogundiya and Baba (2005) see electoral violence as all sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping spontaneous or not, which occur before, during and after elections.

Another political theorist, Fischer (2002) opined that electoral violence means any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced “protection,” blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination.

Generally, we can pin electoral violence to mean any premeditated or spontaneous act that creates chaos in the polity and affect the outcome of elections, the security and safety of electoral officials and lowers the credibility of the polling process and its outcomes.

### **Electoral Security**

Because violence now appears as a given in every election cycle, the idea of electoral security was born to define the mechanism of securing election materials, the voting public, election management body personnel and all other parties involved in an election.

Electoral Security within the framework of this project as captured by USAID connotes “the process of protecting electoral stakeholders such as voters, candidates, poll workers, media, and observers, electoral information and campaign materials; electoral facilities such as polling stations and counting centre and electoral events such as campaign rallies against death, damage, or disruption of the electoral processes.

Fischer also defined electoral security as “the process of protecting electoral stakeholders, information, facilities or events.”

Leaning on the ideas captured in these definitions above, electoral security involves every measure undertaken by security agents, parties, communities and other interested groups in an election to insulate electoral materials and process, voters and electoral observers or members of the media from abuse (harassment and attacks) by hoodlums, criminals, political parties and their agents. It denotes whatever is done to allow the making of free and legitimate choices in a democratic process. It also captures all measures put in place to see that electoral outcomes reflect choice made by the voters.

### **Election Management Body (EMB)**

The EMB is the establishment charged with organising every stage of the electoral process, regulating the conduct of the political parties, setting out rules to guide the conduct of elections, announcing election results and issuing certificates of return to elected officials. In Nigeria, that body is the Independent National Electoral Commission- INEC. The body was set up in 1999 and was the successor to the defunct National Electoral Commission- NEC. The body is headed by a Chairman assisted by electoral commissioners in charge of zones and states and directors of various departments.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

A review of earlier works done to understand the entire concept of elections, violence, party politics and motivation for electoral violence shall be made in this section. This chapter shall guide our understanding and offer us a good prism from which to view the entire research efforts.

#### **2.2. Post Independence Election Violence In Nigeria The Early Days**

Nigeria as pointed out in the previous chapter became an independent nation on October 1, 1960 following the lowering of the Union Jack and the lifting of the green-white-green-flag. However, it was not long after the colonial authorities left when things began to unravel. The 1964/65 general elections gave Nigerians the first taste of what is now generally known as election violence- especially in Western region.

During the 1964/65 elections, politicians were involved in wanton killings and destruction of lives and property especially in the western region of Nigeria (19). The NPC government in Lagos was accused of using state powers to rig the poll in favour of Samuel Akintola's NNDP against Obafemi Awolowo's AG. The crises precipitated by the disturbances in the region contributed to the demise of the first republic following a military coup in January 1966.

#### **2.3. Tackling Electoral Violence Intelligently**

Nigeria's political history has been marred by violent elections with many consistently doubting the credibility of the polls that bring most public officials

to power and each election since 2015 in Nigeria has been worse than the previous one (ibid).

Unfettered access to public treasury, ethnic and religious loyalties and widespread ignorance or poor appreciation of the tenets of democracy are the factors behind much of the violent conducts of parties (stakeholders) before, during and after every election in the country.

According to Bjarnesen (60), electoral violence would be curbed in Nigeria if the stakes for elective offices are lowered to attract only those with a commitment to serve and drive away those with a desire for primitive accumulation, support for democratisation beyond elections, expand the election monitoring process and bring in impartial, disinterested parties, rethink electoral security and address unresolved conflicts at local levels.

#### **2.4. Violence in the second republic**

Violence again reared its head during the very disputed 1983 general elections. The elections- according to credible accounts- were massively rigged for instance, in the then Oyo and Ondo states, the two Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) controlled states which were mysteriously declared for the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) even though UPN- the successor to AG of the first republic was dominant and popular in those states (Babarinsa, 2002). Expectedly, people rose in the numbers to resist what they saw to be an imposition by the Shagari led federal government. The violence that greeted the outcome of the polls in those states created instability in the polity and further doubts about Nigeria's democracy. By December 1983, the military struck

again and ended Nigeria's second republic- the same way they ended the first (20).

### **Babangida's Marathon Transition Came to Nothing in the end**

In June 1993, another election was organized by then Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida to usher in a democratically elected president. The election was billed to break the jinx of Nigeria's troubled political history (Olowojolu, 2015). Interest in the poll was massive as millions of Nigerians registered to vote in the contests between the two dominant political parties- Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC). The election which held on June 12, 1993 was held by many observers and analysts as the most credible and freest in Nigeria.

However, the hopes of many were dashed when General Ibrahim Babangida- then military president- annulled the outcome of the poll. Shortly afterwards, nationwide protests, industrial strike action and civil disobedience engulfed the country. There was general unrest in the country and Babangida had to hand over power to an interim national government which was again ousted in another military coup 3 months after.

### **The Military Continued**

SaniAbacha took over the reins of power and did not show much enthusiasm about handing over to anyone. He died in June 1998 and paved the way for another general- AbdulsalamiAbubakar- to step into the presidency.

General Abubakar returned Nigeria to civil rule 11 months after in May 1999. The February 1999 election was generally peaceful as instances of

violence were largely limited. In the fourth republic, general elections have been conducted in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019.

### **Things did not get better in the 4<sup>th</sup> republic**

Millions of Nigerians were dissatisfied with the annulment of June 12 Presidential election. Several groups emerged, pressing on the Military to return the Country to democracy. Faced with this pressure, General Babangida formed an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Earnest Shonekan, The ING was overthrown by General SaniAbacha. With the death of General Abacha on June 8, 1998, General AbdulsalamiAbubakar instituted a Transition Programme with the view of returning the State to civil rule in 1999. Beside other programmes, the Regime set up an Electoral Body known as the Independent National Electoral Commission. The inauguration of this Body crystallized the beginning of the journey to Nigeria's 4th Republic. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) set the rules and time - table for the commencement of political activism, thus, Political Parties were registered and only three Parties, namely: Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) and Peoples Democratic

Party (PDP) scaled through the huddle and were registered (21). The results of the 1999 general elections indicated that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which fielded Chief OlusegunObasanjo, winning in 21 States across the country was returned elected. The All Peoples Party (APP) came second with 9 states, while the Alliance for Democracy (AD), which held sway in the Southwest, had 6 states. As akin to other elections, there were irregularities, but not as pronounced as other experiments. The results of the 1999 general

elections indicated that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which fielded Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, winning in 21 States across the country was returned elected. The All Peoples Party (APP) came second with 9 states, while the Alliance for Democracy (AD), which held sway in the Southwest, had 6 states.

According to Egobueze (22), these elections have been deeply enmeshed in series of violence before, during and after the elections. The 2003 elections supervised by General Obasanjo who was seeking another 4 year mandate were characterized by manipulation, rigging, thuggery and the assassination of perceived political opponents. The ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) swept the polls as it consolidated its hold on the Nigerian political landscape.

When he was to hand over in 2007 after two terms as president, Obasanjo's administration conducted what many believe to be the worst election in Nigeria's history (23). Months before the 2007 elections at a campaign ground, the outgoing President Obasanjo asserted that the election was going to be a "do-or-die" for the ruling PDP (24).

According to Animashaun (25), there were massive irregularities in the 2007 elections and it was characterized by inflation of voting figures, declaration of results where elections were never held or not conclusive, intimidation of voters as well as manipulation of the security services. Results of elections conducted in some were totally different from those announced in Abuja contrary to the provisions of the 2006 Electoral Act.

An international watch group- the Human Rights Watch (26) noted that there were scores of political killings, bombings and armed clashes between rival political groups. The outcome of the 2007 elections generated a lot of

controversies and wide spread condemnation from both the local and international observers.

Umaru Musa Yaradua- who was declared winner at the end of the April 2007 presidential election admitted at his inauguration in May 2007 that the electoral process in 2007 was highly fraudulent (27). To improve the electoral process in Nigeria, he instituted the Electoral Reform Committee headed by Justice Mohammed Uwais (28). Many of the recommendations made by the justice Uwais committee were included in the amended Electoral Act of 2010.

The next general elections held in 2011 were adjudged by many observer groups to be significantly better than the 2007 polls. The 2011 polls marked the fourth multiparty election in Nigeria. The 2011 general elections were generally acceptable by both local and foreign observers to be partially fair when compared with the 2003 and 2007 general elections which were conducted under the fourth republic (29). The election however witnessed some violence, the pre, during and post election period. AkwaIbom State witnessed one of the worst histories of political violence in March 22, 2011. An eye witness report on the matter indicate that many properties which included: 200 brand new Peugeot 307 cars; 500 brand new tricycles; the Goodluck/Sambo Campaign office which was burnt down by the rampaging mob; Fortune International High School owned by Senator Aloysius Etok which was razed down with school children in session and over 20 Toyota Hiace buses belonging to the PDP and Godswill 2011 Campaign Organization, nine Hilux jeeps belonging to the Government of AkwaIbom State which were either completely destroyed or vandalized (30). Consequently, the Presidency set up a Presidential Committee

of Inquiry to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the violence and recommend ways of averting future political violence in the State. This was aimed at seeking peaceful means of resolving the conflict. Further to the above, the release of 2011 Presidential election result by the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) which produced President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP as the winner led to sectarian violence in some Northern parts of Nigeria. Some of the affected State were Bauchi, Yobe, Maiduguri, Kaduna among others. The post electoral violence that accompanied the 2011 general election resulted in the killing of about ten Youth corps members in Bauchi State (31). Prior to the 2011 general election, political tension was very high across Nigeria with many northern groups and political interests opposed to the candidacy of Goodluck Jonathan. The opposing groups including prominent elders from northern Nigeria warned that a Jonathan presidency would destabilised the informal power sharing arrangement in the ruling PDP which demands power to go remain in the north for another 8 years after Olusegun Obasanjo (south) spent 8 years in Aso Rock (32).

Unguarded social media messages worsened the tensions created by religious and ethnic campaigning by supporters of President Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari (33). Several northern states were thrown into chaos and anarchy after then President Goodluck Jonathan was declared the winner of the 2011 presidential election. Human Rights Watch (2011) reported that about 800 lives were lost as a result of the post election violence in states like Kaduna, Katsina, Bauchi and Adamawa. The group also asserted that more than 65,000 people were displaced after the 2011 post election violence. The Nigerian Red

Cross Society- another group that was involved in providing relief materials and urgent medical assistance to victims of violence- released a slightly lower figure indicating that the violence displaced 48,000 persons in 12 states (34).

Things also became uneasy around the country especially in the northern part as the 2015 general elections approached. The meteoric rise in the Boko Haram terrorist group was blamed for the tensions that swept through the polity. The CLEEN Foundation Security Threat Assessment published in March 2015 found that 15 states were on red alert level. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in its Pre-Election Report stated that at least 58 persons have been killed even before the conduct of 2015 general elections (35).

There were changes in the political configuration of the country as could be seen in the formation of a mega opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2013 (36). The APC was a coalition of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) led by MuhammaduBuhari; the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) led by Bola Tinubu, the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and a faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) controlled by RochasOkorochoa who was Imo governor at the time.

The party picked former military ruler, General MuhammaduBuhari- who had run an unsuccessful presidential campaigns in three previous electoral cycles- was picked as the presidential flag bearer for APC (37). The ruling PDP on its part chose the incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan as the presidential candidate. In December 2013, the PDP suffered setbacks due to the mass exodus of key political players to APC after some disagreement with their party.

The Independent National Electoral Commission- INEC- introduced certain technological and security measures with the view towards curbing electoral fraud and violence during the 2015 general elections(38). INEC introduced the use of Card Readers and Permanent Voters Card (PVC) for the upcoming general elections- it was also used in the 2019 polls.

INEC in its report on the 2015 polls announced that there were 66 reports of violent incidence all across the country. Violence were recorded in Rivers State (16 incidents); Ondo (8); Cross Rivers (6); Ebonyi (6); Akwalbom (5); Bayelsa (4); Lagos and Kaduna (3 each); Jigawa, Enugu, Ekiti (2 each); Katsina, Kogi, Plateau, Abia, Imo, Kano and Ogun (one each) (39).

EU-EOM (European Union Election Observation Mission) for the 2015 polls in Nigeria stated that about 30 people were killed on April 11, 2015 Election Day as a result of inter-party clashes and attacks on election sites (40). Weeks before the 2015 poll, efforts were made by several stakeholders to commit the aspirants – especially the main contenders in PDP and APC- to be peaceful in their actions and utterances at campaign grounds and when speaking to the press.

The APC made history at the 2015 polls by becoming the first opposition party to defeat the ruling party in Nigeria. Jonathan also called to congratulate the winner and on May 29 2015, handed over successfully to the winner- marking the first transition from one party to another in Nigeria’s democratic history.

### **In 2019, the Marginal Gains Made in the 2015 Polls Were Reversed**

The 2019 polls (the 6<sup>th</sup> in the 4<sup>th</sup> republic) were marred by violence in several states across southern Nigeria- especially Rivers, AkwaIbom, Lagos, Delta, Bayelsa, Oyo, Ekiti, Anambra, Abia and Imo states. In the northern states of Kano, Kogi and Benue, there were also reports of burning of INEC offices/electoral materials, harassment of electoral officials, the use of security agents to intimidate voters, hoard electoral materials and disrupt electoral proceedings.

At the end of the presidential election on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, it was reported by Punch Newspaper that an estimated 40 persons had lost their lives in several parts of the country. The killings were carried out by both political thugs working for the politicians and security agents (soldiers mostly) working for the ruling party. Victims included politicians, INEC ad hoc staff (youth corps members) and voters. In AkwaIbom state, INEC officials were abducted by political thugs and held hostage for days. In Lagos, Igbo voters were denied the opportunity to vote by political thugs working for one of the political parties. The Igbo voters were told to “go back to their states and vote.” In Abia, Anambra, Benue and Ebonyi, INEC offices were razed and several materials destroyed.

In July 2019, the *Nigerian Situation Room* in its general report on the election disclosed that 626 Nigerians were killed over a 6 month cycle between the commencement of the election campaigns and the casting of the first ballot in February (41). The body- a group of local election observers- announced that the figure was a significant increase from the casualties in the 2015 elections- 106.

The North West region- according a report published in Premium Times- an online newspaper- recorded the highest number of casualties with 172 death closely followed by the North East where 146 were killed. In the South-south region, 120 persons were killed while in the north central, 111 persons lost their lives. Sixty three people were killed in the South West while for the South East, the fatalities figure was 14- the lowest in the entire country (42)

## **2.5. Causes of Electoral Violence in Nigeria Official Corruption By The Electoral Body And The Failings of the Judiciary**

There are several reasons why electoral violence have multiplied in scope in Nigeria. Firstly, electoral violence in Nigeria is caused by bribery and the absence of a fair, lawful and impartial judiciary. For instance, political leaders who were responsible for the electoral violence that has been taking place are found not guilty and are still living freely. They did not take any responsibility for their actions, some of them go on to occupy high offices thus, the justice system is failing to adequately punish electoral offenders.

Politicians are known to openly bribe electoral and judicial officers and there are no consequences for such behaviours (43). This leads many into resorting to self-help as the general impression is that injustice done at the polling unit will not be reversed at the courts.

### **Widespread Poverty and Unemployment**

Another cause of electoral violence in Nigeria is poverty, as well as unemployment which currently stands at 23.1% (44). About 100 million people live below the poverty line according to a recent statistics from the World Poverty Clock (45). The political leaders take advantage of the neediness of the

public and therefore can easily control the voters by making false promises and obtaining their votes. Poverty breeds desperation thus the political leaders can use that to their advantage. When the people not getting what they had expected in return for their votes, they become beastly and violent. Furthermore, young people who are unemployed have nothing to do at home. Therefore, they are recruited by politicians to engage in electoral violence activities as thugs, assassins, ballot box snatchers and to commit various forms of electoral malpractices.

### **Poor Understanding of Politics**

In Nigeria, it is almost taken as the norm that there must be violence during each election cycle. The youth recruited by the political groups and agents are compelled to cause violence during the election processes because they believe that elections and violence are synonyms.

Each election cycle, parties threaten voters, damage properties, kill people and do other abominable things. This is proof that most people in Nigeria think that there must be violence for election processes to run smoothly and peacefully. This could be caused by the fact that Nigeria was previously a military coup where power flowed through the barrel of guns. Many are yet to adjust to the tenets of democratic culture.

### **Inadequate/Limited voter education**

Many voters and political participants in Nigeria are poorly informed about the electoral process. This is the reason many resort to violence and are quick to launch attacks on electoral officers, security agents and fellow voters at the smallest suspicion or delay. If the voters are well educated, they would know

what is expected of them at each turn in the electoral process, ask the right questions and be able to engage all the stakeholders accordingly.

### **Lack of internal democracy in political parties**

Nigerian political parties have failed in their primary duty to teach their members the basic tenets of democracy and their obligation to make the democratic experiment work in the country or the need to play by the rules. Worst still, electoral violence is consciously or unconsciously encouraged at the party level when candidates emerge for the main elections. This is due to the flawed processes instituted internally by the parties since the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> republic. Sadly, no party is exempt from this.

### **Poor Security Arrangements**

The Nigerian security agencies are most times overwhelmed by the spate of political violence that has been witnessed in the society over time. Several media reports have detailed how security personnel were on ground when these acts were committed, but look the other way because of their limitations in terms of their numbers or tools they need to carry out their duties effectively. This incapacity on the part of the agencies have emboldened corrupt individuals who use violence to achieve their electoral goals (46).

### **Dishonesty and Malpractices From The Electoral Officials**

A situation where the electoral umpire clearly show bias for one party over another is a recipe for political violence. Over time, those whose duties are to conduct a free and fair have been at the fore front of electoral malpractices, which in turn results to civil disturbances by political parties that have been cheated. The onus is on electoral umpires to ensure the electoral process is

credible in order to eliminate the constant cases of violence that is now associated with elections.

## **2.6. The Universal Theory of democracy**

Democracy, as universally acceptable and popular it is as a form of government, it is complex and difficult to understand for many- especially within the African continent. The various writers on the subject of democracy are influenced by their system of practices and their regions. The practice of democracy in the more economically developed countries like the United State of America, Britain, France and Germany are different from the practice in the third world countries in Africa and Asia.

The word “democracy derives from the Greek word ‘demokratia’, which is combination of the words ‘demos’, a Greek word meaning ‘the people’, and ‘kratia’, designating power strength or rule”. Hence, from the Greek perspective ‘democracy’ was understood as an idea resembling rule by the people or the actual and direct participation of the citizens in public affairs. This was manifested through the assembly of the Athenian community (47). In the view of O’Neill in support of the Greek, “democracy is a system where political power resides with the people”. Thus, the people have the right to choose leaders to rule them at any electioneering period.

There are multiple ways of defining ‘democracy’ depending on the ideals envisaged when defining democracy, it may have different meanings. Democracy means “the government of the people, by the people, and for the people”. The expression “government of the people means the power to rule is originated from the people, by the people means the rulers represent the

governed that is the citizens. The governments' legitimacy and power emanate from the people, the government is responsible to the people, government is guided by the people and the definition also connotes direct democracy. So from Abraham Lincoln's definition, democracy means ruling in the interest and with the power of the citizen.

The question is, what about those who come to rule a country through coup d' etat or the use of the barrel of gun? They are also government who come to power and rule but not through democratic processes as happened in Ghana Nigeria during the military rule. Are they as per the definition a government by the people? And for the people means those in authority rule on behalf of the people. Do government actually rule on behalf of the people? Most rulers get to power to pursue their own personal and selfish interest as it is the case in most underdeveloped countries and not that of the ordinary citizens. That is why during elections, the politicians manipulate the system to win power for the attainment of their own interest.

“Democracy is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.” In a democratic system, there are institutional structures like the electoral administration, executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the press. These are some of these institutions that make the concept of democracy to function effectively.

“A political system is defined as democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult

population is eligible to vote”(48). The competition for votes should be done in a civilised way with the exchange of ideas, policies and programmes as to how one is capable of ruling a country. Democracy is said to have a positive attributes and it presupposes the idea that, what is democratic is good and the opposite is the reverse. Democracy stands for stability, freedom of expression and choice. Democracy could be seen in the light of socialist and liberal perspectives. In the Communist view in countries such as the former Soviet Union, which saw themselves as democratic state, democracy meant collective equality rather than individual freedom. In Europe and United States, democracy has been associated with multiparty regimes, civil liberties and individual freedoms. In Nigeria and in several African countries, the concept and idea of multiparty democracy is still evolving as opposition politicians in Nigeria, Cameroun and several other places often at loggerheads with the ruling party and government officials and security agencies. In these countries too, constant efforts are also made to gag the media and stop the press from performing its oversight duties on the way government business is run.

## **2.7. Theoretical Framework**

Many scholars believe that elections began as a religious practice. It could be traced from old and ancient Greek and Roman States, where elections were used in ancient Athens, in Rome, and in the selection of popes and Holy Roman emperors, as the same went with the selection/election of Caliphate in the ancient Islamic history after the death of the prophet of Islam Mohammed. The origins of elections in the contemporary world lie in the gradual emergence of representative government in Europe and North America beginning in the 17th

century (49). Democracy is a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions and inactions in the public realm by citizens who elect them for their representation periodically.

In democratic systems, elections are a primary tool to legitimise the authority of the rulers. According to Diamond, L and Plattner, MF (1996) (50), “elections are the basis for the existence of democracy. Additionally, elections are means to consolidation of democracy and good governance in every country that aspire to it and not an end in itself. They are basic human and political rights to express the will of the people.”

It is “a formal expression of preferences by the governed, which are then aggregated and transformed into a collective decision about who will govern, who should stay in office, who should be thrown out, who should replace those who have been thrown out,” (51). It is the procedure by which members of communities and or organisations choose or select representatives to hold public offices, and also as a concrete instrument of political control at the hand of the electorate. “Elections are process through which citizens choose who will represent them in government or what will be done about a particular issue,” (52).

Attempts to define elections have equally been extended to the level of several domestic legislations. Elections are combination of acts and procedures aiming at choosing or selecting among various candidates, members of parliament and the head of the state by the electorate. Elections are so significant that regional institutions have adopted standards and principles applicable to them. In Africa, the African Union Declaration on the Principles

Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002) and the African Charter on Democracy Elections and Good Governance (2007) are key instruments of the regional legal framework which make reference to such standards and principles.

However, there are several conflicting and contradicting positions with regard to the specific objectives and importance of elections by writers. For instance, Goodwin-Gill began by saying that “an election is not a poll aimed at giving the most accurate representation of all the various opinions or interests at play in society. However, he added that an electoral system is intended to give citizens the power to decide who shall rule and according to what policy”, in this respect, he is self contradictory. If he admitted that electoral systems seek to give citizens the power to decide who should rule and in accordance to what policies and program, then he should have acknowledged that such systems must have election standards which make the people more represented so that they may participate in the policy decision making processes through their elected representatives. If this is true, it is equally correct to say that those who are not represented will not be able to participate in the policy decision making process.

Hence, in electoral systems where elections are the effective ways of citizens’ participation in political decision making, elections should aim at achieving the most accurate representation of all opinions and interests in the society. There should be effective ways through which the citizens choose their representatives both in parliamentary and the presidential elections. Therefore the system of choosing leaders either parliamentarians or presidential should be free and fair whereby the electorates are at liberty to make their own choice at

any given election of their country. It also entails that the electorates should have the liberty to change the leaders they do not like or those who fail to deliver on their electoral promises. Curiously, many Nigerians are currently not experiencing this reality as incumbents employ everything at their disposals to retain their seats and consolidate their hold on power (53).

## **2.5. The Theory of Violence**

Violence according to the UN (54) means “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.”

The definitions of violence are subjective and emotive and depending on the typology and the angle the writer looks at it. It could be domestic violence, criminal violence, routine interpersonal violence, cultural violence, structural violence etc. The concept itself is derived from the Latin word, *violentia*, meaning ‘vehemence’, a passionate and uncontrolled force” (55). “Violence is interpersonal acts of force usually involving the infliction of physical injury”, (56). From the above definition it suggests that the concept of violence cannot be understood independently from the concept of force.

Violence is defined as “the cause of the difference between the potential and actual, between what could have been and what is” (57). Here violence is seen as the difference between what is considered as actual and the potential or the ideal and the realities. Thus in a country where citizens are not able to have access to their basic needs like food, shelter, clothes in the midst of abundance then there is violence. It means that when the actual and the reality are avoidable

then there is a manifestation of violence in a society. “Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realization.”

Again the emphasis is on the deprivation and the incapacitation of people to attain their fullest potential. There are two types of violence; physical violence and the psychological violence. Physical violent exists when parties or standby and development projects are affected directly or indirectly by killing, maiming by guns, bombs among others constitute casualties used in assessing the magnitudes of the violent. Under this type of “violence, human beings are hurt somatically to the point of killing. Psychological violent occurs when parties or standby or development projects are not affected in any form directly.”

“Violence is not simply the exercise of physical force to get something done. For one thing, it is the exercise of force, or more generally power, in such a way as to harm others in pursuit of one’s own ends. Violence causes injury or death, including potentially to the performer of the violence himself or herself”(58).“It is harm done to others which provokes arguments about its legitimacy,” (59). Human societies depend both on controls over behaviour and the expression of positive values between people. Controls over behaviour may involve the use of force or coercive techniques, such as physical punishment or restraint by incarceration. Violent behaviour in particular may be controlled by these means, in which case what distinguishes the control from the violent behaviour itself,” (60).

David Riches (61) introduced the triangle of violence consisting of performer, victim, and witness. Each of these three categories of persons involved is likely to have their own view of the legitimacy issue. “A performer may see his or her action as legitimate, or at least justified; the victim is less likely to do so; and the witnesses will evaluate the actions variably according to their relationships with either the performer or the victim (or both) and their own social standards, moral code, or personal interests” (ibid). The performer or the perpetrator would see his or her action as a legitimate and must be carried out, the victim also think that he or she is legitimate. However, the third person in the Riches triangle could equally interpret the actions between the performance the victim in his or her line judgement. Hence, violence is a subjective and complex theory.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The research is aimed at finding out political violence and electoral irregularities affect voter turnout using the 2019 guber election in Abia state as a case study.

Research methodology is a way of systematically solving the research problem. It is a framework or plan of action, which the researcher intends to use in carrying out the laid out research work. It does not take in consideration the research methods only but also the rationale behind the methods.

The research methodology includes the type of study, population of the study, sample procedure, sample size, study setting, data collection tools/instruments used procedure for data collection, data analysis, secondary data as most appropriate.

Questionnaires will be used to collect data from primary sources, since this is a survey research and secondary sources shall include data from textbooks, academic journals, newspapers publication and internet sources.

#### **3.2 Types of Study**

A descriptive study designs which is a non-intervention study was employed by the researcher as it was most suitable for the design and scope of the research efforts. It also gives allowance for systematic collection, analysis and presentation of data to give a clear picture of a particular situation.

This aim of the design is to quantify or qualify the distribution of certain variables in a population at in time within the area under study.

### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population which the researcher uses in gathering of data is are voters spread across Abia North, South and Central Senatorial districts in Abia State, South East Nigeria. The study population are mostly adults who were eligible for voting in the 2019 polls.

### **3.4 Sample Procedure**

Sampling may be defined as the scientific method of obtaining unbiased and representative data from a given population. A sampling technique according to the United States Bureau of the Census, Software and Standards Management (61) is the name or other identification of the specific process by which the entities of the sample have been selected.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

The chosen sample population is one hundred and fifty respondents (150)

### **3.6 Study Setting**

The researcher employed stratified simple random sampling to gather data from respondents. The respondents were told what was required of them and in most cases, helped to understand some of the questions they were required to provide answers to.

### **3.7 Data Collection**

Open ended questionnaire format was employed by the researcher to obtain relevant data from respondents. It comprised of two section, section A and section B. section A contains information concerning the social profile of the respondents, while section B contain information relating voting and their participation in the 2019 polls.

### 3.7.1 Instrument Used For Data Collection

The researcher personally distributed structured questionnaires randomly to individuals within the 3 senatorial districts in Abia state. This was to enable the researcher elicit useful information helpful in assessing, analyzing responses from the public on subject matter. The questionnaire was designed in such a way to be able to provide answers to the research objectives and variables in hypothesis.

### 3.7.2 Questionnaire Return Rate

The researcher retrieved 97 administered questionnaires after 10 days. Proper monitoring was put in place to ensure proper completion, correctly filled and returning the questionnaire by respondents.

The questionnaire contains two sections. Section A contains the bio data form to be filled by the respondent while section B contains 25 questions. The questionnaire can be summarized into the following;

The questions are prepared in five likert scale format I order to give room for measurement of the respondents' response.

The questionnaire when returned was sorted out and classified. All the uncompleted ones were removed to avoid inaccuracy of results.

## 3.8 Data Analysis Outline

Percentages as well as Chi-square data analysis framework were used by the researcher to analyse the data collected, contingency table was drawn, hypotheses was tested in order to accept or reject the null hypotheses.

### 3.8.1 Coding Procedure

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Tick</b>	<b>Code</b>
AGE		
18-30 yrs	( )	1
31-49 yrs	( )	2
50-above	( )	3
Sex		
Male	( )	1
Female	( )	2
Marital Status		
Single	( )	1
Married	( )	2
Divorced	( )	3
Widow / Widower	( )	4
Educational Level		
Primary School	( )	1
Secondary School	( )	2
Tertiary Institution	( )	3
Employment		
Private Sector	( )	1

Civil Service	( )	2
Unemployed	( )	3
Likert Scale		
Agree	( )	1
Strongly agree	( )	2
Disagreed	( )	3
Strongly disagreed	( )	4

### 3.8.2 Ethical Consideration

The researcher respected the culture, religion and values of the people. The researcher avoided undue violation of privacy and assured the respondents that the exercise is strictly an academic one and whatever they said would be applied only for the stated purpose of the research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of findings from respondents. The study subject were voters of various demographic and income groups within Abia State.

The analysis of findings provides an insight into the impact of violence and electoral irregularities on the voters and how it affects their readiness to participate in future democratic exercises. The central objective of this exercise is to verify the correctness of the research hypotheses.

#### **Demographic Characteristics Of The Respondents**

**Table 1: Distribution Of Respondents According To Age Group.**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
18-27	22	22.7
28-37	68	70.1
38-47	1	1
48 and above	6	6.2
Total	97	100

**SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2019**

Table 1 shows that 22 (22.7%) of the respondents were of the age group 18-27years, 68 (70.1%) were of the age group 28-37years, 1(1%( were of the age group 38-47years, 6(6.2%) were of the age group 48 and above.

This indicates that the questionnaire was distributed to include diverse demographic groups in order to make it sufficiently representative. Let it also be pointed out that 18 years was chosen as the minimum age for participants because it was the required age for participation in voting in the country.

**Table 2: Distribution Of Respondents According To Educational Levels**

<b>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Primary School	2	2.1
Secondary School	38	39.2
First Degree and above	57	58.8
Total	97	100

**SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2019.**

Table 2 shows that 2 respondents (2.1% of the number of respondents had only primary school education, 38(39.2%) of the total number of respondents had secondary school education while 57(58.8%) of the total number of respondents had a tertiary education certificates.

This indicates that all the level of education was represented in the study.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Sex**

<b>SEX</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
MALE	28	28.9
FEMALE	68	71.1
TOTAL	97	100

**SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2017**

Table 3 shows that 28 (28.9%) of the total number of respondents were male while 69(71.1%) of the total number of respondents were females.

#### 4.2 Analysis And Interpretation Of Data

For the purpose of analysis and interpretation, the data was designed to enable us test the hypotheses stated in chapter one in order to accept or reject either the null hypotheses or the research hypotheses

#### Research Question One

**Table 4:** How does violence and electoral irregularities affect voter turnout in polls?

Questionnaire items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The election was neither peaceful nor conducted in accordance with the electoral law	40	28.6	92	65.7	5	3.6	3	2.1
The election was marred by violence and irregularities	35	25.0	75	53.6	10	7.1	20	14.3
Reports of violence and irregularities in the presidential and national assembly elections did not discourage people from voting in the governorship and state	2	1.4	4	2.9	96	68.6	38	27.1

assembly elections								
Political parties did sufficiently caution their members against violence	4	2.9	4	2.9	90	64.2	42	30

### Observations

The statistics above shows that 28.6% of respondents strongly agree the 2019 elections in Abia State was neither fair nor conducted in accordance with laid down electoral rules, 65.7% agree, while 3.6% of the respondents disagree and 2.1% strongly disagree. 25.0% of the respondents strongly agree that the election was marred by violence and irregularities, 53.6% agree, while 7.1% of the respondents disagree, and 14.3% strongly disagree that violence and irregularities characterized the polls. 1.4% of respondents strongly agree that reports of violence and irregularities in the presidential and national assembly elections did not discourage people from voting in the governorship and state assembly elections, 2.9% of respondents agreed to that, while 68.6% of respondent disagree and 27.1% strongly disagree. 2.9% of respondents strongly agree that political parties sufficiently cautioned their members against violence, 2.9% of respondents agree to that while 64.2% disagree, and 30% of respondents strongly.

## Research Question 2

**Table 5:** How do the prevalent political practices in Nigeria affect the country's development?

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do you think that the prevalent political practices in the country promote development?	20	14.3	30	21.4	50	35.7	40	28.6
Do you think the current system engenders corruption?	32	28.9	59	42.1	32	22.6	17	12.1
Do you think that the present order of politics promotes quality governance?	8	5.7	21	15	87	62.2	24	17.1

### Observations

The figures captured from the table above shows that 14.3% of respondents strongly agreed the prevalent political practices in the country promote development, 21.4% agreed, while 35.7% disagreed and 28.6% of respondent strongly disagree.

28.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that the current system of politics and governance in the country engenders corruption, 42.1% agreed, while 22.6% of the respondents disagreed and 12.1% of the respondent strongly disagree.

5.7% of respondents strongly agree that the present order of politics promotes quality governance, 15% agreed, 62,2% disagreed while 17.1% strongly disagree.

### Research question 3

**Table 6:** How do electoral irregularities dampen voters' resolve to effect change of government through the ballot box?

Questionnaire items	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Electoral irregularities affect my resolve to vote	18	12.9	54	38.6	51	36.4	17	12.1
I am scared that my vote won't make any change	16	11.4	57	40.7	54	38.6	13	9.3
I vote often but the outcome does not reflect my expectation	19	13.6	39	27.9	59	42.1	23	16.4
Many in my community have lost interest in political activities	23	16.4	45	32.1	53	37.9	19	13.6
I do not have any hope that the electoral process would improve in the future	16	11.4	52	37.2	48	34.3	24	17.1

## **Observations**

The statistics above shows that 12.9% of respondents strongly agreed that electoral irregularities affect my resolve to vote, 38.6% agreed, 36.4% disagreed while 12.1%.

11.4% of respondents strongly agreed that they are scared their votes won't make any change, 40.7% of respondents agreed, 38.6% of respondents disagreed while 9.3% of respondents strongly disagreed.

13.6% of respondents strongly agreed that they vote often but the outcome does not reflect their expectations, 27.9% agree, 42.1 disagree while 16.4% strongly disagree.

16.4% of respondents strongly agree that many in their communities have lost interest in voting, 32.1% of respondents agreed, 37.9% of respondents disagree, while 13.6% strongly disagree.

11.4% of respondents strongly agreed that they do not have any hope that the electoral process would improve in the future, 37.2% of respondents agreed, 34.3% of disagreed while 17.1% strongly disagreed that there is hope that the electoral process would improve.

## **Research question 4**

**Table 7:** How does nonchalance of voters encourage electoral irregularities?

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Politicians rig because of low voter turnout	27	19.3	59	42.1	32	22.9	22	15.7
Low participation in polls encourage electoral irregularities	69	49.3	31	22.1	26	18.6	14	10
If more Nigerians come out to vote, rigging would be difficult	64	45.7	36	25.7	30	21.4	10	7.2
Nigerians are not sufficiently educated on the power of their votes	74	52.9	29	20.7	23	16.4	14	10
Voter education will greatly enhance electoral outcomes in Nigeria	19	13.5	18	12.9	74	54.9	29	20.7

### Observations

From the figures above, 19.3% of respondents are convinced that politicians rig because of low voter turnout, 41.1% said they agree, 22.9% disagree while 15.7% strongly disagree.

49.3% strongly agreed that low participation in polls encourage electoral irregularities, 22.1% agree, 18.6% disagree while 10% strongly disagreed.

45.7% strongly agreed that if more Nigerians come out to vote, rigging would be difficult, 25.7 agreed, 21.4% disagreed, while 7.2% strongly disagreed.

52.9% of respondents strongly agreed that Nigerians are not sufficiently educated on the power of their votes, 20.7% agreed, 16.4% disagreed, while 10% strongly disagreed.

13.5% strongly agreed that voter education will greatly enhance electoral outcomes in Nigeria, 12.9% agreed, 54.9% disagreed while 20.7% disagreed.

### Research Question 5

**TABLE 8:** How do political parties weaken internal democracy within their parties?

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Political parties are not doing enough to encourage internal democracy in their fold	78	55.7	51	36.4	6	4.3	5	3.6
Do you think that money is playing a corrosive role on party politics in Nigeria?	43	30.7	64	45.7	20	14.3	13	9.3
Do you think that INEC should strengthen internal regulations in the parties?	42	30	65	46.4	22	15.7	11	7.9

### Observations

55.7% of respondents strongly that political parties are not doing enough to encourage the growth of internal democracy in their fold, 36.4% agree, 4.3% disagree while 3.6% strongly disagree.

30.7% strongly agree that money is playing a corrosive role on the nation's politics, 45.7% agree, 14.3% disagree while 9.3% strongly disagree.

30% of respondents strongly agree that INEC should strengthen internal regulations in the political parties, 46.4% agree, 15.7% disagree while 7.9% disagree.

### **Expected Frequency**

$$a=(a+b+c)(a+d+g+g)/n$$

$$b=(b+a+c)(b+c+h+k)/n$$

$$c=(c+b+a)(c+f+i+h)/n$$

$$d=(d+eff)(d+a+g+j)/n$$

$$e=(e+d+f)(e+f+b+h+k)$$

$$f=(f+e+d)(f+c+d+i+l)/n$$

$$g=(g+h+I)(g+a+d+J)/n$$

$$h=(h+g+I)(h+b+e+h)/n$$

$$I=(I+g+h)(I+c+f+L)/n$$

$$J=(j+k+h)(j+g+d+a)/n$$

$$K=(k+j+L)(k+h+e+b)/n$$

$$L=(L+j+k)(L+I+F+c)/n$$

$$a=(50)(33)/140=11.79$$

$$b=(50)(62)/140=22.14$$

$$c=(50)(45)/140=16.07$$

$$d=(40)(33)/140=9.43$$

$$e=(40)(62)/140=17.71$$

$$f=(40)(45)/140=12.86$$

$$g=(30)(33)/140=1407.07$$

$$h=(30)(62)/140=13.29$$

$$I=(30)(45)/140=9.64$$

$$J=(20)(33)/140=4.71$$

$$K=(20)(62)/140=8.86$$

$$L=(20)(45)/140=6.43$$

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup>	(Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup>
A	15	11.79	3.21	10.30	0.8736
B	30	22.14	7.86	61.78	2.7904
C	5	16.07	-11.07	122.54	7.6254
D	10	9.43	0.57	0.32	0.0339
E	25	17.71	7.29	53.14	3.006
F	5	12.86	7.86	61.78	4.8040
G	5	7.07	-2.07	4.29	0.6068
H	5	13.29	-8.29	68.72	5.1708
I	20	9.64	10.36	107.33	11.1338
J	3	4.71	-1.71	2.92	0.4862
K	2	8.86	-6.86	47.06	5.3115
L	15	6.43	8.57	73.44	11.4215
				X <sup>2</sup>	53.2585

Degree of freedom

$$(r-1)(c-1) = 4-1(3-1)=3 \times 2=6$$

Calculate X<sup>2</sup>=53.2585

Critical X<sup>2</sup>=22.46

At 2=.001

## **Interpretation**

Since the calculated value of  $X^2$  (53.2585) is greater than the critical  $X^2$  (22.46) were the reject null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between violence and electoral irregularities and voter turnout in polls and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between violence and electoral irregularities and voter turnout in polls in the country.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This research has holistically examined how political violence and electoral irregularities affect voters' turnout at polls. We used events in Abia state in the last gubernatorial election as a case study. This study had five chapters and established the following as its objectives:

- I. To determine how violence and electoral irregularities affect voters' turnout at the polls.
- II. To investigate how the prevalent political practices in Nigeria affect the country's development
- III. To examine how electoral irregularities dampen voters' resolve to effect change of government through the ballot box.
- IV. To investigate how the nonchalance of voters encourage electoral irregularities.
- V. To determine how political parties weaken internal democracy within their parties.

#### **5.2. Summary**

The researcher found that Nigeria's electoral system is plagued by many challenges which affect the credibility of the entire process and makes it hard to instil confidence in the entire process from the voters, electoral observers and members of the international community.

The violence and irregularities in the system builds a disconnect between the voters and the elected officials, damages trusts and makes the demand for accountability very difficult. The poor electoral process we run in the country breeds irregularities, increases corruption and damages the channels through which proper service delivery is made by the people. A poor electoral process means that the people's rights to demand quality governance is hampered, mediocre are elected into senior government offices and the people suffers years and years of bad governance as it would always be difficult to hold erring officers to account.

### **5.3. Conclusion.**

Sanity needs to be restored in our democratic process for Nigerians to be able to effectively enjoy the promised dividends of democracy. Elections are means through which the electorates express their approval or disapproval of the programmes or policies of a particular political party. It helps the electorates support political aspirants whose views of development they agree with. When the system is tainted with violence and irregularities, it makes it almost impossible for the people to have a say in how they are governed or to agree or disagree with the policy choices of any particular party.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

To enhance the sanity and promote the credibility of the country's electoral process, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be greater enlightenment to teach the people the tenets of the democratic culture, teach them what is expected in a democracy and how to protest electoral irregularities.

2. Political parties should be strengthened to check abuses by moneybags and powerful individuals. Members of the political parties should be educated to know their rights, responsibilities and roles towards strengthening the democratic culture.
3. The country's judicial process should be re-engineered to deal toughly with electoral offenders, punish parties that are complicit in electoral malpractices and sanitise the entire system holistically.
4. Civil society groups should also get more active in monitoring, supervising and calling politicians and their parties to order when they go against laid down rules in the polity.
5. The media also needs to get more involved in exposing the antics of rich individuals and politicians who sabotage the electoral process with a view to undermining it.
6. Civil society groups and the media should collectively mount pressure on the president to sign the electoral act passed into law in 2018 by the 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly.
7. Politicians indicted for violent conducts and their parties should be restricted from participating in future elections as a deterrent to others.

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