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Verification Voting Machine and the Management of the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria

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Abstract:

Election has been seen as a process of choosing a person to occupy a position or an office. Its fundamental element lies in democratic practice worldwide. The conduct of the 1999 transition election as well as the subsequent consolidation elections of 2003, and 2007 were largely marred by irregularities in Nigeria. These irregularities manifest themselves through the exchange of voters' card during election for money, snatching of ballot boxes, announcing of results where election did not hold, falsification of results and underage voting. Action of these politicians have degenerated in enthronement of un-popular leaders, some whom when they emerge began to think less about the masses, since their emergence can hardly be determined by them (masses). These challenges led to series of electoral reforms which gave rise to the introduction of voting technology in the country to checkmate excesses of these politicians. With the adoption of voting electronic device in the 2015 General Elections by Nigeria's Election Management Body (EMB) – INEC, electoral malpractices became more difficult for politicians and political parties. This paper examined the link between the use of verification voting machines and the outcome of the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. The study is a documentary research and data were analyzed through qualitative descriptive method. Using mixed method approach, the paper found that verification voting machine (VVM) adopted during the accreditation exercise accounted for less fraudulent practices during the presidential election. Consequently, we recommend that Nigeria's electoral umpire should improve on these technological gadgets to avoid some of the challenges it encountered.

Keywords: Verification voting machine, management, election, electoral malpractices, mixed method approach

1. Introduction

Election is at the epicenter in any democratic government worldwide and its basic tenets could be seen in allowing the electorate to freely exercise their franchise on contenders for public office. Election serves as a house wire by which the electorates can have control over their representatives. These invariably condition the elected officials to be accountable as they could be removed through the same process when they fail to represent the electorate. It was based on this that in 2015 General election of Nigeria, former President Goodluck Jonathan on different times keep emphasizing his readiness to guarantee the sanctity of the ballots. This effort was in consonance with his believe that until the citizens right to decide who represents them is enforced and guaranteed, leaders who are committed for the common good of all would be difficult to get.

Presumably, this was to prove to the people that absolute power resides on them even though, history has it that past elections in Nigeria had remained controversial, crisis ridden among politicians, political parties and other stakeholders in an attempt to subvert the will of the people and democratic process.

Elections are not only meant to ensure, confirm or re-affirm the legitimacy of the executives through a regular consent, but also provide a fertile ground for liberal democracy to thrive and be consolidated. However, it is necessary to state that election may not guarantee the consolidation and the attainment of the democratic process but it remains vital in the democratization process. Therefore, it is central and a *sine qua non* for democratic consolidation. From pre-independence election of 1959 to post independence election of 2007 in Nigeria, electoral process and system had remain the same with worsening incidence of disenfranchisement of some electorates, manipulation or falsification of election results, unnecessary suit case at the tribunals, harassment and intimidation of opponents, unnecessary crisis among others.

Conducting free and fair elections in Nigeria has been a very big problem since independence. The 1964 federal elections and 1965 Western region elections were marred by widespread electoral malpractices. The violence and crisis that followed it gave the Western region the name 'wild wild west'. These electoral problems and violence were some of the remote causes of the civil war in Nigeria from 1966 – 1970. In line with this, Nigeria almost broke up as a country over the crisis that arose from the annulled election of MKO Abiola in 1993.

However, the administration of free, fair and credible election in Nigeria has posed a serious challenge to the electoral bodies since its establishment. Arising from this is the fact that Electoral malpractices have become a recurring decimal in Nigeria that in most cases it may be attributed to the weak institutions, inexperience and lack of expertise on the side of the Electoral body (INEC) and other stake holders in the country. And this has reduced the confidence of the citizens in participating in their election.

Electoral succession in Nigerian politics has remained the same as Presidential elections from 1999, 2003, and 2007 was marred by irregularities which took different forms of snatching of ballot boxes, intimidation/harassment of voters, exchange of voter's card, falsification of results, under age voting, political parties manipulating the result sheet among others. In doing this, their major concern is to outwit, subvert and sideline the will of the people. The conduct of these elections in Nigeria was accompanied by a worsening contraction of the democratic principles.

Following the worsening incidence of these democratic principles accompanied by Nigerian presidential elections since independence led to the introduction of verification voting device – Biometric Register and Accreditation System to enable the electoral umpire and his team of professionals to identify, authenticate and reduce multiple voting in the electoral process of Nigeria which would give the electorates the confidence that their votes count (Nwangwu, 2015).

These INEC reforms on electronic voting were further modified in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria with the introduction of Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) along side with Smart Card Reader Machine, a device which can scan the PVC to see the authenticity of the device used by a voter in a polling station (Alebiosu, 2015).

The adoption of technological voting device during elections has attracted scholarly attention in the literature. Nwangwu, (2015), Odiakose, (2015), Alabiosu, (2015) are some of the works that have examined the use of verification voting machines in elections. While they explored the contribution of these devices in the 2015 general election of Nigeria, the holistic manner which they analyze their work created an urgent need for this research. Therefore, our focus is on how the voters' accreditation process during the 2015 presidential elections enhances the success of the election.

Following the introduction is a review on the electoral management bodies and the administration of elections in Nigeria. The next section shall be on the key issues on the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. The fourth section shall focus on the deployment of biometric accreditation devices by the electoral body. The fifth section discusses the verification voting machine and the outcome of the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. While the sixth section shall be conclusive remarks and recommendations.

1.1. Electoral Management Bodies and the Administration of Elections in Nigeria

A series of badly conducted elections could create perpetual political instability and easily reverse the gains of democratization. If adequate care is not taken, badly conducted elections can totally undermine democratization and replace it with authoritarian rule, of the civilian or military varieties. At best, they can install inept and corrupt leadership that can herald, if not institutionalize bad governance. There are many illustrations or manifestations of this throughout Africa. But nowhere is this as amply illustrated as in the Nigerian case, especially between 1999 and 2007 (Jega, 2011).

The history of elections in Nigeria has been a chequered one, because electoral conduct since independence has been an exercise in futility, characterized and marred by malpractices and corruption. A flash back at the political history of Nigeria since independence will glaringly reveal that past efforts at democratization collapsed due to failure of electoral bodies known as electoral commissions to conduct credible elections. It is also unfortunate to note that electoral commissions in Nigeria have failed to learn from history. The problem faced by past commissions continues to recur and beset present electoral management body while past shortcomings continue to manifest. The process of transition or transfer of power after each successive military regime becomes a process of rebuilding, recreating and bringing into being, institutions that have been dissolved or kept in abeyance. Therefore, the history of hitherto electoral management bodies or commissions in Nigeria has been a history of dissolutions, constitutions and reconstitutions (Okoye, 2007, Ekundayo, 2015).

The structure of Electoral systems in Nigeria is problematic that having free, fair and credible elections may not only be difficult but may remain a thorn in the flesh. This can be seen in the excessive monetization of politics, the general level of poverty and illiteracy, electoral laws or acts not being taken seriously, lack of independence and government influence on the side of the electoral body itself. However, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other electoral bodies that have existed in Nigeria kept on doing the same thing and expect different results. With the exception of Professors Humphrey Nwosu, and Attahiru Jega who courageously toe a different line and was supported by the Civil liberty organizations and pro-democracy group.

The Nigerian electoral process is complex with multifaceted structure that free and fair elections has always been adjudged as the one accepted by the winning or by the ruling party with less or no regard to the workable guide on election or institutional framework. The inherent challenge in the management of elections constitutes a major factor in the democratic dispensation of many countries in Africa. Although, the integrity of elections is fundamental to the sustenance of truly representative form of government. Election conduct in Nigeria over the years has been incredible and unsatisfactory as the umpires have consistently performed below expectation. Evidently, successive electoral commissions in the country have been either pro-ruling party or engaged in the manipulation of election results in favour of the highest bidding contestants. Consequently, the outcome of such electoral manipulation had been absolutely disastrous as evidenced, for instance, the 1983 election violence in Anambra, Ondo and Oyo states where the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN), allegedly masterminded the fraudulent rigging of the peoples' electoral verdict (Ajayi, 2007).

Accordingly, Nnoli, (2003) made it clearer as he said that the history of elections has not shown that the masses can look forward to them as a significant force in changing the material conditions of their existence. During these

elections, the moral values of the country were also corrupted by the blatant disregard of cherished rules, norms and regulations by the politicians obsessed with winning power at all cost.

In other words, the change in nomenclature of electoral bodies in Nigeria was never a desideratum for having free, fair and credible elections if not succession elections in the country would have become a clear manifestation to that. No wonder the fact that all the change in the electoral body's name has not translated into any meaningful result – starting from Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN), Federal Electoral Commission (FEC), Federal Electoral Commission of Nigeria (FEDECO), National Electoral Commission (NEC), National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Reviewing different elections, we had since 1999, Tinubu (as cited in Adeolu, 2015, p.176) added that since the return to civil rule on 29 May 1999, Nigeria has held general elections, aside from sundry re-run elections and local government polls. Of those general elections, none of them met the necessary condition for credible polling, even if to be fair, the 1999 election, under the headship of late Ephraim Akpata, appeared the cleanest of them. But a disturbing trend is that as each general election was worse than the preceding one (2003 was worse than 1999; and 2007 was worse than 2003), each succeeding electoral umpire was also worse than his predecessor".

As a corollary from above, one need not to be convinced of the true fact that the history of elections in Nigeria have not in any way tried to strengthened the democratic consolidation. Rather each of these general elections attempted to initiate and promote crisis, discord, antagonism, injustice, corruption, exclusion of citizens, and apathy.

According to Omotola (as cited in Nwangwu 2015, p.11) the porous nature of the Nigerian general election in 2007 was a watershed that made well meaning citizens in the country to recourse to electoral reform. The Nigerian government, through pro-democracy, opposition parties and in conjunction with civil society organizations made serious effort to see that a well articulated reform is instituted in the electoral system. For instance, the Centre for Democracy and Development and the Electoral Reform Network submitted a proposal to the Mohammed Uwais Electoral Reform Committee and also monitored it up to the National Assembly. The benefits and success of Uwais Electoral reform were seen in the removal of the then INEC Chairman, Professor Maurice Iwu and in replacing him with Professor Attahiru Jega who was expected to implement the electoral act.

However, having looked at electoral succession carried out by the electoral body in Nigeria with its systemic failure to organize and conduct general acceptable elections worldwide, there are major issues that led to the improvement on 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

1.2. Key Issues on the 2015 Presidential Election of Nigeria

The 2015 presidential election of Nigeria was a good outing in the annals of history. It was seen as breakthrough in the democratic dispensation of the country. Although, there were some shortcomings which can still be handled in the future election of Nigeria. Looking at how fair the election was, we could attribute its fairness to a number of issues, including several reforms made by the INEC on electoral act, introduction of smart card reader (SCR) and permanent voters' card (PVC) by the INEC, President Goodluck's readiness to play by the rules.

1.3. Several Reforms made by the INEC on Electoral Act

The rejection of Nigeria electoral system by Nigerians and the international community have been seen as a water-shed that gave rise to series of innovations adopted by the INEC during the 2015 Presidential election. For instance, in an attempt to find out several shortcomings of elections in Nigeria particularly 2007 general election, Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) was instituted in August 2007 to review the country's electoral process with the intention to ensure the quality and standard of elections in line with the international best practices. In its report, the ERC noted different challenges that affected the management of elections in Nigeria. They commented on the fragility of the electoral acts, the administrative dependence and financial control of the electoral bodies, the need to establish a candidate free from external control and intra-party democracy, and the need to find a better way of addressing issues relating to electoral offences (Civil Society Group 2015, p.19).

Consequently, amendment of the constitution was followed by amending the 2006 Electoral Act in order to provide a strong legal backing during the 2011 general elections. The Electoral process was regulated by the Electoral Act in many ways which includes but not limited to the nomination of candidates, registration of political parties, regulation of party primaries, finances and electoral offences. The Electoral Act 2010 was further amended on the 29th of December, 2010, and on the 24th of January, 2011, in order to provide INEC an ample opportunity to carryout voters' registration and the conduct of election.

The articulation of INEC's strategic plan from 2012 up to 2016 by ERC was carried out in a way that incorporates election organized agencies like the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room. The broad objective of these groups were to provide electoral guide, principles that would encourage the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections; improving voter education; training and research; registering political parties and monitoring how they operate; meeting with people that matters both within and outside the country with a view to reorganize and reposition INEC (Civil Society Group, 2015).

The INEC's reforms and core innovations are based on tripod stand: The Election Project Plan (EPP), the Election Management System (EMS), and the Business Process Review (BRP). The Election Project Plan is meant to plan ahead of time all the necessary things that would be needed before and during the election to see that they are ready before the actual conduct of the election. Election Management System (EMS) is involved with the actual management of the conduct of election through the help of stakeholders; independent observers (national and international) while the Business Plan

Review (BPR) was an effort to review the entire process and see where necessary amendment is needed. These were attempt made to see that INEC as an institution would get it right.

1.4. Introduction of Smart Card Reader (SCR) and Permanent Voters Card (PVC)

The use of SCR and PVC in the 2015 general election was adopted to have:

- An ICT driven voter register;
- A Re-Modified Open Ballot System (REMOBS);
- A set out standard in production of sensitive electoral materials (adding security code and numbering serially both colours of ballot papers, ballot boxes and result sheets);
- An articulated outline for collation and returns of results;
- A revised and transparent methods, techniques that would be adopted on election day (collation and pasting of results in polling centres);
- Enhance Voter education and sensitization of citizen for engagement;
- Creation of an Inter-agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) to ensure proper organization, engagement of all security agencies during voting and election periods (Jega, 2014, p.6). What remains pertinent is whether it was able to achieve all these set out goals.

1.5. President Goodluck Jonathan's Readiness to Follow the Rule

Most of the Nigerian past leaders are interested in holding on to power no matter whose ox is gored. They can do anything within their reach just to retain the power. This can be better understood by the aphorism that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Going back to the memory lane, we could see that what gave rise to the annulment of June 12 election was that Gen. Ibrahim Babangida's led government was not willing to accept the result as was declared by professor Humphrey Nwosu. Even when it is clearly seen that he was not one of the contestants. Virtually, all past Nigerian Presidents believed in the saying that 'he who pays the piper, dictates the tune'. Therefore, they (former Nigeria presidents) keep subjecting electoral umpire to always organize, conduct national elections in their favour or in favour of their candidates. But the former President Goodluck Jonathan toes a different line by his willingness to follow by the rule.

According to Tinubu (as cited in Adeolu, 2015, p. 172)

"... the conduct of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo as elected president left little or no doubt that there was a sort of "Army Arrangement" His style was gruff and dismissive. He barely disguised his contempt for democratic finesse. He openly and unrepentantly subverted due process. He, without end, blackmailed the National Assembly on some bogus pretence to higher ideals of patriotism".

He further argued that Nigeria's democratic dispensation under Olusegun Obasanjo was run on military temper". Consequently, looking at this and remembering vividly the statement of the former President Goodluck Jonathan during his 2015 election bid that "his political ambition does not worth the life of any of the Nigerian citizens", there and then would one see the exercise and manifestation of the rule of law.

The increase on electoral malpractices has given rise to the introduction and the use of verification voting machine to forestall and reduce election irregularities in Nigeria. Against this backdrop is to find out how the anti-rigging devise was administered by the INEC during the 2015 presidential election of Nigeria.

1.6. Deployment of Biometric Accreditation Devices by the Electoral Body

An electoral malpractice witnessed in the past general elections in Nigeria was what gave rise to the electoral reforms instituted in the country. The outcome of the electoral act led to the adoption of biometric devices by the electoral body during election to see that electoral malpractices are minimized to the barest minimum. However, the adoption of ICT driven device in the last general elections in Nigeria generated mix-feelings between and among elite class before, during and after the elections. According to Peters (as cited in Alebiosu, (2015, p.11) the electronic device has the power of reducing different forms of electoral malpractices. For instance, it has the tendency if properly utilized of reducing multiple voting during election. This notwithstanding, some political opponents saw it as a device designed to favour certain political party in the country.

Apart from this, there has been lopsidedness in the deployment of the card reader machines in the 2015 general election of Nigeria. The same is true of subsequent elections, such as the 2011 general election and other sundry elections in Nigeria within the period. All these notwithstanding, the 2015 general elections in Nigeria has been adjudged to be an improvement on the status quo as many have described it as free, fair and transparent. The success of the 2015 election may well be attributed to the innovations of the INEC Chairman Professor Attahiru Jega, evidenced in the introduction of the PVC and the card reading machine, aimed at checkmating rigging, impersonation and related electoral malpractices.

Despite the general acceptance of the outcome of the election, particularly the presidential election, there are still pockets of dissentments that the elections were flawed. For instance, Zaggi (2015), in a media article, titled: "Transparent but flawed presidential election" posit that:

Some of the noticeable faults of the presidential elections, as observed on the day of the election at the polling units monitored, include: late arrival of electoral materials; malfunctioning of Card Readers; insufficient and, in some cases, none availability of electoral materials; overcrowding in polling units, and voting throughout the night which exposed the voters to high risk. Those many faults according to findings have ended up disenfranchising many voters in many parts of the country. (Citizens' Advocate, April 19, 2015, p.18)

Evidently, the electoral body was confronted with logistic problems including the late arrival of its officials, inadequacy of both the officials and election materials in some units, lack of proper arrangement for conveying officials and materials to polling stations in view of the restrictions of vehicular movements, and lateness in commencement of elections.

Accordingly, many voters were denied of their voting rights soon after the accreditation period. The official time slated by INEC Manual (2015) for accreditation was 8. 00 am up to 1.00 pm. It equally noted that by 1:00 pm when the actual accreditation exercise is meant to end, if there are voters who were at the venue but have not been accredited, that they should be attended to before the actual voting exercise would begin. This was interpreted to mean different things to different people, while some see it that actual voting starts by 1:00 pm, others see it that once, you are accredited, voting has taken place. That is to say that accreditation and voting exercise were done concurrently whereas it was not so based on the outline of the election manuals.

The distribution of the permanent voters' card (PVC) assumed another pattern following the understanding that there was a higher rate of PVC collection in opposition strongholds in the north and south-west than in the southern regions where the support for the ruling party was strongest (Report on Nigeria's General Elections 2015). In line with what happened in September 2014, INEC suspended its initial plan to delimit new constituencies but rather introduce a new scheme to create 30,000 new polling units to relieve the pressure on the existing approximately 120,000 units. The polling units' reorganization plan by the INEC was condemned based on allegations that the commission had tactically distributed the units in a way that favoured northern regions. This was because one may find it difficult to understand why the electoral umpire headed by Professor Jega would wait till 2015 general election before introducing and creating new polling units.

Odiakose, (2015) made it clearer when he said that what led to many challenges encountered in the 2015 general election was the timing in the adoption of the Smart Card Reader (SCR). To him, how can INEC Chairman, Attahiru Jega stayed four years in office before introducing a new device that would be use during election with little or no better effort to train INEC staff and ad-hoc staff that would handle the Card Readers.

Another problem needed to establish here was the rate and manner with which the distribution of these technological devices was carried out in 2015 Presidential election of Nigeria. Despite the insecurity challenges in the North East Zones and the high rate of internal displaced persons over there, the available data has it that many people from that area have collected their PVC's unlike what is obtainable in the South Eastern and South-South zones.

Even as the deployment of the smart card reader and permanent voters' card was not properly administered by INEC during the 2015 Presidential election in Nigeria, there are still some remarkable improvements brought to the electoral process through the use of these technological devices.

In the presidential election result presented, out of the 67,422,005 registered voters, only 31,746,490 which constitute forty eight percent were accredited during the election. During the voting exercise, out of 29,432,083 of votes were cast, 28,587,564 votes were valid (CCPA, 2015). Therefore, one can easily say that the 2015 general election in Nigeria and the outcome of presidential election in particular were different when one tries to compare it with other preceding presidential elections that have taken place in the country. Though, looking at the outcome, one can still see some level of apathy and irregularities recorded which is likely to have some side effect in the polity of the country. The key issue is that, the inability of the political elites and the electoral management body to make the electoral process more stable which would enable the citizens have trust and take active part during election (Temitope, 2015).

1.7. Verification Voting Device and the Outcome of the 2015 Presidential Election

The success of the 2015 presidential elections was a momentous victory for Nigeria in its democratic consolidation journey. The successful election has answered the many questions that have been milling around before this event. Was the country going to survive such a closely contested election considering the levels of divisive politicking that had preceded the polls? Was INEC's innovation – the PVC and card reader – going to revolutionize elections, mitigate or totally eradicate electoral fraud? Would citizens ever witness and participate in free, fair, transparent and credible elections? Nigeria not only scaled through all these challenges, but did so commendably across several fronts, most notably through the calm and demure nature of its citizens and the INEC chairman (Amenaghawon Joseph, Premium Times, April 24, 2015).

The use of technological device by the INEC has resuscitated people's confidence in choosing their representatives. The permanent voters' cards (PVCs) and the biometric data for verification of electorates was planned in such a way that the system identifies only registered voters with a view to reduce electoral malpractices and build

confidence on the citizens during elections. There are three basic problems the permanent voters' card and the card reader can address which have been repeatedly occurring and reoccurring during election in Nigeria. They are:

- Inflation of the number of electorates in polling stations.
- Inadequate representation of electorates that is actually present.
- Fake and multiple registrations of voters that create room for easy malpractices.

No doubt, actual report on this issue was addressed by INEC both in 2011 and 2015. Multiple registrations observed in 2011 were above 4 million. Apart from this, it was equally observed that in the 2011 polls, some local government areas turnouts up to 94% and 96% of all registered voters in the polling units which somehow reached 100% turnouts irrespective of the difficulty of these numbers. The problems continued in the new registration where more than 580,000 multiple registrations were noticed and another 680,000 were removed for not completing their data (Nigeria civil society situation room 2015).

Therefore, verification voting device addresses the issue of multiple voting, then the tendency of producing more than enough voters to inflate the election results. If one tries to compare the turnout rate of voters in the preceding general elections like 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015, one would understand that the rate of voters turnout were drastically reducing not only because electorates are fade up with the electoral system but also electoral reforms instituted in the country becomes the magic wand. It is based on this fact that many politicians in the country find it difficult to accept and endorse electronic voting that was introduced.

Year	Registered Votes	Valid Votes	Invalid Votes	Total Votes	Percentages Of Votes Cast
1999	57,938,945	29,848,441	431,611	30,280,052	52.26%
2003	60,823,002	42,018,735	2,538,246	39,480,489	69.08%
2007	61,567,036	35,397,517			57.49%
2011	73,528,040	38,209,978	1,259,506	39,469,484	53.68%
2015	67,422,005	28,587,504	844,519	29,432,083	43.65%

Table 1: Summary Results of Presidential Elections in Nigeria from 1999 - 2015
Inec.org

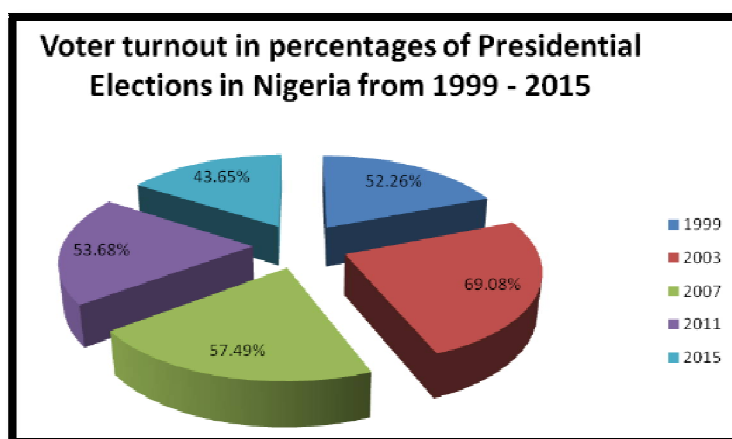


Figure 1
Compiled by the Researchers

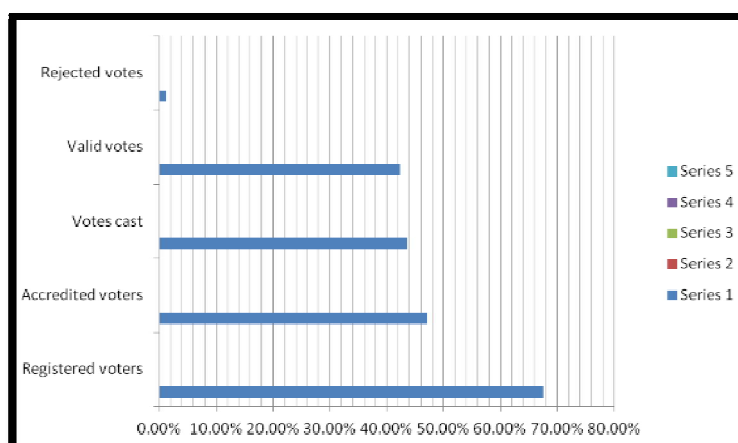


Figure 2: Summary Result of 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria
Culled from inec.org

The above table and charts justify the need for technological voting process in Nigeria. If properly utilized, the device does better than harm; the 2011 register confirmed that more than 4 million individuals had multiple registrations with the help of fingerprints identification. Apart from this number, another additional 12 million people had data that was not completed out of errors or in an attempt to defraud the process. This contributed to the reduction of the registered voters from 73 million people in 2011 to 58 million before the CVR process started. Once people were screened through this medium, permanent voters' card which contain their bio-data would be given to them for proper identification. Revisiting or looking at what happened in 2011, one can easily find out that there were more than 16 million temporary voter registrations that were not translated to permanent voters' cards which may have been stuck off the register. Even in the 2015, there were some attempts to fraud the process, for instance, 21% of attempted new registrations were noticed as multiple registration in Abia state whereas 13% were eliminated on the same issue in Rivers state.

In spite of the challenges encountered with the introduction of the card readers which is to be expected with the introduction of new technology, the 2015 Presidential and National Assembly elections was a huge improvement when compared to the 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections. The election was largely peaceful; there was a drastic reduction of cases of snatching of ballot boxes, unlike the 2011 election which saw widespread violence in the northern parts of the country following the elections results.

2. Conclusion

The effective application of technological innovation by the election management body is one of the major things that could resuscitate the voters' confidence during election and compel politicians to be attuned in their representative but what remains pertinent is the ability of the electoral bodies to administer it properly. Indeed, there is a correlation between election management bodies and the institutionalization of democracy in any country of the world. Therefore, the paper found out that the verification voting device adopted by the INEC during accreditation process contributed to the less electoral irregularities in the 2015 presidential election. It was equally clear that this made many politicians to remain calm in face of defeat rather than causing violence.

From the foregoing, the paper recommends that:

- INEC should be proactive to ensure the full implementation and strict adherence to the Election Project Plan (EPP), Election Management System (EMS) and as well as Business Review Plan (BRP). This will enable them to strengthen its operational, structural and logistics problems.
- The electoral body should strictly adhere to election procedures at all levels with a view of finding out measures to reduce inconsistency in their implementation.
- There should be an urgent need for organization, arrangement and creation of new constituencies, polling units before the election period by the electoral body in the country.
- Electoral Act need to be amended to accommodate the innovations in the electoral process of Nigeria as regards to 'ICT Voting Patterns'.

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