

The cover page features a black horizontal band across the middle containing the title. The top and bottom right corners are filled with a solid green color, while the rest of the page is white. A thin vertical line separates the white area from the green area on the right.

# PERCEPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS ON THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTION IN NIGERIA.

## **Executive Summary**

Nigeria held the 2023 general elections for presidential and National Assembly elections as well as Governorships and State Houses of Assembly to mark 24 years of uninterrupted democracy—the longest span in Nigeria’s history. This served as a critical transfer of power by President Muhammadu Buhari who have served two mandates and is ineligible to seek another four-year term.

Election is one of the most key elements of democracy; conducting free, fair and credible elections has remained a big challenge to democratic process of governance, since the return of Democracy in 1999. In the same democratic process, Nigeria has continued to experienced imposition of candidates, rigging, violence, malpractice, bribing and other form of illegality in the electoral system. Some stakeholders hold mixed opinions on the conduct of elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); whether it had conducted free, fair, inclusive and credible elections since the return of Democracy in Nigeria.

This project entailed the conduct of a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on citizens’ perception and understanding of INEC’s Mandate and the conduct of the 2023 general elections. The project focus on selected states across the 6 geopolitical of the country, using 2 states per geopolitical zone plus the FCT namely: FCT, Kogi and Plateau (North Central), Kaduna and Sokoto (North West), Taraba and Gombe (North East), Anambra and Enugu (South East), Osun and Oyo (South West), Delta and Edo (South South). The objective was to evaluate citizens perception, including understanding on the functions and mandates of INEC. This was achieved through in-depth discussions among participants representing various stakeholder groups across the country. The study was designed to bring together diverse respondents bordering across stakeholders including CSOs, Youths, Observers, INEC Adhoc staff, law enforcement officers, women representatives, religious leaders and politicians to a round table to discuss the performance of INEC during the general elections.

Participants were brought together and given the room and opportunity to freely express their views on the conduct of INEC and the activities of INEC staff during the polls. To facilitate a robust interaction, participants were allowed to freely express other general views relating to the 2023 elections and linked with INEC.

Quite a number of revelations were made touching on the strength and weaknesses of INEC and other stakeholders pre, during and post-election periods. Certain peculiarities also played out in the conduct of the 2023 general elections with respect to their performance in states across the six geopolitical zones in the country.

## **BACKGROUND**

On February 25 2023 and March 18 2023, Nigerians trooped to the polls to elect a new President, National Assembly members as well as 29 State Governors and members of 36 State Houses of Assembly. It was the seventh consecutive general election in Nigeria since the return of democracy in 1999. This represents 23 years of unbroken democracy, the longest in the history of Nigeria.

The presidential election was contested by eighteen political parties and conducted under a new electoral law known as the Electoral Act 2022 which allows the Nigerian electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to use the technology of Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, BVAS, for the conduct of the elections; for the fingerprints and facial biometric identification and authentication of the voters. The new electoral Act also allows the Commission to transmit election results electronically from the collation centres into the INEC servers and results viewing portal immediately after the counting of the votes.

The new technological innovation introduced by INEC paved the way for online pre-registration system of voters and new INEC enrolment device which helped to reduce the long queues witnessed in previous voter registration and voting exercises in the past. The new electoral Act as amended by the National Assembly also extended the time for political campaigns from 90 days to 150 days, thereby creating an opportunity for politicians to take their campaigns to the nooks and crannies of the country if they so desire. 93.4 million eligible Nigerian voters were registered

to participate in the polls. However, only a little above 30 million people turned out for the February 25 Presidential/National Assembly and Edo State House of Assembly elections, a far cry from the total number of registered voters.

Prior to the general elections, the electoral umpire, INEC, adopted some strategic action plans to ensure a peaceful, successful and smooth conduct of the elections. To achieve that, the Commission activated 2,673 additional permanent voter card registration centres nationwide; introduced simultaneous accreditation and voting system, and created additional polling units nearest to the voters. It also embarked on continuous engagements with election stakeholders such as security agencies, political party leaders, civil society organizations and the media towards improving the electoral process.

In a bid to ensure that no eligible voter was disenfranchised in the general elections, the INEC made special provisions for persons with disabilities, and adequate provisions for voters in internally displaced camps, IDPs, to enable them exercise their franchise during the elections. The Commission also engaged in continuous sensitization and enlightenment programmes on the processes of and preparations for the elections, to ensure that the citizens understood the electoral proceedings fully and participate peacefully in the elections. The outcome of the elections marked a significant departure from the previous elections and it appears that people now have different perception of the electoral body.

The outcome of the elections no doubt created diverse image for INEC in the minds of the citizens and stakeholders which must be unraveled with a view to giving insightful guide tips to the commission in the interest of country hence making the need for this study becoming imperative.

### **Introduction to the national survey**

The primary objective of the national survey is to gather comprehensive data on public opinion, attitudes, and awareness, and understanding the mandate regarding the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and its performance in conducting elections in Nigeria. By assessing the level of public trust, identifying areas for improvement, and providing valuable

insights, this survey aims to guide policy decisions that enhance the credibility and transparency of the electoral process.

### **Objectives:**

The survey focused on the followings:

- a. **Assessment of Public Awareness:** Understanding the extent of public knowledge and awareness regarding INEC's roles, functions, and responsibilities in the electoral process.
- b. **Evaluate Public Trust:** Gauged the level of public trust and confidence in INEC's ability to conduct free, fair, and credible elections in Nigeria.
- c. **Explored Perception of Electoral Integrity:** Investigating public perceptions of the integrity of past elections, with a focus on factors such as transparency, impartiality, inclusiveness, and adherence to electoral laws.
- d. **Identified Areas for Improvement:** the project identified areas of concern or potential improvements in the conduct of elections, as perceived by the public.
- e. **Gathered Recommendations:** the national survey collected suggestions and recommendations from the public on ways to enhance the credibility and transparency of the electoral process.

### **Methodology:**

- a. **Sample Design:** The survey adopted a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across diverse demographic variables such as age, gender, geographic location, and socio-economic status.
- b. **Data Collection:** to reach a broad cross-section of the population, a combination of face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, and online surveys was employed. Multiple channels of data collection was utilized to maximize response rates and ensure inclusivity.
- c. **Questionnaire Development:** The survey questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

- d. Ethical Considerations: The survey strictly adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring privacy, informed consent, and confidentiality of respondents' data.

### **Survey Components:**

- a. Demographic Information: Demographic data was collected to establish a comprehensive understanding of the respondents and analyze perception variations across different groups.
- b. Awareness and Knowledge: the national survey assessed the level of awareness and understanding among the general public regarding INEC's mandate, functions, and electoral procedures.
- c. Trust and Confidence: the survey measured the level of trust and confidence in INEC's ability to conduct free, fair, and credible elections, including factors that influence public perceptions.
- d. Perception of Electoral Integrity: the survey evaluated public perceptions of past elections, with a focus on transparency, impartiality, inclusiveness, adherence to electoral laws, and management of electoral disputes.
- e. Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction: the survey identified areas where INEC is perceived to have performed well and areas that require improvement, allowing respondents to rate various aspects of the electoral process.
- f. Recommendations: flowing from the survey results, specific measures and proposals were made by respondents to enhance the credibility, transparency, and inclusiveness of future elections.

### **Data Analysis and Reporting**

- a. Qualitative Analysis: the data and information collected from the national survey were analyzed through the adoption of a qualitative analysis approach. Issues and data collected from Focus Group Discussions and online administration of semi-structured questionnaire were analyzed through a content analysis approach and contextualization of public perceptions gathered.

- b. **Report Preparation:** Preparing a comprehensive report that presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the survey. The report will be publicly available and shared with relevant stakeholders, including INEC, policymakers, civil society organizations, and the general public.

### **Timelines and Resources**

The survey was conducted over a period of four months. To ensure a successful execution, a dedicated research team consisting of experienced survey researchers, data analysts, and report writers were assembled.

### **Dissemination and Stakeholder Engagement**

- a. **Public Dissemination:** The survey findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be disseminated through various channels, including public forums, press releases, social media platforms, and the official website of INEC. Efforts will be made to ensure that the information reaches a wide audience, including the general public and key stakeholders.
- b. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Meaningful engagement with key stakeholders, such as INEC officials, government representatives, civil society organizations, and electoral observers, were prioritized. The survey findings were presented to these stakeholders to foster discussions on potential strategies for addressing identified concerns and improving the electoral process.
- c. **Policy Dialogue:** Facilitating policy dialogues and roundtable discussions will provide a platform for presenting the survey results. These dialogues will enable stakeholders to exchange views, share experiences, and collaboratively develop action plans to strengthen INEC's performance and enhance public confidence in the electoral process.

### **Follow-up Action**

The national survey was designed to serve as a catalyst for actionable steps to enhance the performance of INEC and improve the conduct of elections in Nigeria. Key follow-up actions may include:

- a. Recommendations Implementation: Advocating for the implementation of recommendations derived from the survey findings by INEC and relevant government authorities. This may involve advocating for policy amendments, capacity building initiatives, and procedural reforms.
- b. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the progress made in implementing the recommendations and measuring the impact on public perception and electoral integrity.
- c. Continuous Public Engagement: Fostering an ongoing dialogue with the public through regular town hall meetings, awareness campaigns, and feedback mechanisms to address concerns, enhance transparency, and reinforce public trust in INEC.
- d. Capacity Building: Supporting INEC in its capacity building efforts to strengthen institutional capabilities, enhance election management processes, and ensure the effective implementation of electoral reforms.

### **Participants selection**

Participants were selected based on their involvement and relevance to the electoral process. To ensure diversity, participants were drawn from various sectors. The aim was to capture a range of perspectives reflecting different segments of society involved in the election.

### **NATIONAL SURVEY KEY FINDINGS**

Responses from the Focus Group Discussions across the six geo-political zones were centred on the following areas:

#### **Public Interest and Turnout:**

A surge in public interest and voter turnout during the 2023 elections. This election witnessed widespread participation, with both urban and rural areas experiencing heightened engagement.

*“In this 2023 elections, you can feel it that most Nigerians especially those in towns, were so much interested in the election especially the turnout”.*

*FGD participant – Citizen / PWD*

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*“The 2023 general election was very successful; it was big progress from where we are coming from. We saw the willingness of those who previously were not interested when we talk about elections. We saw the young, the old, the women coming out in their numbers to participate in the election. In my view, it has to do with the fact that we have seen few staggered elections in states but with the introduction of new technology, we saw how the issue of ballot box snatching which imparts a lot of conflict and crisis in the elections, leaving the women and old people, scared and stopping them to participate in exercising their civic rights. The use of the BVAS has eliminated this violence associated with our previous elections. So, we saw a huge turn-out of people coming out to participate in the elections”.*

*FGD participant – Security personnel*

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*“This is what I describe as one of the most controversial elections, probably because it is the first time since our return to democratic rule that we were having a three-horse race especially when it has been between just two parties before and a third one came in and people reacted differently. After the election of course, a lot of people expressed disappointment in the outcome probably because it didn’t go the way they had expected but I also think that a lot of perception played out in how these persons reacted to the outcome and how much of the knowledge out there about the processes.”*

*FGD participants - Media*

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### **General Conduct and Transmission of Results:**

A prevailing sentiment among most Nigerians, particularly those in urban centres, was concern regarding the conduct of the election. Specifically, there were reservations about the uploading and transmission of results. It was noted that the experiences varied across regions, emphasizing that the electoral landscape in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) differed from other states.

*“We found some challenges in terms of uploading results because we experienced network problems.”*

*FGD participant – Adhoc staff*

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### **Patriotism and Government Accountability:**

Citizens expressed a nuanced view of patriotism in relation to government performance. The consensus was that true patriotism is based on government accountability and the alignment of actions with promises. If the government fails to meet its commitments, citizens questioned the sincerity of the call for patriotism.

### **Security and Perception of Citizens:**

The security environment during the election was perceived positively due to a coordinated approach among security personnel. However, misinformation in the media contributed to a skewed public perception of the election, suggesting that media literacy and responsible reporting are essential.

*“A lot of people didn’t follow the processes that led to the election day itself. Some of the disappointments that people expressed were based on the information out there and the kind of information at their disposal. For instance, there was confusion about the function of the BVAS and the IREV. Most people couldn’t separate what the BVAS does and what the IREV does. Politicians also tried to play up sentiments and these brought up some kind of expectations. My conclusion is that having an expectation and not really understanding the process has played out in how most people expressed their disappointment in the process of the election. But by and large, I think for some of the results that are seen, I think the election was a success because if you look at the National Assembly right now it is constituted with different parties not in those days that it was just one dominant party. You can see that people who were contesting for the first time won unlike some governors who had their stronghold and leaders of political parties couldn’t get themselves back into the National Assembly as it was done before.”*

*FGD participant – Media*

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### **Media and Election Controversies:**

Influence of both conventional and social media in shaping perceptions. Misinformation, driven by limited regulation of social media, led to controversies.

*‘If people were looking at statistics or data of outcome, they probably will not allow their emotions to play into all of this. In the handling of the information that goes out, the electoral empire and all other stakeholders didn’t really do much in putting the right perspective out there.’*

*FGD participant – Media*

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### **Security and Election Progress:**

The 2023 election has a significant advancement from previous ones. There was increased participation across demographic groups, attributing this progress to enhanced security measures, including the Biometric Voter Authentication System (BVAS).

*Generally, the 2023 elections were a big improvement compared to where we are coming from. To help coordinate and ensure that the security was improved upon, there was the establishment of an interagency consultation on election security where all the security agencies were brought under one umbrella as against what we used to have in the past where different security agencies go about the election independently. We had all security agencies under one command and it was very easy for deployment. Although we had pockets of violence here and there, we know it was not as compared to what we used to have in the past.*

*FGD participant – Security personnel*

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### **Women's Perspective and Expectations:**

Respondents acknowledged increased voter turnout but noted challenges stemming from the delayed arrival of INEC officials and materials in some places. Women's expectations of active participation were somewhat unmet due to disruptions in some polling units.

### **Politician and the youth’s Perspective:**

Expressed disappointment with the election's execution. Highlighted polling unit mix-ups that left some citizens unable to vote due to their unfamiliarity with new locations. The mix-up of

polling units disenfranchised many voters, particularly the youth. There was a call for resolutions to address these issues and criticized the delayed upload of election results. The conduct of politicians was noted as well-coordinated before and during the election.

The above is not unexpected as politicians did not carry out voter education even among their members. Some youths were also not interested in checking out their names from the various polling units even with sustained call by INEC for citizens to check out their names as pasted or through the online platform provided by INEC.

*“There was a mix-up of polling units that made me not vote throughout the elections. I usually vote in Ilobu but my polling unit was taken from Ilobu to somewhere in Osogbo and all efforts to locate my polling unit proved void and a lot of us from the community could not vote. So, on the side of INEC, the process was faulty.”*

*FGD participant – Politician*

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*“Just a few days before the election I saw one notification on my phone that my polling unit was changed from Durumi to one destination, knowing fully well that we are not allowed free movement on election days. There were some polling units where I could have been cascaded to, very close. How would they move me from Durumi to a very distant place? That was how I and several other people were disenfranchised. That kind of impromptu changes by INEC didn’t really go down well for some of us.”*

*FGD participant – Community Youth member.*

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*“The youth of Nigeria really wanted a change of Government and the number of people that came out to vote was very encouraging compared to the last elections. The outcome of the election was not as expected. The expectation was to change the system entirely and to their greatest surprise, it didn’t go in their favor.”*

*FGD participant – Adhoc staff*

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**Observers' Observations:**

Noted that although the election process was commendable because the emergence of new parties disrupted the traditional two-party dynamics but some INEC adhoc officials appeared ill-prepared for the election.

*“This election is an eye opener and to dispute the fact that Nigeria is not a two-party nation because before now, we use to think that Nigeria is just a two-party nation but this very year’s election proved that to be wrong because another party came up with full force and wanted to overtake. Generally, I will score INEC 60%.”*

*FGD participant – Election observer*

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**Adhoc Staff's Assessment:**

Assessed the election preparation, conduct, and security as commendable, with room for improvement in the timely delivery of material.

*“In terms of discharging materials at the polling unit, there were still some challenges on the side of the Transport Unions contracted because they were delays in the distribution of election materials. The logistics planning should be improved.”*

*FGD participant – Adhoc staff*

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*The election process was good but some INEC adhoc officials were ill-prepared for materials. Some units did not get materials even some of the voting cubicles did not have any coverage, as you are casting your vote, people are seeing you and it ought not to be so.*

*FGD participants – Election observer*

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## **STATE-BY-STATE DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS**

To generate accurate survey results and provide a more clearly thought-out context of our project objectives, we adopted a strategic sampling method involving random selection of 2 states per geopolitical zone, including a compulsory inclusion of the Federal Capital Territory- F.C.T, Abuja. Our random selection of these two states in each geo-political zones was done to the extent that each state has the chance of being selected to participate in the survey without prejudice to our project objectives, goals and expected outcomes; and, without any form of discrimination or sentiments on any ethno-religious lines. The participating states in the Focus Group Discussions are: FCT, Kogi and Plateau (North Central), Kaduna and Sokoto (Northwest), Taraba and Gombe (Northeast), Anambra and Enugu (Southeast), Osun and Oyo (South West), Delta and Edo (South South).

**EDO AND DELTA STATES:** The assessment was conducted in Edo State at Indomitable Youth Organization, 22 Textile Mill Road, off Uselu-Lagos Road in Oredo Local Government Area with stakeholders including representatives of CSOs, youth group, women group, religious organizations, INEC ad-hoc staff, election observers, politicians, as well as security agents.

A questionnaire instrument and verbatim recordings of discussions were used to collect data. Eight (8) stakeholders participated in the FGD with 3 males (37.5%) and 5 females (62.5%) drawn from different LGAs of Edo State. The assessment revealed that the general conduct of the 2023 general elections across Edo State was calm and peaceful as voting took place without violence, and voting processes were smooth in almost all the polling units across the State. There were however reports of widespread irregularities in the State House of Assembly in terms of malfunction of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS), poor deployment of sensitive materials, late commencement of voting processes. Respondents commended Nigerian citizens for the enthusiasm, good conducts and orderly behaviours they demonstrated even in situations where elections commenced very late; fuel scarcity, Naira policy and the professionalism displayed by the security agents in most of the polling units across the State, as in most cases they responded swiftly in areas where disruptions were reported. Respondents also highlighted

the commitment demonstrated by local and international observers, as well as the mass media, discharging their duties in the most professional manner without interfering with election procedures.



**Figure 1: picture showing a cross-section of stakeholders' participation in the FGD in Edo/Delta states.**



**EDO STATE**

**ATTENDANCE SHEET**

EVENT TITLE: FGD on Citizen Perception on INEC Mandate & 2023 Elections

VENUE: Indomitable Youth Organization DATE: 22-7-2023  
22 Tesche Milk Road, Benin City Edo State

S/N	Last Name	First Name	Organisation /Community	Email Address	Phone	Sex (M/F)	Age (Check Age) Range Below		Sign
							Under 35	Over 35	
1	Igaga	Abiola Daisy	CONGOS	cue.development@initiativegwadl.com	08144596471	F	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Ebose	Hilbosa	NSCBC	awoms4mp@gmail.com	0706563322	f	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Idufueto	Itohan Pearl	Take a Cue Devt Initiative	Pearlmatthew6@gmail.com	0901993919	F	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	ONWUKA	ERNEST	PFI/ANI	ernestonwuka52@gmail.com	08030601482	M	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	inECABE Neta	EGLIN	CONGOS	in-egbereni@eglyn@gmail.com	0701096287	f	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	APASOM WYN	PATUL	Politician	patulchristian@gmail.com	08037340789	M	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Otolie	Emmanuel	INEC	Manfrimulana@gmail.com	0813715352	M	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Akpasi	Ufuoma	observer	ufuoma2you@yahoo.com	08026233860	F	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Pete	Nwabili	KF	kpabin@quintan@gmail.com	080763811	M	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Ideli	Samuel	CONGOS	scmmls@quintan@gmail.com	0803234900	M	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Figure 2: list of participants at the FGD in Edo state**

**Key Findings/Outcomes from the FGDs in Edo and Delta States:**

- The 2023 Presidential/National and State Assembly elections in Edo State were calm and peaceful as well as to some extent transparent.
- There was inclusiveness in the 2023 general election whereby the people living with disability and aging one were given preferential treatment with adequate facility in almost polling units in Edo State



- The introduction of the BVAS technology reduced rigging and over voting to some extent.
- Delay in the arrival of election materials in some areas triggered a pocket of conflicts among supporters of political parties during the presidential election but the narrative changed during the state house of assembly election in Edo State.
- Security agencies were scored high for being unbiased before, during and after the elections.
- Politician still engaged in vote buying before and during the elections to allegedly buy their PVCs and vote.
- The BVAS helped to reduce rigging, vote buying, paving the way for the right candidates to win their elections without vote buying.
- According to Stakeholders, they stated that, INEC did a great job, and adjudged the 2023 exercise as one of the best elections since 1999 in Edo State.
- Late arrival of INEC materials during presidential/national assembly led to conflicts in some communities in Edo State as stated earlier.
- There was early arrival of INEC materials during State House of Assembly in Edo State led to voting and closing of poll.
- The introduction of BVAS and REV in the electoral process led to peaceful election in Edo State.
- Nigerian voters were commended for their resilience in participating in the electoral processes despite all odds that happened before the elections.
- Inadequate capacity building/welfare of ad-hoc staff and planning process which led to its inability to transmit the presidential election results electronically.
- The failure of INEC to transmit the Presidential/National Assembly elections results to the IREV made the turnout for the State Houses of Assembly elections low.
- The presidential results declared by INEC created mix feelings in the minds of some voters.
- Some Ad-hoc Staff used during the elections were compromised by politicians and party agents during the Edo State House of Assembly.

- The 2023 general elections put politician under pressure as candidates went to the crock and nook to campaign because of the use of BVAS, which never happened in Edo State and Nigeria before.
- During the presidential election, INEC was scored low in logistics arrangement, but it later improved during the Edo State Houses of Assembly elections.
- The expectations of voters were very high, and many came out en-mass to cast their votes for the candidates of their choice.
- The general safety environment of voters, and INEC staff was good.

**ANAMBRA AND ENUGU STATES:** Focused Group Discussions were organized in Enugu State and held at Blueberries Park within the premises of the National Museum of Unity, 65 Abakaliki Rd, GRA, Enugu on July 12, 2023, and in Anambra State at Zara Stores by Kwatta Flyover, Awka on Thursday July 20, 2023, respectively. The two Focused Group Discussions revealed plethora of insights into citizens' knowledge of a government's institution like INEC, divergence in thoughts and an alarming resignation to fate or indifference.

**Participants at the FGD includes:**

The State Lead reached out to an average of two to three persons in each of the categories with hopes and at the end, the most assuring willing participants were invited to the FGDs. In spite of the fact that the State Lead contacted different people within the indicated segments of the society, it is important to state that at the end, eight people participated in the Focused Group discussion at Enugu while eleven people showed up at Anambra.

For the FGDs, the following stakeholders participated:

1. Enugu State FGD Stakeholders
  - i. CTA represented by the State Lead.
  - ii. Traditional leader - Chief Chukwuemeka Eni.
  - iii. Security agent - Lieutenant Nnamdi Akabogu.
  - iv. Politician - Mr. Heritage Umana (Labour Party).
  - v. Women's representative - Mrs Ezenyinwa Naomi Chinaza
  - vi. CSO representative - Mrs Onyekachukwu Ekure

- vii. Election observer - Ozioma Edozie
- viii. An INEC ad hoc staff - Nwokabia Adaobi (NYSC Corps Member).
- ix. Religious leader - Vivian Okoye (Sr Prophetess Agape Light).

## 2. Anambra State FGD Stakeholders

- i. CTA represented by the State Lead.
- ii. Traditional leader - Ichie (Chief) Ekene Chike
- iii. Politician - Mr Oguguo Kenechukwu Okonkwo
- iv. Politician - Mr. Prosper Onyedika Okeke
- v. Women's representative - Mrs. Vivian Ifeoma Agu-Kalu
- vi. CSO - Miss Juliet Iriaka (Advocate Youth Initiative).
- vii. Civil Servant - Mr. Kosisochukwu Pascal Itulu
- viii. Election observer - Mr Sean-Patrick Ikemafulam
- ix. An INEC ad hoc staff - Ms Eunice Uju Ozougwu (NYSC Corps Member).
- x. Religious leader - Mr. Kalu Okwu Kalu (SU Regional Coordinator).
- xi. Security Agent - Inspector Casmir Ugwuanyi

### **Summary of Key Findings**

Generally, there is a consensus that the 2023 general election did not meet the FGDs participants' expectation and as such, their perspectives dwell more on the election than wholly as INEC as an institution. It is safe to say that citizens are not as enlightened as they should be; there is demonstrated ignorance on the processes, legality and operational structure of INEC and Nigeria's democratic structure.

The two FGDs were conducted within the same geopolitical zone – South East, the experiences were quite different and the following were recorded:

- a. Stakeholders have limited knowledge of how INEC works.
- b. It is apparent that a good number of participants had some measures of difficulties expressing their thoughts in English language when compared with vernacular discussions.

- c. There is a high trust deficit and suspicion on INEC because of the country's political players and their records.
- d. There is an embarrassing demonstration of ignorance on very basic electoral process by participating politicians; there was a mix up of the function of a political party with that of INEC.
- e. Stakeholders are poorly aware of constitutional provisions regarding the electoral process hence the beliefs that the INEC Chairman could simply make declarations from thin air.
- f. There was genuine interest in the last election and the outcome was a disappointment to many based on pre-conceived expectations.
- g. Most stakeholders are emotionally attached to the 2023 election and their view of INEC depended on their interpretation of the election's outcome.
- h. There is a belief that technology is currently not sufficiently deployed to conducting elections.
- i. There are [many untested] recommendations on how to resolve INEC's problems.

**TARABA AND GOMBE STATES:** round table discussions enhancing a thorough in-depth qualitative analysis and contextualizing public perceptions of the 2023 general elections among stakeholders in Taraba state was held at No 54 Miyapet Plaza, Opposite Jolly Nyame Stadium, Jalingo Taraba State. And in Gombe state at Mother Hen Development office, Gombe, Gombe state. The two Focus Group Discussions took place on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.

Stakeholders in attendance at the FGD include members of the following strategic groups: Civil Society Organization, Politicians, Religious leaders, Security agents, INEC ad-hoc staff, People with Disability (PWD) Women leader, Youth), Community representatives, Election observers, youth groups, Political parties, and members of the Nigerian Police Force.

**ATTENDANCE LIST FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ON  
THE PERCEPTION OF 2023 GENERAL ELECTION BY CTA**

SN	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	SEX	ORGANIZATION/ GROUP	SIGNATURE
1	JOSHUA DAVID KANA	08160810326	M	YOUTH GROUP	<i>[Signature]</i>
2	JOSHUA RAJMONA	0806904224	M	Religious GROUP	<i>[Signature]</i>
3	EGLAH IDORHIN	08037687674	F	Women Group	<i>[Signature]</i>
4	JESSE EMANUEL JESINA	09084319550	M	NPF	<i>[Signature]</i>
5	JAN SAIR FIASARMA	0806604046	F	CSO	<i>[Signature]</i>
6	MUSUF BELLO	07035993133	M	INEC AD-HOC STATE	<i>[Signature]</i>
7	LULY SAMUEL	08035950073	F	Observer	<i>[Signature]</i>
8	Hon. PATIENCE N BANJUMA	08036951395	F	Politician	<i>[Signature]</i>

**Figure 3: list of participants at the FGD in Taraba State**

**Key outcomes and findings from the FGD in Taraba and Gombe States:**

- INEC should efficiently use ICT so as to enhance voting process and cut other electoral irregularities as contained in the 2022 electoral guideline as amended.
- It was obvious that the 2023 general elections were divided along religious and ethnic lines. This further undermine the supposed development in Nigeria electoral system
- The Commission should intensify on voter education with a view on improving on the gains recorded so far.
- INEC should be ‘truly’ independent without any form of interference, this way the commission can deliver efficiently.
- The general public should have mutual respect for opposing opinions especially when it comes to candidate support as well as voting by the electorates.
- Religious Institutions at all level should insist on doing the right thing by maintaining neutrality.
- Federal Government of Nigeria through its organ should ensure timely release of budget/funds to the INEC, this way the Commission may not be vulnerable to certain forces.

- The Commission should be independent NOT dependent as is currently being perceived by the general public
- Nigerians/Electorates should rid themselves of sentiments of whatever sort.

**KADUNA AND SOKOTO STATES:** Eight (8) stakeholders across Sokoto State participated in the FGD; respondents include politician, women's representative, youth representative, CSO representative, election observer, an INEC ad-hoc staff, religious leader, and a security agent. at STCI Sokoto on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023. In Kaduna State, the FGD took place at IHIFIX Technology Complex, Kaduna on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2023. The FGD attracted key relevant stakeholders that actively participated in the 2023 general elections in Kaduna State.

Participants at the FGD include representatives from INEC Ad-hoc Staff, Religious Leaders, Politicians, Civil Society Organizations, Security Personnel, Women, Youths, Disability Community.

The FGD examines and provides recommendations regarding key components of the 2023 general elections conducted by INEC. The issues discussed were the Electoral Act, Stakeholders Role, Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), Result Viewing Portal (IReV), Politicians and the Electorates.



**Figure 4a**



**Figure 4b**

**Figure 4a and 4b above shows the participants at Kaduna FGD**



**Figure 5: cross section of participants at Sokoto FGD**

### **Summary of Key Findings**

Stakeholders commended INEC for ensuring that the 2023 general elections campaigns in public commenced 90 days before polling day and ended 24 hours before the election day as enshrined in Section 99 of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended)

The introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to citizens as an electronic device designed to read Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) and authenticate voters using the voter's



fingerprints to prove that they are eligible to vote at a particular polling unit reduced ballots box snatching in the last election.

Stakeholders commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for training Ad-hoc Staff before the election to support and ensure free, fair and fair credible elections.

In some polling unit's money was shared to INEC officials, security personnel and to electorates to have advantage over other political parties.

It was observed that most Religious Leaders were bribed by politicians to use religion as a basis of supporting political candidates through preaching and mobilization of electorates

Despite the commitment, time and resources made available to INEC and the high demand and full expectations of citizens to see results made available for public viewing in real time through the INEC Results Viewing (IREV) portal, the INEC officials failed to upload results in real time.

The actions and deployment of untrained Ad-hoc Staff and lack of basic materials on the election day by INEC officials affected the process of the general elections.

During the general elections it was observed that most of the polling units were not having basic materials to enable them to carry out their assignment effectively such as ink pad, permanent maker, data to upload results to IREV etc.

**OSUN AND OYO STATES:** Focus Group Discussions were organized in Oyo State at Ibadan Development Centre, Ibadan. Also, in Osun State at the University of Ilesa, Ilesa, Osun State. The FGD took place on 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 respectively. Participants at the round table discussion include representatives of CSOs, Youths, Observers, INEC Adhoc staff, law enforcement officers, women representatives, religious leaders, and politicians.

Participants were brought together and given the room and opportunity to freely express their views on the conduct of INEC and the activities of INEC staff during the polls. To facilitate a



robust interaction, participants were allowed to freely express other general views relating to the 2023 elections and linked with INEC.

Quite a few revelations were made touching on the strength and weaknesses of INEC and other stakeholders pre, during and post-election periods. Certain peculiarities also played out in the conduct of INEC with respect to their performance in each of the two states. Issues bordering on the preparedness of INEC for the elections, vis a vis, voter education and sensitization, deployment of election materials to state offices and RAC centers, security, recruitment and training of adhoc staffs, creation of new polling units and interface with political parties were discussed. Issues relating to the actual conduct of the general elections were also discussed which borders on the professionalism of INEC staff, timeliness in the opening and closing of polling units, orderliness of the polling units, recording and transmission of election results, collation and announcements of results were discussed. Post election perception was also discussed which touches on the willingness of INEC to defend the results announced in court, measures taken to forestall agitations amongst others.



**Figure 6: showing picture of participants at the FGD in Oyo state.**



**Figure 7: showing picture of the FGD participants in Osun state**

ATTENDANCE OF FGD ON 2023 ELECTIONS PERCEPTION STUDIES FOR OSUN STATE HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILESIA ON THE 18TH JULY 2023

S/N	NAME	Phone	Constitution Represented Organization	E-mail
1	Abesoye, Abeniji W.	08035627477	Civil Society	abesoyeabeniji@gmail.com
2	Ogunmodede Suraju Adesemi	08066823333	Politician	kegemony2012@yahoo.com
3	Adeyemo Amidat Modupe	08069378878	Inec Adhoc staff	adeyemoamidat@yahoo.com
4	Oyelami Mutiu Kolade	08036558068	Youth	koladeabayomi@gmail.com
5	Arowole Samuel Opeyemi	07086496560	Observer	arowolesamuel@gmail.com
6	Imam Areez, Jami Adeloye	08062335550	Religious leader	areezjam@yahoo.com
7	Adeyemi Teriye	08058694015	Women Representative	adeyemi@gmail.com
8	Gabriel Oluso	08161326277	HSCDC	oluso@hotmail.com

Figure 8: list of FGD participants in Osun state

ATTENDANCE OF THE FGD PERCEPTION STUDIES CONDUCTED FOR CTA  
AT THE IBADAN DEVELOPMENT CENTER (IDC) ON THE 20TH JULY 2023

SN	NAME	Phone / E-mail	Constituency Represented Organisation
1	Matthew Ayojobi	08064742898 mat4justice@gmail.com	Youth
2	Adekunle Olades	07032986190 oladesade08@yahoo.com	INEC ADHOC STAFF
3	Adeoye Abayomi	yomideadeoye2013@gmail.com 08024458226	Religious leader
4	KETHINDE ARODUN	toallmy pals2005@gmail.com 08052992996	Observer
5	Kolawole AMUNFAT.	07055540006 / cdcmnigenta@yahoo.com	LSO
6	Fabode Damilola .O.	09092911466 fabodedamilola44@gmail.com	Women
7	Bello Saadom	0905267274 Saadlambello3@gmail.com	Politician

**Figure 9: list of FGD participants in Oyo state**

### Summary of Key Findings and Outcomes of the FGD

- INEC did not conduct proper monitoring of party primaries for other elections except the presidential primaries.
- The collection of PVCs was poorly organised and full of sharp practices.
- INEC had a pass mark in the aspect of voter education and mass sensitization.

- Recruitment and training of adhoc staff was mismanaged by INEC staff, trained adhoc staff were booted out for gatecrashers.
- Creation of new polling units is applaudable and a good move but needs to be look at again.
- BVAS performed well in a larger percentage of units.
- INEC adhoc staff in some places cannot effectively handle BVAS and other sensitive materials.
- People voted without PVCs as long as they have their VIN.
- INEC registered some unscrupulous elements as observers.

**KOGI AND PLATEAU STATES, AND F.C.T:** Focus Group Discussion took place in Kogi State on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at Iko-josh Empowerment Foundation Office, No 1 IBB Way by FMC Junction Lokoja, Kogi State. In Abuja, the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with 9 persons in attendance. This is to explore their views on their perception of INEC’s mandate to conduct free, fair and credible elections. The FGD was held in FCT on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August 2023 between various critical stakeholders.

### **Participants selection and engagements**

The FGD in Kogi State involved eight (8) participants across different sectors which includes a politician, women group representative, youths’ representative, CSO representative, election observer, an INEC Adhoc staff, religious leaders and Security agent. The FGD was conducted in a professional manner with verbatim recording of the entire proceedings at a well conducive environment. Each participant was given the opportunity to adequately express their perception on INEC’s mandate. The FGD was informative and interactive as participants took turns to air their views and perception.

In Abuja, participants were selected based on their involvement and relevance to the electoral process. To ensure diversity, participants were drawn from various sectors. The aim was to capture a range of perspectives reflecting different segments of society involved in the election.



**Table 1: Details of FGD participants in Abuja.**

Number of participants: 9	Categories	Location:
Female: 2 (20%)	Security Personnel	Abuja,
Male: 7 (70%)	PWD	FCT
PWD: 1 (10%)	Media	
	CSO	
	Community youth	
	INEC Adhoc staff	
	Politician	
	Woman	
	Election observer	

The focus group employed structured open-ended questions aimed to achieve a deeper perception from participants.

### **Limitations of the Abuja study**

The study's limitations encompass a small sample size of nine participants in a single-day focus group discussion conducted in Abuja, FCT. Social desirability bias could affect the findings' accuracy and applicability.

### **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

In the course of the survey in North Central, there are positive and negative findings. These findings are therefore presented in the table below:

**Table 2: showing summary of key findings in North central region**

S/N	POSITIVE FINDINGS	NEGATIVE FINDINGS
1	Early distribution of sensitive and non-sensitive materials to RAC centers by INEC	
2	BVAS machine functioned perfectly in most polling units, and where there were challenges, replacement was done immediately	INEC voter education rate should be increased
3	High turnout of youths and women during presidential election	Most BVAS machine operators failed to upload result at polling units during the Presidential Election
4	CSOs independently participated actively in the last general election through observation	Security agencies allegedly compromised by working in favor of the ruling party (APC) in Kogi State.
5	Youth participation increased in the last general elections	Violence and killings were recorded during general election at Kogi east senatorial district and Kogi central senatorial district
6	Marginal improvement in INEC operations and adherence to their mandate	Untrained Adhoc staff were deployed by INEC to some polling units
7		Most INEC Adhoc staff compromise and work in favor of politicians this they claim is due to very poor stipend paid by INEC
8		
9		
10		Late training of INEC Adhoc staff is a

		challenge to the electoral process
11		High voter apathy during state house of assembly elections due to lack of trust in the electoral process by citizens after the presidential election.
12		
13		
14		Women are always victims of violence in election as it also occurred in last general elections
15		Vote trading was high through electronic fund transfers.
16		Number of Uncollected Voters Cards was very high.

### **DISCUSSION OF ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS**

To Further collaborate our Focus Group Discussions findings, the survey also featured online administration of a semi-structured interviewer questionnaire which was administered on 10,000 respondents across the country. Our results from the online survey, done through survey monkey, contextualized in a broader sense the public perceptions on the functions of INEC and performance in the just concluded 2023 general elections. The Rational Choice Theory of Election is a political economy approach towards understanding the nature and pattern of voters' choice during election in a particular democratic setting.

Lindberg & Morrison (2008) observed that elections in African countries are mostly considered on rationalism where the ethnic, religious, and regional cleavages are given much consideration. Furthermore, Lindberg and Weghorst (2010) identified what they called "Swing votes" in



developing democracies like Nigeria where they analysed that ethnic, religious, patronage and satisfaction of the voters when measured with evaluation of performances of the leaders in office can influence the outcome of an election. The theory is directly applicable within the context of this study since voting is recognised as a rational choice based on performances considerations. The results of the past Presidential Elections in Nigeria and that of the recently concluded 2023 general elections is a good example of how the voters give much emphasis on ethnic, religious and regional rationality than performances.

The result shows that ten thousand (10000) people participated in the survey, 94.7% were registered voters, 58.9% of them voted while 41.1% did not vote in Nigeria 2023 election. Out of the responses, 53.7% were male while 46.3% were female. People with the age bracket of 36-45 are the highest age group that participated in the election which is 50.5%. Also, it was discovered in this study that majority of the respondents are Christians.

Are you a registered voter?

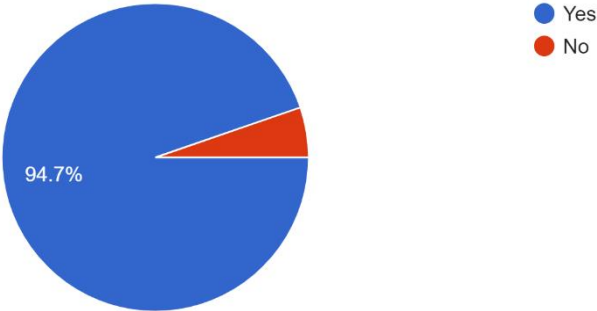


Figure 10: Chart showing total number of registered voters across the 6 geopolitical zones

If yes, did you vote in the last election?

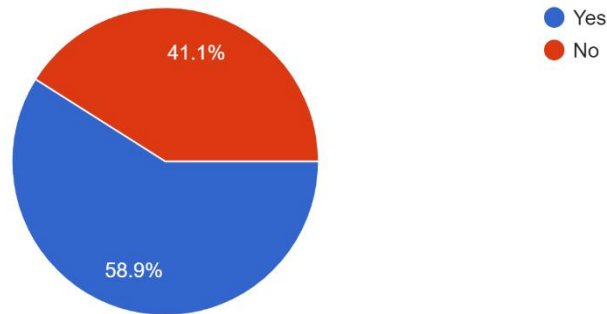


Figure 11: chart showing total number of voters in the survey regions

The 2023 General Election as usual in Nigeria was heralded with tension, blame games, anticipated violence, and campaign of calumny, threats and the desire to win at all cost. It was another presentation of the litmus test for Nigerian democratization and also has the highest number at which Nigerian youth will participate in the electoral process. 18 political parties were registered and fielded candidates for the Presidential Election. The parties that fielded candidates for the election are presented in the table below:

S/N	Party Name	Party Acronym	Presidential Candidates
1.	<a href="#">Accord</a>	A	Professor Christopher Imumulen
2.	<a href="#">Action Alliance</a>	AA	ALMUSTAPHA HAMZA

S/N	Party Name	Party Acronym	Presidential Candidates
3.	<a href="#"><u>Action Democratic Party</u></a>	ADP	SANI YABAGI YUSUF
4.	<a href="#"><u>Action Peoples Party</u></a>	APP	NNADI CHARLES OSITA
5.	<a href="#"><u>African Action Congress</u></a>	AAC	Omoyele Sowore
6.	<a href="#"><u>African Democratic Congress</u></a>	ADC	Dumebi Kachikwu
7.	<a href="#"><u>All Progressives Congress</u></a>	APC	Asiwaju Bola Tinubu
8.	<a href="#"><u>All Progressives Grand Alliance</u></a>	APGA	Professor Peter Umeadi
9.	<a href="#"><u>Allied Peoples Movement</u></a>	APM	Yusuf Mamman Dan Talle
10.	<a href="#"><u>Boot Party</u></a>	BP	ADENUGA SUNDAY OLUWAFEMI
11.	<a href="#"><u>Labour Party</u></a>	LP	Mr Peter Obi
12.	<a href="#"><u>National Rescue Movement</u></a>	NRM	OSAKWE FELIX JOHNSON
13.	<a href="#"><u>New Nigeria Peoples Party</u></a>	NNPP	Mr Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso

S/N	Party Name	Party Acronym	Presidential Candidates
14.	<a href="#">Peoples Democratic Party</a>	PDP	Alhaji Atiku Abubakar
15.	<a href="#">Peoples Redemption Party</a>	PRP	Mr Kola Abiola
16.	<a href="#">Social Democratic Party</a>	SDP	Prince Adewole Adebayo
17.	<a href="#">Young Progressive Party</a>	YPP	Prince Malik Ado-Ibrahim
18.	<a href="#">Zenith Labour Party</a>	ZLP	NWANYANWU DANIEL DABERECHUKWU

Source: [inecnigeria.org](http://inecnigeria.org)

The table above indicated the list of political parties and their presidential candidates. The 2023 general elections were not like business of before were two major political parties (i.e APC and PDP) were only the major contenders for the seat of the presidency, whereas in the last presidential election it was known that three political parties really fought for the race and there was a close margin of numbers in the total number of votes casted for each party. Also, the three presidential candidates won the same number of states - 12 state each. The three major contenders in LP, APC and PDP were identified in the table with a red marking for easy identification.

Political mobilization around religious and ethnic identities have also had a significant impact on the outcome of the election, especially with regard to citizens' participation and voters' turnout. For instance, the lopsidedness in voters' turnout in Northern Nigeria could be attributed to

citizens' dissatisfaction with the performance of the incumbent government to improve their economic, social and psychological well-being.

Conversely, unlike in the North where emotive attachment to candidates were minimal, the South-West and South-East recorded huge voter turnout as electorates developed strong attachments to specific candidates along ethnic identities.

Also, the effect of END SARs and police brutality campaign which many youths felt they need a change and a good governance also play a significant role in mobilizing many youths to turn out to go and vote for their candidate.

The result indicates a voting pattern of the normal Nigerian political culture as observed by Sule et al. (2017) and Mudasiru (2015). The Rational Choice Theory of Election too is applicable here especially the 'Swing Votes' syndrome postulated by Lindberg and Weghorst (2010) where ethnic affiliation, religion and region is given much emphasis than performance.

The Presidential Election in 2023 set another dimension in the Nigerian political history because despite some parts of Nigeria felt that it is the turn of the south, a new scenario emerged with the candidate of the APC coming into the political arena with a Muslim – Muslim ticket, a reflection of the religion dominance in Northern region. The Labour party and PDP field a Muslim-Christian candidate because of the religious sensitivity of the country.

### **Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

Respondent from this survey were majorly female (53.7%) compared to male (46.3%). Also, the majority of the respondents that participated in the research were between the ages of 36-45(50.5%), are mostly Christians and were married.

Age Range

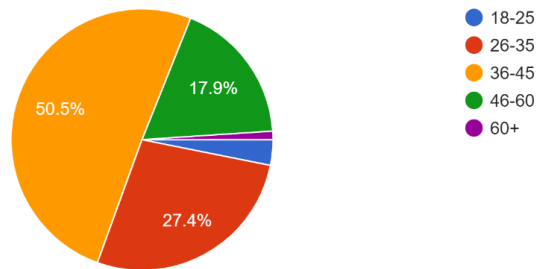


Figure 12: Chart showing age groups of respondents.

### Establishment of INEC to organize election in Nigeria.

To understand why people vote, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a series of possible explanations why INEC has right to be in charge of election without being influence by the Government. The majority strongly agreed that INEC is the one with responsibility of organizing election into elective positions in Nigeria (63.2%) and because it is their constitutional right (45.3%).

INEC is responsible for organizing elections into elective positions at the Federal and State government levels.

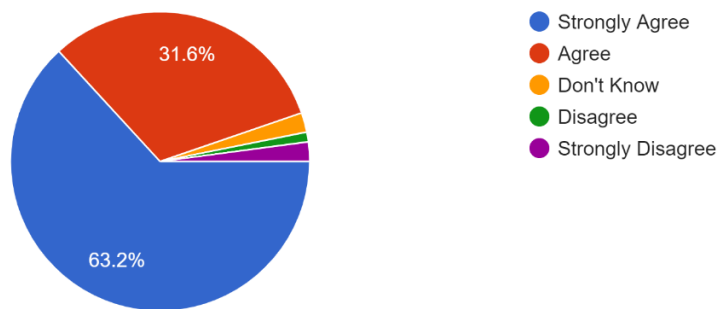


Figure 1: Chart showing respondents opinions on INEC functions and responsibilities.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria establish the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

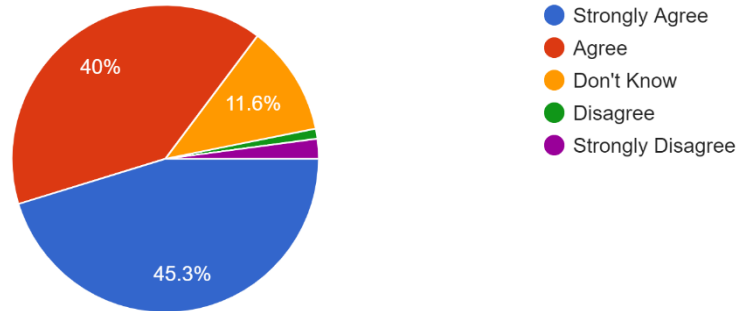


Figure 13: Chart showing INEC's dependence on the 1999 constitution.

### Perspective of Respondents on the 2023 elections Organized by INEC

Majority of the respondents have an opinion that election conducted by INEC since 1999 has not been credible (31.6%) while 28.4% had an opposite opinion believing that the election organized by INEC had been free and fair.

INEC has organized free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria since 1999

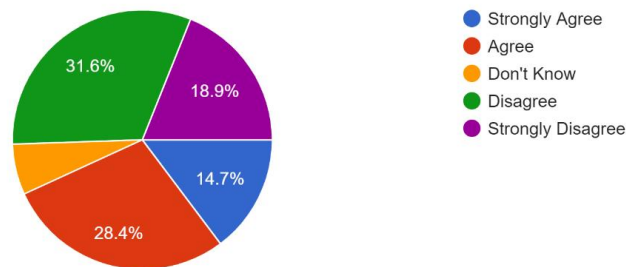


Figure 14: Chart showing status of the electioneering process.

### Effectiveness in the use of Technology during the 2023 Election

The use of BVAS and IREV to capture and upload result during the election were examined. 50.5% agreed and 33.7% strongly agreed that the BVAS machine was very effective for both the

federal and state election which was organized by the INEC while 46.3% disagree with the overall handling or credibility of the election, 31.6% of the respondents believe INEC performed woefully in the proper handling of the election since 1999 and 30.5% agree that INEC has been comprising with the result of the election.

BVAS machine is the best technology most important device used by INEC

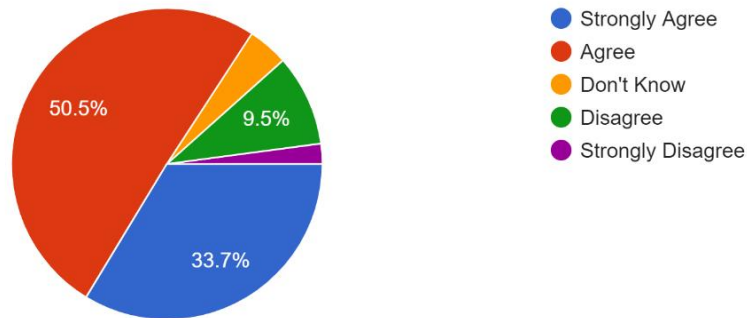


Figure 15: Chart showing respondents opinion on BVAS machine.

INEC's handling of elections in Nigeria has been very good?

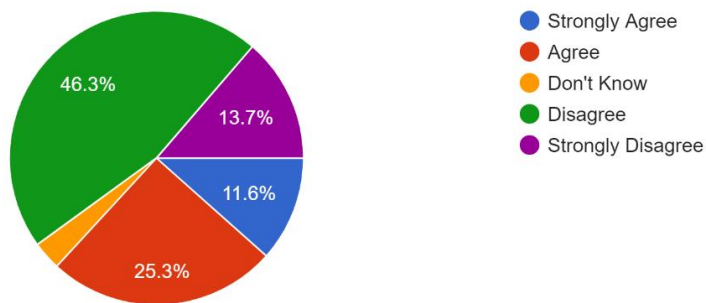


Figure 16: Chart showing respondents opinion on INEC's handling of election.



INEC has performed woefully since 1999

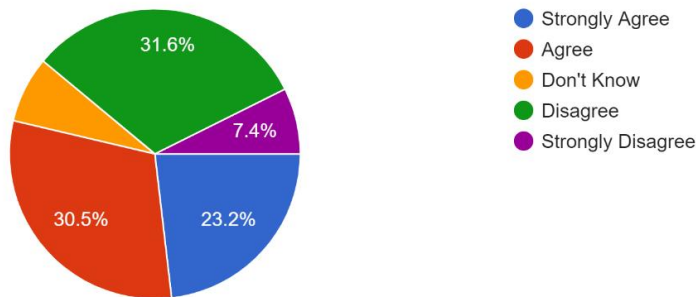


Figure 17: Chart showing respondents opinion on INEC performance.

Do you consider the present INEC management as compromised?

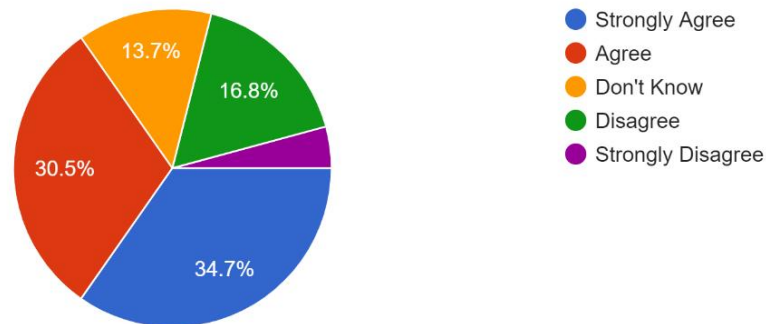


Figure 28: Chart showing respondents' opinions on INEC's management.

### Party identification and regulation of political parties by INEC

The party identification model of voting behaviour describes those voters who identify with a particular political party and express their long-term loyalty by persistently voting for that party (Kovernock and Robertson, 2008). This model is often given as an explanation for voting

behaviour in Nigeria. Although, it is increasingly recognized by scholars that party identification motivations are combined with issue-based voting. To show this, we examined the extent to which party loyalty could influence voting behaviour. Respondents who had voters were asked if they had ever considered that INEC should regulate the political parties. The number of most of the respondent that agreed indicated that it is high time for INEC to regulate the political parties (47.4%); 40% strongly agree while 8.4% disagree with the opinion.

INEC should effectively regulate political parties and campaign financing.

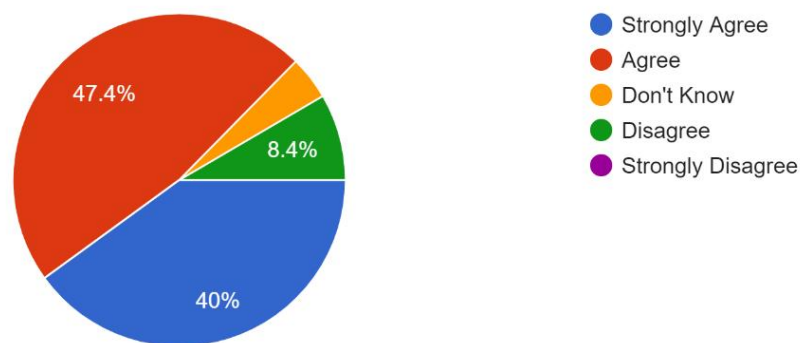


Figure 19: Chart showing respondents opinions on management of political parties by INEC.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance voters' education to address issues arising from lack of awareness and misinformation.
- Conduct focus group discussions (FGDs) in rural areas to capture diverse perceptions from the grass root level.
- Increase Civil Society Organizations' (CSO) involvement in educating citizens during the electoral processes in Nigeria.
- Strengthen the prosecution of election-related offences.
- Intensify voter education to combat misinformation.
- Advocate for citizen participation in governance.
- Improve the timely distribution of election materials.

- Address challenges with uploading election results.
- Adopt necessary technology for credible elections.
- Continue to promote peaceful political conduct during elections.

## **CONCLUSION**

These diverse perspectives from citizens reflect a mix of positive advancements and concerns in the 2023 general elections. Recommendations point towards the need for enhanced voter education, improved material distribution, security cooperation, and media regulation. The elections showcased progress but also underscored the importance of addressing areas for refinement in Nigeria's electoral process.

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