



INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC) AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE 2023 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS IN ADAMAWA STATE

ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at examining the 'roles of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in managing the 2023 Adamawa State Gubernatorial Election. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is an established independent institution that is saddled with the responsibility of managing the Pre, during and after elections. This project aimed at examining the roles played by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Managing the 2023 Adamawa State Gubernatorial Election, and also finds out if there is any relationship between the Independent National Electoral Commission and the outcome of the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State. Data for the study were sourced using primary and Secondary Source, Stratified sampling technique was used in determine the sample size of the study, the used of questionnaire has formed the major instrument used in data collection, the sourced data were analyzed using simple percentage, hypothesis were tested using Chi-Square. The study anchored on structural functionalist theory as the framework for analysis. This project found out that INEC has effectively managed the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State but was not been able to prevent electoral malpractices as a result they were faced with significant challenges in the management of the 2023 gubernatorial elections in the state which has resulted in to some consequences as a result of the malpractices, also the project found out that INEC has also failed in its responsibility to provide sufficient training and resources to its staff and election officials in the state so as to ensure transparency, and it does not have a clear monitoring and evaluation system that is set in place to report irregularities there it can be concluded that INEC in Adamawa Sate has not successfully implemented its management strategies to enhance transparency and efficiency in the conduct of the 2023 gubernatorial elections. More so the project makes the following recommendation. The monitoring and evaluating team which comprises of non-governmental organizations, foreign bodies, e.t.c., should assess, record and report any anomalies in the conduct of the elections and necessary authorities should adult such reports for further actions, as this will motivate them work harder. INEC should be truly independent; government should avoid interfering with the activities of the body.

Keywords: *Gubernatorial, Election, INEC, Management*

1.1 Background of the Study

The significance of elections towards the development of nation cannot be overemphasized. This is because it constitutes the channel through which leaders in governance emerge. However, the management of elections in Nigeria for the successful emergence of leaders has continued to constitute a significant challenge in recent times. Collins English Dictionary,(2021) defines an election as a process in which people vote to choose a person or group of people to hold an official position.

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In the social sense, “an election is the process by which a person linked to an office through the due participation of the people who will bear the weight of his or her authority”. Election as a symbol of sovereignty, serve the purpose of investigating governments with political authority and legitimacy. It ensures that citizens retain power to hire and fire political leaders. To achieve this, an election must be free and fair, or at least perceived to be so (Laakso, 2022). On his part Adeniran (2021), sees “elections as involving a set of activities leading to the selection of one or more persons out of many to serve in position of authority in a given nation. It is the process therefore, by which the people select and control their representative. The implication of which is that election gives an electorate the sovereign power to decide who will govern or represent them”.

The management of elections in Nigeria is vested on the Independent Electoral Commission under the powers of electoral Act 1999. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to among other things organize elections for various political offices in the country. Elections in Nigeria are currently regulated by the 1999 constitution (as amended) and the Electoral Act of 2010 (as amended). As in previous constitutions, INEC was established as a federal executive body. The constitution broadly defines the scope of the commission’s powers and responsibilities, and provides for its independence and funding. The 1999 constitution introduced the establishment of 36 Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) in each state of the federation, which are mandated to conduct local government elections. Till date INEC have been able to conduct various general elections since the era of democracy in 1999 totaling five consecutive general elections of 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2023

Nigeria’s election management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has always been accused of not being able to engender public confidence in the electoral process or organize transparent and credible elections. Since elections are the heartbeat of any democratic process and that ineffective electoral administration leads to political instability and loss of legitimacy, assessing the performances of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is most appropriate as we tread the path towards election credibility in Nigeria. Furthermore, Abbass (2008), revealed that the 1999, 2003 and 2007 general elections witnessed electoral violence in Nigeria and that these elections questioned the credibility of the democratic process and invariably posed serious Challenges for the democratic practice in the country. There have been politically motivated assassinations and other election related killings, all jeopardizing the Nigerian democratic project with most often than not puts the ability of election management body to question. It is, therefore, surprising that the electoral process in Africa and Nigeria in particular is riddled with controversies. This is because of numerous underpinning problems such as corruption, religious factors, ethnicity, regionalization of the political parties, power of incumbency and the politics of Godfatherism that have eaten deep into the Nigerian political structures. These, in one way or the other, have contributed to the inability of electoral bodies to conduct free, fair and credible elections (W. J. Ekundayo, 2015).

The 2023 Adamawa State gubernatorial election took place on 18 March 2023, to elect the Governor of Adamawa State, concurrent with elections to the Adamawa State House of Assembly as well as twenty-

seven other gubernatorial elections and elections to all other state houses of assembly. The election, which was postponed from its original 11 March date, was held three weeks after the presidential election and National Assembly elections. Incumbent Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri (PDP) was re-elected by a 3.75% margin over first runner-up and APC nominee Senator Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed.

The independent electoral commission has not been able to sufficiently address many of the challenges confronted in the process of elections. Therefore, the study seeks to investigate Independent national electoral commission (INEC) and the management of the 2023 adamawa state gubernatorial elections.

Objective of the Study

The Objective of the this paper is to investigate the roles played by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) In managing the 2023 Adamawa State Gubernatorial elections

Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Election

Election is one of the contemporary realms of the discourses in the discipline of Political Science and democratic studies (Bendor, Diermeier, Siegel & Ting, 2011). Election is mirrored as a game and a mathematical calculation where the players (politicians) engage in all tricks to outsmart and outclass one another for securing power (Smith, 2012). The electorates may support and vote for a particular party or candidate, the public key office holders may subvert and trample upon the process, thereby altering the public choice with personal choice. In this regard, election has occurred, but there is no choice. This situation is obtainable in authoritarian democracies of Africa and Arabian countries (Buttorff, 2019).

2.1.2 The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the electoral body that is saddled with the responsibility of elections conduct in Nigeria according to Nigerian 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2010. It was established shortly before the final transition to civilian rule in 1998 to replace the previous electoral bodies that were scrapped by the military during their sojourn into power. The Nigerian Military on 5th August 1998 established the INEC under Decree No.17. The INEC is empowered by Section 225 Sub-Sections 1-6 and Section 226 Sub- Sections 1-3 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution to monitor and supervise all electoral processes and activities in Nigeria. Besides, the Electoral Act 2010 provides in Section 88-92 that INEC has the powers to register political parties, deregister them, monitor their activities including financial such as sources of income, expenditure, maximum campaign spending limit, audit their financial books and sanction violators of regulations accordingly.

The INEC is headed by the chief executive who is the Chairman of the organization, appointed by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as approved by the National Assembly. He is subordinated by twelve (12) National Commissioners with two (2) each drawn from the six geo-political zones of the Northeast, North central, Northwest, Southeast, South south and Southwest. The organization is divided into seven Departments as follows: Personnel Department, Finance and Audit Department, Political Party Monitoring Department, Works and Housing Department, Information and Publicity Department, Legal Unit Department and Operations and Logistics Department. The body is supervised by the members of Governing Board appointed directly by the President (Sule et al.2017).

2.1.3 Dimensions of the Challenges of Electoral Malpractice in Nigeria

In Nigeria as elsewhere in Africa, one of the objectives of the transition to democracy has been a free and fair electoral system, the hallmark of liberal democracy. According to the International Institute of Democratic and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2001) by definition, liberal democracy is a procedural system involving open political competition, with multi party, civil and political rights guaranteed by law and accountability operating through an electoral relationship between citizens and their representatives. However, the citizens of Nigeria have clearly been denied a true experience of liberal democracy according to this definition.

According to IDEA (2001), important institutional factors that are major impediment to the electoral process in Nigeria include the limited autonomy of various electoral bodies (particularly their lack of financial empowerment) and their weak human resource base. Unreliable voters register combined with serious logistic and communication problems are characteristics of the flawed electoral process. Psycho cultural factor primarily derived from the history of today's immense political corruption, factors that have undermined the social and economic basis for the emergence and sustenance of democratic political culture in Nigeria. These political factors are set against the background of a major structural factor institutionalized. Among the most serious and blatant cases of electoral fraud are;

- i. Rigging, overstuffing of ballot boxes, over bloating ballot register, special treatment of voters and election officials, disappearance or destruction of ballot box etc.
- ii. Distortion or doctoring of results.
- iii. Annulment and falsification of election result

Despite the serious nature of the above irregularities in the electoral process, the April 2003, "election forgery" and the 2007 "falsification of election results" as well as 2011 "electoral flaws" in the presidential, gubernatorial and the Assemblies elections have seriously undermined the country's democratization processes. These acts, a master stroke against democracy and the democratization process, have posed threats to the country's corporate existence. Other factors that are consistently cited as undermining competitive electoral politics in Nigeria include;

1. Lack of discipline in the forms, spirit and implementation of the election process
2. Excessive monetization of politics in general
3. A "winner takes all" philosophy pervasive among the political elites;
4. The general level of poverty and illiteracy
5. The absence of clear ideological underpinning of the parties
6. Religious bigotry and to a limited extent ethnic chauvinism
7. Political corruption

Election rigging was perfected in the elections conducted in 1964, 1965, 1979, 1983, 1999, 2003 and 2007. Election rigging connotes any form of undue authority or power that influence and manipulate election result in a dubious way to protect a particular interest against the interest of the generality of the masses. When the interest of the people are articulated in a free and fair election, the government in power tend to enjoy the sovereign legitimacy of the people but election rigging can thwart the interest of the people hence the dubious imposition of an unpopular candidate. The sad end is governments' lack of people's support, which is one of the basic principles of democracy.

2.1.4 Challenges and Consequences of Electoral Malpractice to Democratic Governance in Nigeria

Manipulation of election proceedings (such as in voters' registration), rigging, thuggery, nullification and outright falsification of election results as well as Cynicism are the most crisply analyzed variables in the scope and aspects of electoral malpractice and violence in Nigeria. Other challenges to the electioneering and democratic governance include imposition of unpopular candidates through impunity, excessive monetization, corruption and weak democratic institutions. Thus consequences of these challenges are disenfranchisement of voters, apathy and legitimacy crisis as well as insincerity, bad leadership and autocracy. Indeed these consequences would definitely have spillover effect on security and economic situation sinking people deeper into poverty.

2.1.5 Electoral Process

In the form of interpretation of qualitative secondary data, numerous scholars contribute to the literature of elections, its process and malpractice (Ebirim, 2013; Ighodalo, 2012; Osinakachukwu and Jawan 2010; Idowu, 2010 and Herreros, 2006). Ighodalo, (2012) said "Elections are means of selecting representative of the people in different public positions within the polity". He noted that Elections are critical aspects for democratic governance of modern political societies. They are considered as apparatus for political choice, mobilization and accountability. In the liberal democratic paradigm that has become the most popular form of democracy in today's globalization era, election are expected to cushion transition from one civilian regime to another and ease in legitimizing sitting governments. Odusote (2014:31) has rightly posited that electoral process is a pillar of democracy because it gives effect to the right to govern by consent. Herreros (2006) sees election as a way of selecting 'good types' of politicians who would pursue the common good instead of their factional interests. Dickerson (et al, 1990) defines election as a post mortem of the record of those in office, whose performance may have little to do with promises made when they were last elected" (cited in Idowu, 2010:54). He further stated that election is often confused as electoral process. Thus he refers to electoral process as all the pre and post-election activities without which an election is either impossible or meaningless.

The process therefore involves registration of political parties, voter's registration, resolution of election disputes, swearing of election winners' etcetera. Meanwhile, electoral process is certainly about rules and procedures of conducting an election.

Election therefore facilitates and shapes democracy. While democracy is considered as the best form of government due to its ideology of promoting peoples' will. It is the people's mandate to choose who should govern them in a free and fair 'electioneering'. Therefore, election process constitutes an essential principle in liberal democracy. Election is highly significant in a democracy because it is a medium through which people express their legitimacy and leadership succession. As Jibrin (2009:33) writes "elections have meaning for most people only in a democratic context because they lead to the choice of decision makers by the majority of the citizens. Elections and democracy are therefore inextricably linked". Osinakachukwu and Jawan (2010:130) said it is a process of checkmating a ruler that is popularly accepted and ejecting an unpopular leader, mainly through voting. "This method shuns mutiny and chaos in a system hence it reflects peaceful hand-over from one administration to the other so long as the process is devoid of election rigging". It has been noted that for elections to thrive there should be the establishment of a well-defined, competent, relatively independent and non-partisan electoral body that will be responsible for the conduct of elections.

There is need for the existence of impartial judiciary that will interpret electoral laws and as well as adjudicate on electoral matters. Mass media devoid of influence from the politicians should be instituted together with police force that will help supervise the conduct of an election. Indeed one of the major elements of electoral process is to ensure an election is free and fair and the result of the election must reflect the wishes of the people. Therefore any activity that hampers the conduct of an election can be considered as ‘subversion of people’s sovereignty’. Using theoretical framework of cultural relativism Idike, (2014) critically examine the problems and prospects of e-voting on Democracy and electoral process in Nigeria. He refers to electoral process as a complex process that encompasses the good intentions and undesirable outcomes of election administration, particularly in emerging democracies where general elections are often marred by culturally hued electoral malpractices. In the Nigerian case, the truth remains that the electoral process is immensely characterized by a culture of electoral malpractices.

In a democratic system where elections are devoid of crisis, long term disputes or political violence, are amicably resolved. Such system enhances the prospect for political stability, peace, development and continuity in governance. However where elections are synonymous with violence, thuggery, intimidation, rigging, ballot box snatching and stuffing and other forms of electoral malpractices, they bring to question the very essence of democracy and compromise the nation's security.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2 Structural functionalism theory

Theories are useful set of logically related concepts for explaining the occurrence of any phenomenon. In both the physical and social sciences, theories are indispensable tools at the disposal of the researcher for shedding more light on the possible relationships that exist between various variables, which apparently appear to have no logical connection.

Theories therefore provide the springboard for the researcher’s critical analysis of data collected. A theoretical framework will therefore aid our research in its relevant perspective, thereby directing us on what to look for and the standard against which to analyze the data collected.

This study anchored on structural functionalism or the structural functionalist theory as the framework for analysis. According to Varma (1975:45), structural functional analysis revolves around certain concepts more important of which are concepts like functions and structures. In using structural functional analysis, three basic questions are usually asked, namely: (a) What basic functions are fulfilled in any given system, (b) By what structures and (c) Under what conditions?

In the words of Merton (1949:51), “functions are those observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given system; and dysfunction, those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system”. A system on its own part has been variously defined as “a set of elements standing in interaction”, Bertalanffy (1956:3); “a set of objects together with relationships between the objects and between their attributes”, Hall and Fagan (1956:18); and “a whole which is compounded of many parts- an ensemble of attributes”, Cherry (1961: 307). The implication of all these definitions is that a system implies the idea of a group of objects or elements standing in some characteristic structural relationship to one another and interacting on the basis of certain characteristic processes, Varma (1975: 39). When action takes place in a given system, functional and/or dysfunctional consequences are usually produced.

Varma (1975: 46) further notes that beside the concept of function, another very important concept in structural functional analysis is that of structure. While function deals with the consequences, involving objectives as well as processes of pattern of actions, structure refers to those arrangements within the system which perform the functions. A single function may be fulfilled by a complex combination of structures, just as any given structural arrangement may perform functions which might have different kinds of consequences for the structure.

Structural functionalism is employed as a theoretical framework so that possible ways of survival of a system can be discovered. The analysis is primarily directed towards the amount of change at the structural level that a system can accommodate without seriously hindering the fulfillment of its basic functional requisites.

In applying this theory in the analysis of a political system, it is important to note that a political system comprises of many structures, all working or performing certain functions to make the system work. For any political system to work several activities need to be performed and certain institutions are created to perform some of these roles or functions for the society to keep the system going.

Nigeria operates a political system and for the society to maintain itself, certain institutions also known as structures are created to perform certain roles or functions for the maintenance of the Nigerian society. Now, for the society to function well there is need to have a government; and for the government to operate there is need to have the leadership, that is, the elected officers of the state, the President, Governors and the Legislators. There is need for them to have legitimacy also. All these are structures. There is also need to have the structure or institution charged with the role of organizing elections for the leadership of the nation to emerge. That institution in the case of Nigeria is the Independent National Electoral Commission and the function it performs is that of conducting elections into the various elective offices. There are also other structures or institutions of the society through which political leadership are put in place for the society. The political parties and the people, called the electorates, the political elites, security agencies, civil society organizations, etc. They also have different roles to play in the political system. How each of these structures performed their different functions for the political leadership to emerged.

In this study, the researcher will assess the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State administered by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, and a creation of the government as an institution (structure) that is charged with the responsibility of organizing elections into various elective offices in the Nigerian political system. In the course of performing its function, INEC had to collaborate with other institutions or structures, which also had roles to play in the electoral process. In the course of performing their different roles, some intended or unintended, recognized or unrecognized consequences manifested which enhanced or lessened the adaptation or adjustment of the system thereby bringing about dysfunction in the system. These intended and unintended consequences as well as the dysfunctions are analyzed in this research to find out whether INEC conducted free, fair and credible Adamawa State gubernatorial election in 2023.

Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

Table 3.1 Chi Square Test of INEC Management Roles played in the 2023 Adamawa State Gubernatorial Election

3.1 H₀₁: Null There is no significant difference in INEC Management role and the conduct of 2023 gubernatorial election in Adamawa State.

Variables	Chi-square value	DF	P-value
INEC in Adamawa State implemented management strategies to enhance transparency and efficiency in the execution of the 2023 gubernatorial elections	251.271 ^a	4	.000*
INEC provide sufficient training and resources to its staff and election officials in Adamawa State to ensure transparency and efficiency in the execution of the 2023 gubernatorial elections	206.246 ^a	4	.000*
INEC in Adamawa State have a clear system of monitoring and evaluation in place to assess the transparency and efficiency of the 2023 gubernatorial elections	406.095 ^a	4	.000*
INEC in Adamawa State successfully implemented management strategies to enhance transparency and efficiency in the execution of the 2023 gubernatorial elections	375.618 ^a	4	.000*

Source: computed results (2024)

*= significant at 5%

The results presented in Table 3.1 above reveals that INEC in Adamawa State has not implemented management strategies to enhance transparency and efficiency in the execution of the 2023 gubernatorial elections, there was no sufficient training and resources to its staff and election officials in Adamawa State to ensure transparency and efficiency in the execution of the 2023 gubernatorial elections, INEC has no clear system of monitoring and evaluation in place to assess the transparency and efficiency of the 2023 gubernatorial elections, and it has not successfully implemented management strategies to enhance transparency and efficiency in the execution of the 2023 gubernatorial elections, is significant at 5% level of significance ($p < 0.05$) with chi-square values of 251.271, 206.246, 406.095, and 375.618.

This implies that INEC in Adamawa State failed to implement management strategies that will enhance the transparency of 2023 gubernatorial election in the state, the personnel were not adequately trained and the resources were not adequate so as to ensure transparency and efficiency in their conduct, there was no clear monitoring and evaluation system in place that would assess the transparency and

efficiency of the elections, and also it has not successfully implemented management strategies that would enhance transparency and efficiency.

Based on the findings above, the results shows that there was high level of significance at ($p < 0.05$), therefore the null hypothesis is rejected that says There is no significant difference in INEC Management role and the conduct of 2023 gubernatorial election in Adamawa State.

Table 3.2 Chi Square Test of the success of INEC in the management of the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State

3.2. H₀₂: There is no significant level of success in the management by INEC and the conduct of 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State.

Variables	Chi-square value	DF	P-value
INEC have specific guidelines or policies in place to ensure equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State	195.719 ^a	4	.000*
INEC taken any concrete steps to promote equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State	198.533 ^a	4	.000*
INEC actively encourage and support the participation of underrepresented groups, such as women and marginalized communities, in the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State	231.698 ^a	4	.000*
INEC been successful in ensuring equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State	323.533 ^a	4	.000*

Source: computed results (2024)

*= significant at 5%

The results presented in Table 4.2.1 above reveals that, INEC does not have specific guidelines or policies in place to ensure equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, INEC has not taken any concrete steps to promote equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, INEC has not actively encouraged and supported the participation of underrepresented groups, such as women and marginalized communities, in the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, and INEC was not successful in ensuring equal representation and

inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State.

This implies that INEC in Adamawa State do not have any specific guidelines or policies that is in place to ensure equal representation and inclusion in the nomination and selection process of candidates, it has failed to take concrete steps towards promoting equal representation and inclusion in the nomination and election of candidates, it has not actively encouraged the participants of the underrepresented groups, and it wasn't successful in ensuring that there was equal nomination and selection of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State.

Based on the findings above, the results shows that there was high level of significance at ($p < 0.05$), therefore the null hypothesis is rejected that says There is no significant level of success in the management by INEC and the conduct of 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State.

4. Discussion of the Findings

The research is aimed at assessing the Independent national Electoral Commission (INEC) on the management of the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State. Having analyzed the respondents' views to the questionnaire and interview, it is obvious that the INEC management of elections in the study area have significant impact in the conduct of 2023 gubernatorial election in Adamawa State.

From the analysis presented indicates that, majority of the respondents are male, majority are within the age range of 31 and above. This indicates that more youths are involved into politics and men have greater participation in politics than women in Adamawa State. The analysis further shows that the respondents in the study area are literate, the majority of them having O' level results, this implies that the respondents have the ability to read and write and can accept easily changes brought about by INEC to enhance transparency, majority of them are Christian, Adamawa state is dominated by the two major religions, Christianity and Islam, the majority of the respondents also are married, this implies that the respondents are responsible people, leaders at various levels of life, and they are ready to align with INEC to ensure transparency in Election, the majority of the respondents in the study area are civil servant "INEC staff" and Students, these are vibrant members of the society that can easily be used by INEC to achieve its objectives, as it be seen from the past, this has brought positive results since the former INEC Chairman Prof. Attahiru Jega decided to use students as Adhoc Staff for the conduct of voter registration and election.

The statistical analysis depicts that majority of the respondents strongly agree that Independent National Electoral Commission has effectively managed the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, majority of the respondents has disagreed with the statement that Independent National Electoral Commission has successfully prevented electoral malpractice during the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, majority of the respondents in the study area strongly agree that the Independent National Electoral Commission has faced significant challenges in managing the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, majority of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that Independent National Electoral Commission has faced consequences for any instances of electoral malpractice during the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, and the majority of the respondents strongly agree that

Independent National Electoral Commission has faced consequences for any instances of electoral malpractice during the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State. Therefore, the researcher opined that INEC has effectively managed the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State but was not able to prevent electoral malpractices as a result they were faced with significant challenges in the management of the 2023 gubernatorial elections in the state which has resulted in to some consequences as a result of the malpractices.

It was also observed that majority of the respondents in the study area strongly agree that historical background and past performance of INEC has influenced the conduct of the 2023 Adamawa State gubernatorial election, the majority of the respondents disagree that historical performance of INEC has shaped their expectations for the 2023 Adamawa State gubernatorial election, majority of the respondents have agreed that past experiences and track record of INEC played a significant role in ensuring a fair and transparent 2023 Adamawa State gubernatorial election. Therefore, the researcher opined that, historical background of INEC has sharpened their performance but it failed to have any effect on their expectations as the participants still keep their expectations, and the track record that was created in the past by INEC in the use of card readers has played a significant role in ensuring a fair and transparent elections in 2023 gubernatorial elections.

The study also discovered that, the majority of the respondents agree that they are aware of measures that INEC has put in place to enhance voter education and awareness in Adamawa State prior to the 2023 gubernatorial elections, majority of the respondents strongly agree that they have received voter education materials or information from INEC, majority of the respondents strongly agree that INEC has conducted voter education programs or initiatives in their community to promote awareness about the 2023 gubernatorial elections, and majority of the respondents disagree that the measures taken by INEC has effectively enhanced voter education and awareness among the citizens of Adamawa State during the 2023 gubernatorial elections. Therefore, the researcher opined that, INEC has put in place measures to ensure that voters are educated about the conduct of the election by distributing voter education materials or information and have conducted voter education programs in the communities so as to promote awareness about the conduct of 2023 gubernatorial elections but the measures that was taken by INEC has not effectively enhanced voter education and awareness among the citizens of Adamawa State during the 2023 gubernatorial elections.

The study further uncovers some truths that majority of the respondents agree that INEC have specific guidelines or policies in place to ensure equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, majority of the respondents disagree that INEC has taken concrete steps to promote equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates for the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, majority of the respondents disagree with the statement that INEC has actively encouraged and supported the participation of underrepresented groups, such as women and marginalized communities, in the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, majority of the respondents disagree with the statement that INEC has been successful in ensuring equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process

of candidates, and majority of the respondents disagree that INEC has been successful in ensuring equal representation and inclusivity in the nomination and selection process of candidates. The researcher opined here that INEC has policies in place that will ensure equal representation and inclusiveness in the nomination and selection process of candidates but it failed in taking appropriate steps towards implementing such policies, it has also failed in its duty to actively encourage and support the participation of underrepresented groups, such as women and marginalized communities, enhance, it can be said that it was not been successful in ensuring that there was equal representation and inclusiveness in the nomination and selection process of candidates.

The study also discovered that majority of the respondents disagree that INEC has provided sufficient training and resources to its staff and election officials in Adamawa State to ensure transparency and efficiency in the execution of the 2023 gubernatorial elections, majority of the respondents disagree that INEC in Adamawa State had a clear system of monitoring and evaluation in place to assess the transparency and efficiency of the 2023 gubernatorial elections, and majority of the respondents disagree that INEC in Adamawa State has successfully implemented management strategies to enhance transparency and efficiency in the execution of the 2023 gubernatorial elections. There researcher opined here that INEC has also failed in its responsibility to provide sufficient training and resources to its staff and election officials in the state so as to ensure transparency, and it does not have a clear monitoring and evaluation system that is set in place to report irregularities there it can be concluded that INEC in Adamawa Sate has not successfully implemented its management strategies to enhance transparency and efficiency in the conduct of the 2023 gubernatorial elections.

5. Conclusion

The central theme for this research is that the process of elections management/conduct in Adamawa State has never been easy in the political history of the State, elections in the past has been mired with enduring negative characteristics of rigging, violence, bribery, corruption, excessive campaign spending, manipulation of results and other related factors. The electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) seemed entrapped in a vicious circle of recurrent election irregularities which took place in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 Gubernatorial Elections.

This study have found out that the 2023 gubernatorial election in Adamawa State was characterized by so many anomalies which ranges from low or inadequate voter education, some marginalized members were not given equal right of nomination or election such as the women, inadequate monitoring and evaluation of the electoral process, INEC in Adamawa Sate has not successfully implemented its management strategies to enhance transparency and efficiency in the conduct of the 2023 gubernatorial elections. It therefore calls for INEC and other institutions concerned to cooperate with INEC in ensuring transparent and efficient conduct of elections as this is the only way our democracy can grow and we will see positive development.

6. Recommendations

The followings are recommendation made;

- i. The independent national electoral commission (INEC) should educate voters ahead of time before the conduct of elections, these can be done in collaborating with the village's heads who know their people very well and the people listen to them.
- ii. Adequate preparation by the INEC should be encouraged as this will make the Adhoc staff and other electoral officials to familiarize themselves with the operations of the machines (to avoid by-passing Bvass)
- iii. INEC and other institutions concerned should encourage women and the disabled members of the society to participate and be given equal rights of being nominated and elected.
- iv. The monitoring and evaluating team which comprises of non-governmental organizations, foreign bodies, e.t.c., should assess, record and report any anomalies in the conduct of the elections and necessary authorities should act on such reports for further actions, as this will motivate them work harder.
- v. INEC should be truly independent government should avoid interfering with the activities of the body.

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