

## **Assessment of Security Compliance in North-Central Nigeria during the Conduct of 2019 General Election**

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#### **Abstract**

*This research is out to assess security compliance of Nigerians especially in the north-central part of the country in the last general election. The researcher employs Survey research design in the study. The population consisted of Nigerians selected in the major cities of north-central part of Nigeria and sampled opinions of masses to examine politically motivated security issues, consequent on political leadership in Nigeria. The single stage cluster sampling and random sampling techniques were used to select 30 sampling units in six major state capitals and 20 sampling units in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and 200 respondents that made up of the sample size. Founding shows that insecurity of lives and properties has assumed a crisis dimension in Nigerian politicking especially during election period. It therefore concludes that the citizens need not to die or loose properties at the cost of participating in the nation's electoral process. With sizeable election-based violence across the country lately witnessed in the last February/March 2019 General Elections sequel to poor level of preparedness displayed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), this work recommends provision of adequate logistics in security-prone areas in the north-central states to curb incidence of insecurity and other related crises in Nigeria.*

**Key Words: Election, Security Compliance, Insecurity and Democracy**

#### **Introduction**

Across the globe, democracy is spreading fast due to its ability to provide basic requirements, transparency, good

governance and enhancement of security for citizenry among others (Idris, 2013). However, the essential provision of modern government remains largely among other

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things, protection of lives and properties that supposedly conferred the fulfillment of security within the confines of state boundaries (Malasowe, 2016). Given the role democracy plays in development and modernization of states, global citizens are clamouring for its enthronement as the best system of governance, which can move a society forward (Igwe, 2010; Ewetan & Urhie, 2014). The issue of security has remained an underpinning factor, as well a topical, factor indeed, for concerned and well meaning researchers in the country.

Barely more than two decades to the rebirth of her home-grown democracy, culminated into what is described as the Fourth Republic, there has been predominantly hegemonic renaissance and politicking in the Nigerian state democracy. The Nigerian state now assuming legitimacy which by implication beams on popular political participation and collective choice having given up predatory chasm characterized by military regimes and a shift from 'uniform men' to democratic statehood.

Of obviousness, electioneering has been characterized by violence since the inception of the Nigerian fourth republic. The 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and the just concluded 2019 general elections were marred by ballot box snatching, political assassinations, bombings, killings, maiming of voters, arson, and abduction of electoral officials (The Punch, 2020).

Specifically, Ogbonna Uche Ogbonnaya, the candidate of All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) was assassinated on February 8, 2003. In July, 2006, similarly, Mr. Funsho Williams, a People Democratic Party (PDP) governorship aspirant for Lagos State, was assassinated in his bedroom. More than 300 people were killed in the widespread violence that marred the 2007 state and national elections. Equally, the 2011 presidential election was marred by an unprecedented post electoral violence, especially in the far North, resulting in the death of many innocent citizens (Emeka, 2013). In recent times, security has emerged as a key concept in Nigeria's struggle for

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good governance. To many, the return of Nigeria to democratic rule should bring about development socially and economically across board. On the contrary, the democratic dispensation is bedeviled with growing terrorism, kidnapping, criminality, poverty, corruption, employment, etc. There are several unprecedented security challenges straining the security and development of the nation.

Insecurity remains a prevalent challenge confronting the democratizing Nigerian growth. However, electorates should not have to die or loose properties at the cost of participating in any electoral process. With the poor level of preparedness displayed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct a violence-free election, even with the week-long postponement of the election to allow for adequate logistics and security readiness. Yet, there were sizeable election-based violence across the country, for instance; there was the burning of thumb-printed ballot papers in Isolo local government area in

Lagos, killing of a young voter at a polling unit in Dekina Local Government, Kogi State; death of two persons in Nembe, Bayelsa, to mention but few.

The Nigerian state has witnessed many challenges in the aspect of security since the experience of civil or democratic rule of Forth Republic. One can establish connectivity between electoral anticipation of ambitious politicians whose promises of the “dividends of democracy” failed and the increasing level of insecurity in Nigeria. From the *Boko Haram* insurgencies in the North Eastern part of the country to the clashes between farmers and herdsmen particularly in the North Central which this work focuses on, to kidnapping for ransom and general banditry-all happening within the sphere of electioneering related. All these posed threats of security consciousness to Nigerian democracy and also strike awareness of conflict and political hostilities to her nascent democracy. This research exploits threat of insecurity and political locked-jam, the evils of recent political

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electioneering conducts among political parties in the North Central of Nigeria.

The purpose of this study therefore is to assess security compliance on conduct of 2019 general election in North-Central Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose of the research is to:

- i) Assess how the fear of violence significantly reduce the level of Nigeria citizens in democratic participation
- ii) Assess how poverty level in the North-Central region of Nigeria significantly hinders and has direct impact on participatory democracy.
- iii) Assess how the absence of the 'dividends of democracy', i.e., poor human development factors significantly affect democratic participation in Nigeria as it were or promised by politicians.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

For a clear understanding and debunking of concepts closely related to this

research work, terms as security-vis a viz internal or national security deserves to be purveyed. Security simply entails the protection of a society against all forms of external aggression, espionage, hostility, reconnaissance, sabotage, subversion, annoyance and other inimical influence. Thus, for a state to be seen as an organization for enablement of mass realization of social goals its formation has to be primarily centred on purpose of security (Laski, 2004; 25).

In this regard, Malosowe (2016) sees a state having only three duties to which it should attend. These include its duty of protecting society from violence and invasion of other independent societies; secondly, the duty of protecting, as far as possible, every member of society from injustice or opposition of every member of it, or the duty of establishing an exact administration of justice, and, thirdly, the duty of erecting and maintaining certain public works and certain institutions. Thus, what is security in relation to institution of state?

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Attempts at conceptualizing security have not yielded any consensus. This is due to fact that scholars, writers and practitioners have been influenced by their training, orientation and perspectives. In its common usage for instance, it denotes situation where a person or object is not exposed to any form of danger or risk of attack, accident or deterioration. Security practitioners submit that the concept is usually tied to the safety of citizens, ability of a nation-state to contain internal rebellion and external aggression (Zabadi, 2007). According to Ebohon and Ifeadi (2010:5), “the traditional approach views security from the reactive angle, purely of a military texture or calculus and the use of physical force to ward off dangers or aggressors”. As the duo reason further, “state-centric notion of security is based on a short term view of forcibly eliminating all threats”. But, in spite of the reasonableness of traditional approach, it fails to recognize non-military threats, such as unemployment, human-induced environmental pressure, resource war and crises relating to population

explosion, displacement of refugees, poverty, diseases, injustice and cruelty to humanity

Baldwin in Laski (2015:13) sees security as “low probability damage to acquired values”. His conceptualization of security is encompassing as it does not border only on the presence and absence of threats, but also on the preservation of acquired values. This definition explains why values is what changes the nature of security threats that ranges from country to country; and how the various countries react to these threats. In a related discourse, Imobighe in Oche (2006) averred that security has to do with freedom from danger or with threat to a nation’s ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its people. Thus, internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the cooperate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic

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objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. Internal security also implies freedom from danger to life and prosperity. (Oche, 2006).

A much clearer definition of security has been given by Buzan (Okpata & Nwali, 2013) thus: "...the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile." This definition appears exhaustive as it breaks down the nature of "value" and emphasized the maintenance of functional integrity against forces of change. This definition is also particularly peculiar as it emphasizes the perception that states reject all forms of terrorism because it tampers with their functional integrity through unacceptable forces of change.

In recent scholarship however, the concept of security has widened in scope and form. Nwolise (2012:118) justifies this view when he submits that security in contemporary usage has expanded

horizontally and vertically. He posited that horizontally, security has gone beyond the military to encompass economic, political, environmental, social and other aspects. He stressed that vertically, security has gone beyond the state to incorporate and emphasise the individual, social groups, (ethnic, religious, professional), the state, and humanity at large. Thus, there is a dramatic shift in the concept of national security, to human security. Cavin (2003), argues from a human security dimension when he emphasizes that human security means safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats. It is a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or even their lives... It is an alternative way of seeing the world, taking people as its point of reference, rather than focusing exclusively on the security of territory or governments.

From the above averments, it can be persuasively inferred that human security constitute a cardinal plank in the narrative and characterization of security and becomes

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germane to institution of state. Corroborating further, Ogege (2013) opines that human security paradigm adds a new dimension to traditional security by emphasizing on the human being rather than the state. According to them, whereas traditional security is state-centric and concerned primarily with interstate security, the protection of borders and sovereignty, with human security “non-military/non-traditional threats to security have led to the broadening of the reference object of security to include individuals, non-state actors and sub-national groups.” They concluded that this paradigm shift has profound implications for not just inter-state relations in contemporary politics, but much more for regime survival. O’Brien (1995:100) in explicating a somewhat different idea of national security, referred to as an inclusive approach to security, argues that security is construed as more than just safety from the violence of rival militaries, it is the absence of violence whether military, economic or sexual.

### **Methodology**

The methodology employed by this research is qualitative in nature. It dwells on using secondary approach which includes the use of publication, journals, relevant books, newspapers, magazines, official documents, seminar papers, academic research papers, libraries, the internet and distribution of questionnaires. The population of the study comprises 200 eligible electorates in North-Central states of Kogi, Nassarawa, Kwara, Niger, Kaduna and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) selected randomly. Also, interviews are conducted for some selected population systematically from volatile cities, towns and villages of these states and all these will be based on a structure quantitative data which might be subject to statistical analysis for further study.

Responses are asked to rate all items using 4-point modified Likert scale. The Cronbach alpha analysis is used to determine the reliability of the instrument and it obtained reliability of coefficient of 0.77 (very high). Data gathered are analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count,

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percentage scores, mean and standard deviation.

*Research Question 1: Does the fear of violence and election insecurity pose a threat to citizens' democratic participation?*

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

	<b>Statements</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1	Violence is threat to life during the election.	122 61.0 %	532 6.5 %	12 6.0 %	13 6.5 %	3.24	1.30	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2	There were instances of violence during 2019 general election.	51 25.5 %	106 53.3 %	36 18.1 %	6 3.0 %	2.62	1.42	4 <sup>th</sup>
3	The last election was totally devoid of all unrest and violence.	17 8.6%	48 24.4 %	99 50.3 %	33 16.8 %	1.08	1.56	7 <sup>th</sup>
4	There were sizeable election frauds due to violence within the zone.	60 30%	131 65.5 %	3 1.5 %	6 3.0 %	3.27	0.83	1 <sup>st</sup>
5	I only heard of fight and snatching of ballot box through mass media.	118 59.0 %	42 21.0 %	10 5.0 %	30 15.0 %	2.99	1.55	3 <sup>rd</sup>
6	There were fewer electorates available to vote due to issues of violence.	44 22.0 %	29 14.5 %	30 15.0 %	97 48.5 %	1.32	1.76	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	Fear of violence reduced citizens' participation in the last election.	64 32.0 %	35 18.0 %	37 18.5 %	63 31.5 %	1.82	1.86	5 <sup>th</sup>

From table 1, most of the respondents were aware of the 2019 general election and its attendant insecurity and potential violence attracted as mean scores of 3.24; 2.62 and 3.27 were recorded for items 1, 2 and 4

respectively, which were positive statements to fear of violence during election and political participation. A mean score of 1.08 was recorded for respondents who disagreed with the negative statement that the last

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election was totally devoid of all unrest and violence. As regard awareness of election violence through mass media, the table showed that most respondents learnt of the issues of election violence through mass media as a mean score of 2.99 was recorded. Thus, the positive statements ranked high and the negative ones ranked low. This shows

that respondents are quite aware of the fear of violence and election insecurity pose a threat to citizens' democratic participation.

***Research Question 2:** Does poverty level in the North-Central region of Nigeria significantly hinders and has direct impact on participatory democracy?*

	<b>Statements</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1	High level of poverty has direct impact on voting pattern and political participation of citizens.	72 36.2 %	78 36.2 %	46 23.1 %	9 4.5%	2.53	1.63	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Electorates were tipped to cast votes	58 29.9 %	73 37.6 %	51 26.3 %	12 6.2%	2.32	1.67	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	The elections were marred by forgery and sale.	53 26.6 %	81 40.7 %	53 26.6 %	12 6.2%	2.29	1.65	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	There were instances of votes racketeering.	10 5.1%	20 10.2 %	99 50.3 %	68 34.5 %	0.51	1.21	6 <sup>th</sup>
5	Eligible voters are paid to vote	40 29.0 %	75 37.5 %	59 29.5 %	26 13.0 %	1.93	1.70	4 <sup>th</sup>
6	Food items were shares virtually to all with voters' card.	44 23.5 %	54 28.9 %	68 36.4 %	21 11.2 %	1.81	1.76	5 <sup>th</sup>
7	The elections were hindered by paid touts and hoodlums.	10 5.1%	19 9.6%	92 46.5 %	77 38.9 %	0.49	1.20	7 <sup>th</sup>

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From table 2, the average mean score of respondents who perceived that high level of poverty has direct impact on voting pattern and political participation of the citizens was that of 2.53. This ranked highest among the seven items of perceptions.

*affect democratic participation in Nigeria as it were or promised by politicians?*

**Research Question 3:** *Does the absence of the 'dividends of democracy', i.e., poor human development factors significantly*

	<b>Statements</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1	The elections were dominated by illiterates	20 10.1 %	56 28.1 %	88 44.2 %	35 17.6 %	1.25	1.61	7 <sup>th</sup>
2	The polling booths were majorly dominated by women.	51 25.6 %	87 43.7 %	51 25.6 %	10 5.0%	2.34	1.61	4 <sup>th</sup>
3	Voters were mindless of whom they voted for.	35 17.7 %	106 53.5 %	43 21.7 %	14 7.1%	2.31	1.52	5 <sup>th</sup>
4	Voting exercise was full of unscrupulous elements	18 9.0 %	124 62.3 %	29 14.1 %	28 14.1 %	2.23	1.44	6 <sup>th</sup>
5	Some polling units and booths are cited in the bush/villages for easy maneuvering.	54 27.3 %	97 49.0 %	41 20.7 %	6 3.0%	2.56	1.49	2 <sup>nd</sup>
6	Unequal distribution of wealth and poverty significantly affected maneuvering of elections.	14 7.1 %	44 22.2 %	98 49.5 %	42 21.2 %	0.95	1.50	8 <sup>th</sup>

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7	Creed, culture and ethnicity significantly affected the elections.	57 28.6 %	88 44.2 %	49 24.6 %	5 2.5%	2.47	1.57	3 <sup>rd</sup>
8	Politicians don't need to provide for or give anything to be voted for	62 31.0 %	90 45.0 %	39 19.5 %	9 4.5%	2.59	1.52	1 <sup>st</sup>

From table 3, a mean score of 2.59 showed that respondents perceived of politician not provide for electorates (dividends of democracy) before they win any election. This ranked 1st among the list perceptions followed by an average mean score of 2.56 which showed that respondents perceived all polling units and booths are located where they could be tampered with by employed political touts. Table 3 also showed that respondents perceived unequal difference and illiteracy among the peasant rural dwellers as influencing factors that caused fear and made politicians maneuvered election exercises in the last general election in the North-Central States of Nigeria.

### **Discussion**

This study has found out that the fear of violence and election insecurity posed a

serious threat to citizens' democratic participation across the zone understudied. This finding is in collaboration with O'Brien (1995) which states that free and fair election can be dislodged in the presence of chaos, violence and turbulence sequel to unavailability of sizeable security during electioneering process. On the contrary, the study is in contrast with BVP (2010) which perceived insecurity during election as flexible factor that can be suppressed by government agencies assigned to forestall orderliness and safety during any election exercise.

Moreover, from the results obtained, it is revealed that poverty is regarded as one of the major factors used to influence electorates and caused civil unrest (insecurity) during election as the case in the

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North-central Nigeria senatorial zone. These findings are in accordance with a study carried out by Salawu (2013) when he argues that Nigeria is slow in pace of consolidating democracy, integration and security due to political engineering of votes. Also, since voters are sidetracked by social injustice by political gladiators and elections offered them peanuts at the expense of mortgaging their social goods, political jobbers therefore deprived them of casting their votes free and fair. These findings are also supported by Ademola (2006) when he opines that every human has basic needs which he/she seeks to fulfill and the denial or frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals (politicians) could affect him/her now or later, thereby leading to conflict and subsequently culminate in violence or insecurity.

Similarly, the findings revealed that over 70% of population in the states locations sampled is languishing in abject poverty and level of illiteracy being on the increase. Nonetheless, another major spate of

insecurity during election is unemployment as majority of educated and uneducated youth are prone to restiveness and chaos. These findings align with the view of Obi (2012) that the situation of unemployment in Nigeria is alarming, where majority of graduates are not gainfully employed and the effort by government to curb this menace is far-reaching. The resultant effect is that the former is revolting against the latter.

### **Conclusion**

Against all odds and threats ever known to all political processes, democracy still remains a fashionable prospect. It is against this background that this paper proposed to assess the level of security compliance in North-Central of Nigeria at the last general election, at the same time examined the security challenges facing the nation's nascent democracy. However, a concern for volatile youth restiveness as cannon powders for the perpetration of electoral violence due to unemployment, frustration and despondency becomes one of the findings of this research work aside from

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assessing security compliance in North-Central region of the country. Again, the significance of this study remains germane to the ascertaining of whether insurgency such as violent attack, militancy, kidnapping and its demand for ransom; poverty; unemployment; the absence of the divided democracy; unequal distribution of the resources of the nation and unequal opportunities will keep affecting Nigerian democratic polity as all these continuing posing threat to internal or national security

Thus, security threats and violence issues have not been intractable with the polity of Nigeria since the return of democracy penultimate decades. The work therefore concludes that on how democratizing Nigerian state is missing it in providing essential functions as well as maintaining peace, order, justice and security for the people that compose it. Whilst electioneering remains the only mechanism for changing government/administration in Nigeria, its effects have come up with invasion of threat to lives and properties by

political jobbers and gladiators. Insecurity of lives and properties vehemently has assumed a crisis dimension in Nigeria politicking. Indeed, it has become an intractable problem since the return of democratic rule in 1999. This work therefore affirms that, in democratizing Nigeria experiences over two decades, insecurity remains a prevalent challenge confronting the nation's economic, social and political growth, and the implications of insecurity in democratizing state as Nigeria ever remain absence of justice, equity and misrepresentation.

### **Recommendations**

Among the characteristics that distinguish modern state include provision of essential goods, security and defense of territorial integrity. With sizeable insecurity consciousness across Nigeria especially during electioneering programmes, this work provides the following suggestions:

- i) Since democracy is premium on periodic election free and fair, essential machinery to provide adequate security across all geo-

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- political zones should become the central focus of every government or administration. A situation where incumbent government is seen as connivance to breach security protocols in order that the winning party or sitting political party is returned winner would make mockery of the democracy as well as distorting its institutions.
- ii) It also recommended that provision of adequate logistics in security-prone areas in the north-central states to curb incidence of insecurity and other related crises should be a major focus of Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) when drawing plans and programmes of every election in Nigeria. The insecurity prone areas can be given much attention to ensure prompt voting exercise at the same time guarantee voters consent and willingness to come and partake in voting.
- iii) Researchers have confirmed that politics breeds cruelty so much that the cord of humanity is broken at politicking, irrespective of family or relations ties. Thus, from the family background of all involving in electioneering matters every anticipated electoral insecurity and threat should addressed by sages and elders within that community before it degenerates into community nuisance and to the larger society. This can beef up security consciousness as all divergent political opinions or rivalries can be amiably settled prior to election period proper.
- iv) It can also be recommended that adequate political orientation and information be disseminated across the nation which would equip matured politicking on Nigerians and at the same time translate our nascent democracy into egalitarian democratic practices as can be found

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