



Global Advanced Research Journal of History, Political Science and International Relations ISSN: 2315-506X Vol. 3(2) pp. 017-029, April, 2014  
Available online <http://garj.org/garjhpsir/index.htm>  
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## Review

# Voting pattern in Imo State governorship election: a study of 2011 election

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Accepted 21 April, 2014

With the April 2011 general elections, Nigeria may have taken steps towards reversing the degeneration of its previous elections, but the work is not finished. Despite some progress, early and intensive preparations for the 2015 elections need to start now. There is no doubt that election is the process of selecting leaders through voting. Voting is a critical variable in the electoral process. Therefore, the voting patterns in any ideal election should follow the direction or pattern which will see the popular candidates for election emerging winners and helping to solve the socio-economic and political problem in Nigeria. This is because, at the heart of the problem with Nigeria today is leadership. There is no free and fair election that will usher in credible leaders who has the interest of their people at heart. The course of character and behaviour modification is critical in Nigeria and should be championed. Orientation and re-orientation of the electorate on the values of election through process of political socialization based on our indigenous values should have a prime of place in our electoral system. It is only when credible and trusted leaders like Rochas Okorocha is trying to prove to Imo people that Nigerians can bit their chest and say “we have started” lest, no way for Nigeria in the pursuits of matching with the best democracies in the world. Also INEC should be given enough antinomy to do its work. There should be rotation of the Resident Electoral commissions from their state to other state. This will enhance non-partisanship on their part finally we are agreed that voting patterns in the 2011 guber election in Imo state is characterized by zoning, personality of candidates. The direction of votes and behaviour of electorate went to this direction.

**Keywords:** Voting, pattern, Imo State, governorship, election, and 2011 election

## INTRODUCTION

In the 1959 general elections in Nigeria for instance, voting patterns in the various elections had been on

ethnic lines. Many have attributed this ethnic politics to issues of strong regionalization which characterized the politics of the first republic. Post, (1963:376-436)

In the Second Republic, the ethnic syndrome was minimized with the creation of states by the military who took over power from the drifting politicians. During the 1979 elections, Nigerians voted mainly for personalities

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either as one's old acquaintance or as a person whose name has remained in the political scene since independence.

From 1999 till 2007, the voting patterns had been predicated on machine politics, once a "prophecy" is made on the candidature of a person and he is "anointed", nothing on earth can change this status-quo because these god-fathers control both in machinery of the government and the electoral body. Here, the majority have no choice since it is obvious that their votes would not count. They better give it to them and collect the money which is in exchange of the dividend of good governance they are being deprived of in this period. It is very unlikely that the Nigerian electorates would vote for the politicians or party they consider responsible for scarcity and exorbitant prices of essential commodities. The electorates were expected to vote not because of 'Zik, Awo or Shagari' but of their individual conviction. That is, they would vote according to their conscience. They would vote only for the party or person they could confide in or trust. They expected that they person or party for whom they would vote would be able to fulfill the promises and expectations as set out in their election manifestoes.

Surprisingly, some of the legislators at the National Assembly could not cope with the intellectual or highly specialized debates due to their insufficient schooling. Also, some of the governors were incapable of delivery the goods because of the weakness or the other. Even in political appointments, errand boys of Awo, Zik or Shagari were made this or that in government without considering the capabilities of these politicians.

This error in electing and appointing politicians accounts for why these people are messing up. Now, due to our advancement in political development, such things might not have occurred in our extant elections especially 2011 gubernatorial election in Imo state. In 2011 gubernatorial election in Imo state, it was believed that the election should not follow the patterns of the past; 1979, 1999, 2003, 2007 elections.

It is very unlikely that the voters in Imo state would any longer vote the person or party they considered responsible for their hardship and scarcity cum exorbitant prices of many essential commodities. To many, the 2011 governorship election in Imo state was very crucial because they would want a change immediately for better before things could go out of proportion.

But the important question is, how would the electorate vote in order to change things for the better and bring in only those who could deliver the good" in the interest of the electorate what are the variables that are likely to affect the electorate in voting the way they did or chose?

The probability is even. The electorates could be affected by opinion leaders, societal needs, group identities, friends and associates. To many people, they governorship election in Imo state (2011) was crucial for

the citizens of the state because they would want a change for better immediately.

The essence of this paper is to examine the voting pattern of Imo electorates in the 2011 governorship election in the state. To achieve this objective the paper is divided into four parts.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

This review studies considered pertinent to our understanding of voting patterns. It draws heavily from works based on Nigerian political culture, political participation, and apathy in terms of voting patterns with intermittent reference to works done elsewhere other than Nigeria.

Certainly, decades ago, we have witnessed increasing interest in the question voting behaviour or voting pattern by political scientists, clinical psychologists, economists, Anthropologist, sociologist etc all who have useful contribution to our knowledge of the phenomenon of study, through in various ways and different reasons.

Obasigwe (2007:330) posits that the study of political attitudes and responses, their nature and character including forms, causes and consequences, in the context of the subjects personality and the society which harbours and socializes man into his political culture. He asserts that the problem in defining political Behaviour arises in part from the fact politics itself is behaviour of a particular abstraction, such that as a discipline it may equally be termed political behaviour.

Continuing, in political behaviour, attempts are made to answer such inter related questions as: what are the political orientations? Belief and goals of the people and why, why are particular political norms and values prevalent among a people instead of others? What factors are at work in determining what sorts of party election (voting patterns),? Why do people do people choose and vote the way they do, what influences political culture and political socialization may exert upon political behaviour. What may be the likely consequences of a possible reverse influence of political behaviour upon political culture and socialization? What are the effects of biological, sociological, economic, geographical, cultural and other environmental factors on political behaviour and voting patterns? An attempt to confine political behaviour to the study voting behaviour or electoral politics, even including the personality and decision making aspects of analysis do not seem to do political behaviour adequate justice. Ultimately, a broader approach to the inquiry would require at least some level of understanding of group dynamics and attitudinal characteristics Obasigwe (2007:330).

According to Ejiofor, (2007-75) voting is the one exercise that demonstrates the extent of people's involvement and participation in politics. When free and

secret ballot voting takes place, the direction and quantum of individual's participation come out in their true form. Then do men exercise their freedom untrammled?. Then do they put their preferences to the test?

In general, men desire similar goods and services through voting, they entrust their dispensation to a chosen few. They seek the same fulfillment and yet they disagree on who provides it through voting.

Why in general, do people vote, in a particular way? (Voting Pattern) How can we generalize the voting patterns of political participant? Voting describes the means whereby a number of persons are enabled to indicate their agreement or disagreement with some proposition, or their preference between two or more proposals or between two or more candidates for some office.

Implicitly voting implies confidence in choice and decision: it also implies a burning expectation, which motivates a voter to designate on who best would fulfill his desire. Psychologically, voting should include the assistance of an undecided issue, the perception of that issue and the general framework within which solutions to that issue are possible. The voters even recon broad notional issues of personal concerns. Configuratively, voting according to Ejiofor (2007) implies the existence of fundamental freedoms although in newer and more disguised dictatorships. There are attempts to combine compulsion and choice that is to present voters the object, which they must accept because it is though good for them. The single and lone candidate election is a case in point the presentation negates that freedom which gives meaning to any choice.

Ejiofor (2007) further listed the factors that are related to voting behaviour in elections;

1. Religious Difference
2. Regional Loyalties
3. Men or Women Inclinations
4. Ideological Alignment
5. Rural-Urban Base
6. Issues of Modernity.

According to Makintoch (1966, 289-357) in his study was interested in finding out the basic reasons underlying electoral behavior. He was also interested in finding out how voters view their parties, the candidates and the electoral process and why they cast their vote in a certain way. In this research, Makintoch selected three federal constituencies in each of the region (except Midwest). These constituencies were Enugu Zaria central and Ibadan central. The electorates in the constituencies numbered 24,246; 21,865 and 30,344 respectively.

Makintoch used questionnaire approach in this and in each of these constituencies. Concluding, Makintoch noted that variables such as mass media, and religions,

affiliations influenced voting behaviour in these constituencies. These were the main reasons underlying electoral choice in his "Nigerian Government and Politics"

According to Nnanka (2004:32) citing Dowse and Hughes, turns to education as a factor, Dowse does not really comment on it as a factor but they found out that higher education correlates with

1. The desire to obtain and assimilate information
2. The educated person acquires a stock of free political in for nation as a by-product of education.

This gives him a free context within which to assess new information. Hence, the costs of participation for the educated are lower and therefore participation is likely to be higher concluded Dowse and Hughes.

Lane Robert E. and Sears Davido (2004:39) pointed out that the quality that is special to primary group relationships is the influence of face to face relationships. It is a matter of people dealing directly with other people. They briefly explores some kinds of identifications and learning processes involved in reference group behaviour.

They noted that the influence of group identification upon opinion and beliefs is almost as strong as it is for primary groups. The college girls who identified with their own families tended to adopt the liberal college norms more quickly. That is to say that reference groups are highly significant in moulding opinions. Indeed, it has "no opinion", it is for one of just three reasons;

- a. The individual has no reference group within which a stand is taken, relevant to the proposition
- b. He can not shift psychologically to the right references.
- c. He is unaware of the stand unaware which his appropriate group has taken or would take if asked.

It is pertinent that there is little in the way of coherent and systematic theory relating to social, psychological and political variables to the act of participation in politics. The difficulty is that without such a theory one can almost indefinitely spin out associational factors related to voting pattern (Agbo,2009:25).

Unanka (2004:169), posits that voting is the commonest measure of political participation in a democratic and pseudo-democratic nations. Its variations at the individual level in the form of voting behaviour-who cast votes, and at the national/state or local levels in the form of voter turnout, is an issue of great concern to political and policy analysts.

Furthermore he posits, in a democracy, voting is the key electoral device applied in the political process through which people participate in the creation, choice and control of their government.

Voting i.e casting votes (cards, voice or raising of the hand) for the election (selection) of national, state and local leaders at executive and legislative levels, is the most modern popular device for the creation and control

of government. Yet voting is not a natural right and definitely not a biologically determined human activity. The question is who votes and why do people vote?

He further argue that if voting is not a natural right, not a biologically determined human activity and therefore, not a taken-for-granted form of political activity. The issue of how and why people vote (i.e. voting behaviour) remains important to political analyst as a pertinent question of when people begin to vote and how they vote (the type and method of voting). These and similar questions are important to this discourse.

For the purpose of theoretical framework, we are going to use the post-colonial state theory.

The post-colonial state theory is an attempt to study and examine the role and nature of the third world societies. The state in post colonial societies were not established by the indigenous bourgeois but by a foreign one for the domination of the natives in order to enable them exploit the resources. Clande Ake (1981).

The state now occupies a central role for this reason. The policies emanating from post colonial state made it impossible for the indigenous bourgeoisie to operate. Because of the domination of the emerging class, they started pressurizing the state because They want to have a say within the system. What happens is that the state that inherited the post colonial society fundamentally became an instrument of class formation and these were primarily where the uniqueness of the state lies. As a result of the weakness of the class, the state in post colonial society was virtually involved in serious investment and development in the society.

The consequences of this can be seen in the zero-sum nature of politics in the third world which is usually the winners take all. Because of the zero-sum nature people in everything and this also explains the Hobbesian nature of African societies.

Because those who control the state are pre-occupied with wealth accumulation and maintain of power, every single thing is politics. They are after the accumulation of wealth in order to entrench themselves economically and politically.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework of analysis adopted in this article is the Marxist theory of Post-Colonial State. The State in the post-colonial periphery is a capitalist type of state, even though to some extent it is different from the state in advanced capitalist formations. According to the Marxist theory, the state is the product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms (Lenin, 1984:10-11). This state, which arose from the conflict between and among classes, is as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which by this means also becomes the politically dominant class and thus acquires new means of holding

down and exploiting the oppressed (Jakubowski, 1973:41) Thus, according to Marx and Engels (1971:38) "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie".

Therefore, contrary to the claim of Western liberal or bourgeois scholars, the state is not class neutral, rather, it is immersed in constant class struggle within and between the various institutional groups that make it a reality (Ezeani 2008).

The classical Marxist theory of the state has been further developed to take into consideration the peculiarities of the neo-colonial state (see Alavi, 1972, Saul, 1974 and Ekekwe, 1986).

The main attributes of a neo-colonial state as seen by the Marxist theory include:

- The state as an instrument of class domination.
- The centrality of the state and its apparatuses as the main instruments for primitive accumulation especially by the dominant class and their foreign collaborators.
- The renter or extractive nature of the state.
- The unifying function of the post-colonial state (Alavi, 1972, Saul, 1974, Collins, 1976 and Ezeani, 2008).

As Ekekwe (1986:12) rightly noted;

The difference between the two forms of capitalist state is thus: that whereas the state in the advanced capitalist formations functions to maintain the economic and social relations under which bourgeois accumulation takes place in the periphery of capitalism; factors which have to do with the level of development of the productive forces make the state, through its several institutions and apparatuses, a direct instrument for accumulation for the dominant class or its element.

This peculiar attribute of the neo-colonial state can be traced to the colonial epoch. The Colonial Governments in their bid to achieve their economic interests discouraged the emergence of a strong indigenous capitalist class. This they achieved by discriminating against African businessmen in the disbursement of bank loans, award of contracts and other business incentives. In the absence of indigenous capitalist class strong enough to establish hegemony over the state at independence, the neo-colonial state such as Nigeria became the main instrument of economic investment and economic development. Beside, the new indigenous bourgeoisie that inherited control over the neo-colonial state and its apparatuses had a very weak economic base, and hence relied on this control for its own capitalist accumulation (Ezeani 2008:4).

Critical to understanding this, is an appreciation of the nature and character of the Post-Colonial Nigeria. Many scholars such as Graf (1988), Diamond (1986) and Joseph (1996) have identified capitalist rent seeking, patrimonialism and prebendalism as the major characteristics of Post-Colonial Nigeria State. Some have even fancifully referred to the Nigerian State as a "rogue state" (Joseph, 1996). These characteristics have combined with one another, and with many others, in complex dynamics, to undermine the Nigerian State's capacity to discharge those fundamental obligations of modern state to its citizens, such as socio-economic provisioning, guarantee of fundamental human rights and freedoms, ensuring law and order and facilitating peace and stability as pre conditions for growth and development (Jega, 2002:36).

The unique nature of the Neo-Colonial State such as Nigeria therefore, has primarily on the fact that it combines that function of serving as a major instrument of capital accumulation with that being a direct instrument of class formation and domination. As Milliband (1977:109) puts it, "*The state is here the source of economic power as well as an instrument of it; state is a major means of production*".

The Marxist theory of state is very significant to understanding and explaining the anti-corruption crisis in Nigeria. Applying the theory, it is argued that those who have presided over the state have tended to personalize power and privatize collective national resources, while being excessively reckless in managing the affairs of the nation. Indeed, the state has become the prime mover of capitalist development and class formation, with all the associated contradictions that this is wont to spew up.

Put differently, the criminal justice system in any polity reflects the socio-economic system in operation. That is, the criminal justice system in a capitalist society is a reflection of the capitalist mode of production operated by the polity. The anti graft agencies operating in Nigeria is operating in the interest of the rich and influential members of the Nigerian society. This confirm the thesis that he who controls the means of production equally dominant other aspects of human life. The rich and influential are the dominant members of the Nigerian society who benefit from dependent capitalism; and have also conspired to make the anti-corruption agencies operation in the society to reflect their interest. Also, there are equally corrupt. Sa'ad (2002:13) has posited as follows:

Clearly, then the turning of the state into a primary source of capital accumulation appears to account for the existence of corruption among the public servants in Nigeria. Corruption may be more outrageous at the top level of the public service, but in general the occurrence of corruption in Nigeria takes place across all levels of public service.

The pervasiveness of corruption is as a result of turning state into a main source of private accumulation; it has at least two main effects on law, justice and state in Nigeria. The Nigerian Law Enforcement agents and Judicial Personnel and Socio-cultured units of Nigerian Society can hardly remain immune to corruption.

In societies of this nature like Nigeria, the performance of politicians in office is measured by the amount of loot they can make and not actually by their performance in the state. Hence life becomes brutish nasty and poor as far as politics is concerned. It further creates conclusive environment for Multinational Corporation to exploit these societies.

In relation to our research enterprise, these instruments of class domination in the post colonial state, have become too powerful that voting patterns in recent times follow that direction. People now vote because of the envisaged economic gains that accrue to them after "selling their conscience". This is manifest in a variable in voting behaviour called group identity.

The peoples Democratic Party PDP has become instrument of class domination in Nigeria that if you don not identify with them as a voter and as an aspirants, no head way for the person. Therefore voting patterns in this extant period in Nigeria follow the dimension of identifying with a powerful group called PDP during voting. This is because, they have both economic power and political power to influence vote.

In 2007 Governorship election in Imo states Chief martins Agbaso of the APGA won the election but the INEC chairman in the person of Prof Maurice Iwu cancelled the election because Agbaso is not a member of a PDP and does not come from a particular zone that was 'anointed' to rule Imo state as at that time.

## REVIEW OF ELECTIONS IN IMO STATE 1999-2011

Imo state came into existence in 1976 under military president Murtala Mohammed from part of east central state, part of it was split off in 1991 as Abia state and another Ebonyi state. The main cities in the state are Okigwe, Orlu and Owerri, English is the Nigeria official language, almost 89%, speak and understand English or broken English. The official local language is Igbo which about almost 96% of the population speak. Imo state is mainly a Christian state and just over 8% are orthodox and nearly 2% are Muslim. The population of Imo state is approximately 5.2 million and the state is made up of twenty-seven local governments.

Besides, Imo State was created on 17 March 1776 from the part of East central state. In 1976, there was no election, the state was ruled by the military headed by Governor Ndubuisi Kanu from 1976 to 1977 and from

1977 to July 1978 the state was ruled by the military headed by governor Sunday Ajibade Adenihum. The formation of political parties in Nigeria's second republic was as a result of the nationwide broadcast made by the then Head of state Brigadier Murtala Mohammed, on October 1, 1975 during the 15<sup>th</sup> independence Anniversary. Brigadier Murtala Mohammed announced a five-stage programme leading to the military handover of power to civilians by Monday, October 1 1976. In 1979-1983, five political parties contested. The election in which Governor Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe became the Governor under the National party of Nigeria (NPN). Today, late Governor Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe is recognized as the best governor that has ever ruled Imo state by the Imo citizens.

From January 1984 to August 1985, there was no election. The state was ruled by the military by Governor Ike Nwachukwu and from 1985 to 1986, the state was ruled by the military under the leadership of Governor Allison Amakoduna Madueke and from 1986 to 1990 was ruled by the military led by Governor Amadi Ikwuechegh and from August 1990 to January 1992 The state was ruled by the military Governor in the person of Anthony E Oguogu.

Not only in 1985 to 1989 but also was in Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha regime During this administration two political parties were formed National Republican convention (NRC) and social Democratic party (S.D.P). In this, election was conducted in which Governor Evan Enwerem emerged as the Governor from National Republican Convention (N.R.C) from January 1992 to November 1993. The military ruled the state from 19<sup>th</sup> 1993 December to 22 August 1996 by James N.J. Aneke and from 29<sup>th</sup> May to May 1996 to May 1999 was ruled by a military Governor Tanko Zubiru. From 29<sup>th</sup> May 1999 to 29 May 2007, elections were conducted and many political parties participated which saw Chief Achike Udenwa as the Governor of the state under the peoples Democratic Party (P.D.P). There were several incidences of electoral malpractices for example, The Chairman of the Imo State Independent Electoral Commission was asked to resign his position following his indictment by the Imo state Election Petition Tribunal. The 2007 election were conducted and many political parties participated but PPA won the election in the state which made Chief Ikedi Ohakim the Governor of Imo state Imo state and Chief Owelle Rochas Okorochoa of the APGA won over whiningly. This election is the one this research is poised to probe or inquire about.

Electoral malpractice not only threatens the credibility of elections but also damages the legitimacy of democratic institutions, by weakening too, fundamental human rights, freedom of association and freedom of speech. (Vanguard, 2007:9). From 1999-2007, there have been numerous incidence of electoral malpractices in Imo state. In 2004, the chairman of the Imo State Independent Electoral Commission (ISEC), Marcel

Ogwuegbu was asked to resign his position following his indictment by the Imo state Election petition tribunal. The Chairman of Imo state chapter of the All Nigerian people party (ANPP) Vitalis Orikeze Ajumbe also urged the Governor Achike Udenwa's administration to shore him aside if he fails to resign. He insisted that with the indictment handed down by the lower and appeal tribunals, Ogwuegbu should not wait for anyone to advice him to quite but that he should bow out honorably.

Ajumbe lamented that the action of the chairman was not only a disgrace to the electoral body but an embarrassment to the entire state as the tribunal ruled that there were discrepancies in the election of the Owerri Municipal Council. Ordinarily, what happened on the Election Day in Owerri was the same in all part of the state but in the municipal council, no form of election was help at all and the electoral body only awarded votes to the winner. The tribunal in its ruling, ordered for a bye-election in Owerri municipal council.

The chairman of A.N.P.P Imo state chapter Vitalis Orikeze Ajumbe further called for the cancellation of the bye-election in the Owerri municipal stressing that the entire exercise was characterized to with snatching of ballot boxes by members of the PDP, alleging collusion between party and the state independent electoral commission (ISIEC). Ajumbe protesting the irregularities witnessed during the election in the municipal council chairmanship election added that some the evidence to buttress his stance was the snatching of ballot box at Arugo Park along Onitsha high way by PDP thugs. At the Dan Anyiam stadium, only one booklet of ballot paper was brought and only 12 voter's names were in the register for booth seven. At the government college, up till about 10.30am, there was no presence of (ISIEC) adhoc workers and their materials. At Aladidimma Primary School voting did not take place as wrong voters list was brought by ISIEC Officials.

In 2007, Imo Gubernatorial election involving Chief Ikedi Ohakim of the progressive people Alliance (P.P.A), Senator Ifeanyi Ararume of the people Democratic Party (PDP) and chief martins Agbaso of the all progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). Chief Agbaso of the APGA Claims he won the election in 24 out of 27 local governments in the state before the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Cancelled the election. Agbaso challenged the cancellation of the April 2007 poll by INEC; claiming that he won the election and INEC Cancelled it because it was clear that its favoured candidate was losing the election. INEC cancelled the election, citing Electoral irregularities in nine out of 27 local governments. In the same 2007 Gubernatorial candidate of the ruling party PDP in Imo state senator Ararume was replace with Chief Charles Ugwu after winning the party's primary election and federal high court in Abuja ruled that chief Charles Ugwu is the party's governorship candidate in the state since he (Ugwu) had been chosen by the party to contest for the election.

Furthermore, on the evening of APRIL 19, 2003 in my local government Amaimo, Ikeduru local government, Onyewuchi Iwuchukwu, an ANPP member, was shot dead in front of his family by suspected PDP Supporters associated with PDP's local government chairmanship.

Candidate, Samuel Anyanwu known as (Sam Daddy) Onyewuchi Iwuchukwu's murders were able to be identified by several witnesses who were at the spot when the incident occurred. The perpetrators were identified by name. However, the witnesses alleged that the man who did the shooting was the younger brother of the same Sam Daddy, the PDP candidate. In the same vein, another ANPP agent was briefly abducted on the orders of the transition committee chairman Charles Anukwa protesting that Anukwa, accompanied mobile police men, took away ballot boxes from the vote collection centre, on April 19, 2003.

In the same 2003, there was a report by the opposition party APGA on the presidential and governorship election in Imo state, stating that in Orsu local government, a group of armed men in three buses, armed to the teeth, drove around the area and started harassing people with their weapons especially people who they believed are not PDP supporters. One similar note, in Ndiawa, in Okigwe local government area, An ANPP Supporter was beaten almost to death after he refused a cash bribe to rig the election result. A similar incidence occurred in the same election in Umudi/Umuwala ward, in Nkwere local government, two buses loads of mobile police officers came to the polling booth and attempted to force voters to vote for the PDP. Agents four opposition parties protested and snaffles broke out, during which ballot boxes and other materials were snatched in PDP members.

In the same 2003 election, a local community in Imo state called Umunumo in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area. Over 140 innocent people were shot dead or burnt and the highest level of arson and raiding was executed by the state police against the community in question. This story goes that one Mr. Jerry Egemba, an adviser to the deputy Governor of the state shared out money to many agents to rig elections for the Governor Chief Achike Udenwa, including his deputy.

A large part of the town did not vote for him. In reaction, the said adviser J Egemba, a barrister at law by trade returned after words to collect back his booty. While some out of fear Coughed out their own and paid back, a few others were unable and thus refused to comply. They purported that, election "money" is bad money no one should hope to recuperate. They meant it was a deal that the giver never goes back to the receiver to collect back the money dare due to the unfair conniving and electoral stigma and shame attached to it.

Mr. Jerry Egemba infuriated, because of not recovering his money back, drop back to Owerri, the state capital of Imo state, and brought some red-eyed police killers to arrest the named persons in the deal and have them duly tortured for the pleasure of his political masters. A

policeman was killed in the incident leading to reinforcement with some lorry loads of policemen armed with deadly arsenals. Even the fuel that was scarce during the period became surplus in the hands of the combatant police to achieve for themselves and their "Oga's" maximum revenge.

During this period, the governorship election in Imo state was fraught with diverse form of electoral malpractices, ranging from ballot box snatching, ballot stuffing, thuygery and outright voters' disenfranchisement. In Owerri North council area, as at 6.20pm no election materials have been brought to over five polling centres in Okigwe Road and Orji areas of the council.

In Uzoagba my own town in Ikeduru local government area, electoral materials in boot and were snatched by unidentified hoodlums and at Okwu, Ezizama and Ugirike wards, ballot boxes and all electoral materials were snatched by unknown gunmen as well.

In Oguta, gunshots were heard from different areas; especially the Izombe community was two of the major contenders for the House of Assembly seat came from. There were rampant snatching of ballot boxes and electoral materialism the area.

Also in Ezinaihte Mbaise council area of Imo state, PDP chairman of the area, allegedly invaded polling boot 004, ward 1, (one) Amumara Ezinaihte, with things, allegedly compelling voters to vote PDP and openly sharing money to people. The police were called in but did not intervene in the matter and left in Imo Transport Company (ITC) commercial bus. The chairman of all Nigeria people party (ANPP) reported that at 6.10pm, there were no voting in the entire Ngor Okpala council area of Imo state due to issues ranging from the absence of result sheets to the unavailability of other relevant material for the elections Ballot papers were allegedly taken away from these polling units and thumb printed for the PDP outside the polling station by armed thugs by some officials of the state government.

The Independent National Electoral Commission in April 2007 removed the Resident Electoral commissioner in charge of Imo state. Mr Austine Okojie. The Resident Electoral Commissioner was replaced with Alhaji Ismaila Abdulkareem, following "Electoral irregularities in nine out of the 27 local governments during Mr Okojie administration in 14 April 2007. According to Chief Martins Agbaso, he described this 14<sup>th</sup> April poll 2007 that professor IWU was playing clannish politics with an intention to return a candidate from Okigwe zone while he (IWU) hails from as Governor of the state regardless of how the people of Imo Vote. Mr. Agbaso said that Prof. Iwu should be a neutral umpire as the INEC chairman but has sought to subsume the interest of the rest of Imo state into his personal and clannish interest to impose a governor from his zone (Okigwe zone) at all cost.

More so, according to chairman of all progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) Prince Cletus C Nwaka, said that

the cancellation of the April 14 Governorship poll of 2007 in Imo state by INEC was for the reason that the election was marred by electoral irregularities in various parts of the state. The news about the cancellation of the polls came to the good people of Imo as a grave shock of monumental dimension. The party chairman maintained election "broad day light". The victory of chief Martins Agbaso was subverted by INEC that is supposed to be independent and fair arbiter. Prince Cletus C. Nwaka continued that even though the Imo state INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) Mr Austin Okojie listed about nine (9) local government Areas where he noted that election did not hold as a result of the claimed "Electoral irregularities he still went ahead to announce a state assembly election result for the Imo citizens.

The above scenario was the myriad of the charade called election that held in Imo state in the period of 2003 and 2007 elections. This will now usher us in into the most extent contemporaneous 2011 governorship in election.

In Imo state like every other states of the federation, the management of the 2011 election posed huge challenges; from the training, deployment of electoral staff, logistics, security matters to the major outcome of elections. Great diligence was, however, taken to ensure transparency, integrity credibility of the election process.

### **Election Personnel**

The election officials used for the elections were sourced from NYSC Members and Federal Agencies in Imo state. About two months to the elections the state embarked on recruitment targeted at very competent personnel for both poll activities and security during the polls. Specifically, poll officials were drawn from INEC, National Youth Service Corps, National population commission, Nigerian immigration service, Federal university of Technology (FUTO), National orientation Agency and National identity card management commission among others. Returning and collation officers were received from the federal Tertiary institutions located within the states.

### **Posting of Staff**

As part of effort to ensure transparent, free fair and credible election in Nigeria and Imo state in particular. There were posting of Administrative secretaries by INEC. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2011: Mr. Moses Udoh the Administrative secretary of Imo state was posted to Delta state in the same vein, the public affairs officers of the 36 states and FCT were also redeployed to various states during the 2011 elections. All was geared towards ensuring free, fair and credible elections.

### **Training and Deployment**

Training of adhoc staff was done in phases starting with Training the Trainers and supervisory presiding officers (SPO's). Accordingly, a 3-day training exercise was organized for these categories of adhoc staff at the Federal secretariat Imo state. And at the end of the exercise, a total of 296 trainees were selected and posted as trainers at the local government level. A separate training programme was also organized for collation officers and Returning Officers, who took part in the exercise.

In addition a larger training was organized for the NYSC members and non-corps members both at the NYSC orientation Camp and at the 27 local government areas in the state. At the end of the training exercise, a total 8874 adhoc personnel were deployed as presiding Officers Assistant presiding Officers and poll clerks.

### **Election Materials**

An election material is a key to the conduct of elections. The quality, timing and general manner in which these materials are appropriated can either make or mar elections.

After all registration exercise in Imo state a total of 1,688, 793 eligible voters were registered as authentic registrants while 11, 083 were recorded as double registration in Imo state. The materials for the election were received and distributed before every exercise. The logistics provision was far reaching in scope, covering innovations never used in previous elections such as supply of industrial fans, generators, tents, mats, camping of adhoc staff, etc.

### **Security**

In line with the new approach to electoral security in the country, the commission in the build up to April, 2011 General elections established Inter Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) to among other things coordinate the design of an election security management system for INEC, develop locally focused plans for providing security before, during and after election and harmonized the training, deployment of security personnel on security election duties.

Here in Imo state, the security Agencies working within the frame work of (ICCES) played a commendable role in maintaining peace and security during the General elections.

The consultative committee which had heads of security Agencies, in the state as members and Imo state commissioner of police as its chairman held several



meeting during the election period to chart and evolve comprehensive security action plan for the elections. This strategic and integrated approach to election security management in the state helped nip in the bud threats to peace and security during the election exercise

In general terms, there was a remarkable peace in most parts of Imo state during the elections including areas traditionally regarded as flash points.

In conclusion, the 2011 election in Imo state was successfully conducted. The exercise was generally peaceful and the conduct of the elections was substantially in compliance to the rules. Challenges were huge but the independent National Electoral commission was able to overcome the obstacles and deliver acceptable elections. The assessment of the election both by local and international observers was that the election was free, fair and credible.

The immediate challenge before the commission is how to manage the success already recorded and improve the process so that the future elections would be better than what the commission had in April 2011.

As part of efforts by INEC to deliver free, fair and credible election in Imo state, the following are the results of the Imo governorship election in 2011 for the April 26 polls as INEC declares inconclusive results in the state. The results among the three strong contending political parties run thus;

From the foregoing, we can see that the voting patterns according to this result underscores to a large extent, sectional interest called zoning. People from Okigwe zone voted for their "Brother" while the Orlu people vote for the "brother" as well.

In order not to renege in their promise of delivering free, fair and credible election, INEC cancelled the election held in Ngor Okpala and Ohaji Egbema on account of violence, including other places like award in Orji Owerri North, Mbaitoli Oguta were election were said to be marred with irregularities hence inconclusive election as declared by INEC in the state.

Moreso, four resident electoral commissioners were deployed in Imo to conduct the supplementary governorship election who swore to deliver, free fair and transparent election in the Imo state. The supervising REC Aniedi Abasi Ikoiwak gave the assurance in an interview with journalist in Owerri. One of the commissioners Mike Iginni warned that attempting to snatch ballot material would be suicidal because of the high number of security personnel that would be detailed to each polling unit.

Mr Ikoiwak noted that in view of INEC's insistence on discipline and best ethical practices, four INEC officials indicted in complicity in electoral malpractices were immediately suspended on the arrival of the new team of INEC Umpires to Imo state.

However, against the 6, 500 police officers deployed in the April 26 governorship election in the state, the police have deployed over 10,000 police officers for the 6<sup>th</sup> may

**Table showing the political Zones in Imo State**

| LGA                          | PDP       | APGA        | ACN      |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Owerri Zone</b>           |           |             |          |
| Aboh Mbaise                  | 20,171    | 11,498      | 8,452    |
| Ahiazu Mbaise                | 16,055    | 12,240      | 6,708    |
| Ezinihitte Mbaise            | 13,063    | 10,286      | 6,370    |
| Ikeduru                      | 18,922    | 14,919      | 4,969    |
| * Mbactoli*                  | *12,400*  | *17,757*    | -        |
| Ngor Okpala                  | -         | No election | -        |
| Owerri Municipal             | 4,194     | 19,919      | 4,969    |
| *Owerri North*               | *7,341*   | *19,901     | 2,826    |
| Owerri West                  | 8,341*    | 14,313      | 3,864    |
| Total                        | 101,135   | 120,433     |          |
| <b>OKIGWE ZONE</b>           |           |             |          |
| Ehime Mbano                  | 21,969    | 1,508       | 10,322   |
| Ihi He/Uboma                 | 14,462    | 1,600       | 7,043    |
| Isiala Mbano                 | 28,090    | 1,892       | 12,735   |
| Obowo                        | 12,352    | 3,444       | 6,872    |
| Okigwe                       | 14,043    | 3,959       | 7,707    |
| Onuimo                       | 7,575     | 744         | 4,206    |
| Total                        | 99,491    | 13,147      | 48,885   |
| <b>ORLU ZONE</b>             |           |             |          |
| Orlu                         | 7,555     | 30,914      | 3,592    |
| Ideato South                 | 4,989     | 27,400      | 2,105    |
| Ideato North                 | 6,994     | 20,463      | 1,667    |
| Oru East                     | 6,013     | 14,011      | 2,335    |
| Oru West                     | 7,434     | 12,739      | 1,357    |
| Njaba                        | 7,630     | 19,188      | 2,197    |
| Orsu                         | 7,455     | 12,045      | 2,088    |
| Isu                          | 7,623     | 11,713      | 2,980    |
| Nkwerre                      | 5,111     | 6,752       | 1,563    |
| Owangele                     | 7,679     | 5,995       | 2,672    |
| *Oaguta*                     | *12,216*  | *4,449*     | 2,377    |
| *ohaji/egbema*               | *28,779*  | *6,008*     | 5,376    |
| Total                        | 109,478   | 171,682     | 30,309   |
| Grand total                  | 310,104   | 305,262     |          |
| <b>25% Target in 26 LGAS</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>17</b>   | <b>6</b> |

(\*) Asterisks refer to figures already released for the Local government areas before the election in these areas were cancelled and therefore Imo election declared inconclusive.

supplementary governorship election in Imo state in the four council areas and a ward.

From the results above, it appears PDP leads but the areas marked asterisks (\*) where areas were elections were marred with electoral malpractices that led to the cancellation of the results and conduct of fresh elections in those areas. It was reliably gathered that APGA was leading in 11 local government while PDP led in 10 local government apart from other local government areas that election were declared inconclusive.

Following the inability of INEC to successfully collate ballots from four local government areas and a ward on

the 26 April polls, the INEC Chief returning officer for Imo state declared the Imo state gubernatorial race as being inconclusive. Consequent upon its inconclusiveness, a supplementary election was ordered by the electoral body on 6<sup>th</sup> of May, 2011.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2011, Owelle Rochas Anayo Okorochoa (OON) the candidate of APGA was declared the Winner of the Imo state Governorship Election, having scored 336809 votes as against Chief Ikedi Ohakim's 290496 votes. Not satisfied with this declaration, the PDP, being the party that sponsored Chief Ikedi Ohakim for the said election, an Election Petition at the Imo state Governorship election Tribunal headed by Hon. Justice E.N. Kpojirne as E.G Osinuga as members. The petition was numbered EPT/IM/GOV/04/2011.

**The main grounds of the petition were**

1. That the PDP candidate scored the majority of lawful votes cast at the said election and
2. That the supplementary election held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of may, 2011 was invalid being in breach of the provisions of both the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) and the 1999 constitution (as amended)

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2011, the tribunal delivered its judgment which spanned a total of 50 pages and took about 3 hours to be delivered.

The judgment began by reviewing the pleadings in the petition the pleadings in the replies and reply to the replies of the judgment. At the close of the pleading and pretrial session. The tribunal with the concurrence of all the lawyers in the matter formulated 2 issues for determination:

1. Whether the supplementary election conducted on the 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2011, were held in compliance with the provisions of both the constitution and the Electoral Act.

2. Whether the petitioner's candidate i.e Ikedi Ohakim scored the majority of lawful votes cast at the election (see p9 10 of the judgment).

Consequent upon this directive, the petitioner opened its case and led evidence in support of its pleadings and called a total of 33 witnesses and tendered hundreds of exhibits (see pgs 10-24). The first and second respondent, that are Owelle Rocha's Okorochoa and APGA, called a total of 3 witnesses only while 3<sup>rd</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Respondents (i.e INEC and its officials called only 1 witness see pages 24-25 of the judgment). At the close of the cases of all the parties, council to all the parties filed, exchanged and later adopted the written briefs of Argument, based on the 2 issues which were identified by the Tribunal at the pre-trial session and consented to by all the counsel to the parties.

**Consistent with the above, the court based its consideration of the case on the issues as formulates.**

In its judgment on ISSUE No 1-that is today, weather the supplementary election of 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 was held in compliance with the provisions of the constitution and Electoral Act, the Tribunal after analyzing my the relevant statutory provisions, especially section 178, sub section 1 and 2 of the 1999 constitution and section 26 of the Electoral Act 2010 and after reviewing all. The decided cases cited before it came to the conclusion that the supplementary Election held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, 2011 was held in compliance with the provisions of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria. (As amended) and consequently held further that the petition, on this ground, is accordingly dismissed (see page 27-37 of the judgment). In so doing, the court noted that section 27 of the Act requires that the results of elections be announced at each level and a winner declared. The pleading in paragraph 14 (1) of the petition is to the effect that no declaration and no return were made by the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent concerning the election of 26<sup>th</sup> April rather the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent declared the said election inconclusive. The implication is that the process was not yet completed. It is to be borne in mind that only the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent has the constitutional power of declare result of an election conducted under the Act, and as long as an election process has not been concluded, no winner can be declared. If we accept the interpretation urged on us by the petitioner's council, it would amount to an absurdity as it would amount to basing the result on an incomplete election. Bearing in mind that an election is a process commencing from accreditation, voting, collation, recording on INEC forms and declaration of result, it cannot be said that the election to the office of the Governor of Imo state held on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2011 was conclusive in view of the non declaration of result. The Election which commenced on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2011 was only concluded on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 with the declaration and return of the 1<sup>st</sup> respondent as winner of the election. We are therefore persuaded by the argument proffered by the two sets of respondents to effect that the supplementary election of 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 is only a continuation and conclusion of the election that was conducted on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2011, and not a fresh election whose timing could be said to be in violation of section 178 (2) of the constitution.

On ISSUE NO2 formulated; which is whether the petitioner's candidate scored the majority of lawful votes cast at the election of April 26, 2011 and/or the supplementary election of May, 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Tribunal, after a through, detailed, and pain-staking review of the evidence led before it by both the petitioner and

respondent especially in relation to Mbaitoli, Oru West, Oguta, Ohaji/Egbema and Ngor Okpala local Government Areas, and after a thorough review and analysis of all the evidence led in the matter held that “from the above analysis of the evidence as presented by the petitioner and the respondents, we come to the irresistible conclusion that on issue number 2, we hold that the petitioner has failed to prove that its candidate scored the majority of the lawful votes cast at the election. In so doing, the court noted that “the petitioner has pleaded that 1<sup>st</sup> respondent scored 336,809 votes. There is no proof before us that this number consists of unlawful votes. The petitioner has also not disproved the presumption of regularity of this result see section 150 (1) of the Evidence Act. In a case of Ogu Vs Ekweremadu (2006) 1 NWALR (Pt-961) 255 at 282, relied upon by counsel to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent, the court of appeal held thus “where the petitioner fails to rebut the presumption in favour of due return his petition must fail”. The petitioner can only be declared the person with the majority of lawful votes if it proves that it scored even one vote above the 336, 809 scored by 1<sup>st</sup> respondent, or that this number consists of unlawful votes which when subtracted will make it the winner. We have not seen any such proof from it in this petition. It cannot therefore be declared the winner of any election.

Under the circumstance and in consequence therefore, the Tribunal in its unanimous judgment held that the petition lacks merit, and is accordingly dismissed in its entirety.

### **Zoning as a Factor in April 2011 Governorship Election in Imo State**

According to Oparah (2011), zoning as a necessary power sharing arrangement has come to stay as a way of ensuring the three major zones in Imo state feel equal sense of belonging in the governance of the state. It has become a convention that respected by the zones and trusted to ensure smooth power sharing in such a way that each of the three zones has come to an agreement on where power should domicile in every political epoch. Power here is represented in the governorship of the state where it domiciles at a given time represents the feeling of the people at that particular point in time. Zoning is a very critical factor in the 2011 governorship election in Imo state as it had been in previous elections. Whatever other variables that will come into play, zoning will certainly have a primal position in deterring who Imolites will support. Being sensitive to the charters of the unwritten zoning arrangement will certainly determine coming election, as it has done in previous elections in Imo state so it pays every political party to ensure it is politically correct on this imperative. It pays for all the zones to be cognizant of this doctrine of necessity and ensure that the spirit of fairness and equity, which

informed it in the first instance, is up held in such a way that no zone will feel cheated or oppressed by the choices every Imolite makes in the coming election.

Peter continuing, posits that a cursory glance at the zone arrangement so far has shown that of the three zones of Owerri, Orlu as Okigwe that make up Imo state, Owerri, has been the least favoured in the power sharing arrangement, while Orlu has taken eight full and uninterrupted years in power, Okigwe has taken eight years and still counting while Owerri has taken a paltry two. In his words, “I would have a situation where there will be equality in the number of years each zone has enjoyed on the Imo state governorship saddle but given the situation we find ourselves, the next destination for power in Imo state in 2011 should be Owerri zone. However, the outcome of the party selection processes and the fact that the incumbent governor, chief Ohakim still has one possible tenure has postponed Owerri zone’s hope till 2015. These are the factors that came into now unsettle the applecart for Owerri zone but gives them enough room to plan well to take over the reins of the state in 2015.

One of three leading candidates in the governorship race, two, incumbent Governor Ohakim of PDP and Senator Ifeanyi Ararume of the ACN are from Okigwe zone while Chief Rochas Okorochoa of APGA is from Orlu zone so none of the leading candidate with possible chance of winning the election emerged from Owerri zone. With this scenario, Owerri zone has to do a clear headed but simple analysis of their possible chances to rule the state again in 2015 and make an electoral decision that will only facilitate this opportunity but also ensure that under no condition again would it be further delayed. For now, the electorates of Owerri must weigh the options, balance them against the wishes and expectations of the other zones and ensure that they translate such to full endorsement of the best option that will guarantee them their rightful due in power in the coming election. The expected outcome is not who wins the next election but whose victory will facilitate the quickest realization of the dream of the people of the zone to assume ruler ship of a state where they constitute an impregnable majority. In doing this analysis, we may take hostage certain other critical variables that decide where a people flows in an election amid such may include performance, competence, qualification, etc. So we have to take all these variables as given and go on to take stock of how best the bread of Owerri zone is buttered within the context of the three leading candidates in the race presently.

Let us take a scenario of the victory of Chief Rochas Okorochoa, who is from Orlu zone. The zone through Achike udenwa had eight unimpeded years in the governorship of the state. Taking power back to the zone in 2011 through Okorochoa, just four light years after Udenwa will mean that Owerri will wait till 2019, when Okorochoa would have had his constitutionally allowed

eight years in power. Given that Orlu would have had sixteen years in power, Okigwe would have had eight years and Owerri would have permanently stagnated in two years. That can never be a desirable scenario for any average Owerri man and no matter the transient benefits it will give to the people of Orlu, it will definitely work against them in future and in an emerging Imo state that plays false with zoning and power arrangement, it may ensure that an Orlu man will never rule Imo state again. Also, who will guarantee that in 2019, another Orlu man or another Okigwe man will not ride on the backs of the same factor that birthed the Okorochoa governorship and still sentence Owerri to a permanent political oblivion?

In the likely event that Chief Ararume emerges victorious, Owerri will wait till 2019 when he would have fully exploited his constitutionally granted two terms and when he is through, Okigwe would have had sixteen years in power, Orlu would have had eight while Owerri remains stagnant at two years. Let us not make much of Ararume's promise of relinquishing power after one term to advance the power arrangement between the zone for if indeed he genuinely desires to do so, would he resist the mammoth pressure that is bound to start soon after he assumes office, to the effect that he should go for a second term to "continue the good work" he has been doing even before assuming office. And who says another Okigwe man or Orlu man would not be waiting on the wings to pounce power once he finishes his tenure thereby worsening the woes of Owerri people?

In a likely event of governor Ohakim winning a second tenure, it is almost certain that the Imo would have been permanently sealed by the victory. The certainty of an Owerri man taking over after him is totally guaranteed so his emergence in the coming election offers the best and most secure assurance of a smooth transition of power to Owerri zone in 2015. His victory will even affirm the right of Owerri people to go all out and get their just desert from the present zoning formula and solidify the orderly process that has greatly mitigated rancor and mistrust among Ndi Imo. He would not have an additional term to struggle for and he will certainly pay the debt of gratitude to the people of Owerri zone for supporting him for a full tenure.

So people of Owerri zone need to think deeper and see reason to support Ohakim to complete his constitutionally allowed tenure and give way for one of their own in 2015. They need to buy into this thinking because any other option among the ones lined up now will postpone, injure or seal the chances of Owerri people to take the governorship in 2015. As at now, Owerri zone is the biggest of the three zones; in terms of the registered voters in the new INEC register. It is therefore the beautiful bridle that will decide where power goes in 2015 and a united statement will help consolidate prospects of their assuming what may be considered their rightful patrimony in 2015.

Misusing the awesome power will land the zone in continued grief and political oblivion. The recommendation therefore is that to ensure fairness and equality, Nigerians and Imo state should encourage equitable distribution of power to all component units and ensure no one zone or people are cheated. Believing that is the intention of those that paneled the zoning arrangement in Imo state and we must all work to sustain it for the greater good of all. In other words, Rochas Okorochoa and the entire Orlu and Okigwe zone should give way for Owerri to have their own share of the common wealth" of Imo.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on our analysis we recommended the following:

1. That appointment of the Resident electoral commissioner and all the staff of INEC should be people of proven integrity probity, and non-partisan. These appointments should not be politicized. We also recommend that more people like reverend gentlemen or priests from the rank of Bishop should support Jega in his good job. This will help fight electoral malpractices in Nigeria.

2. Again, we are of the view that future political parties with similar or identical ideologies should be not be allowed to function differently. They should be joined to form one party because lack of ideological differences among the Nigerian political parties has left the electorates with no alternative choice ideologically.

3. The electorate in future should be well enlightened and mobilized ideologically through the mass media, lecturers and seminars should be organized in public places by ideological experts.

4. More importantly, the zero-sum nature of the politics in Nigeria where by the winner takes all should be eschewed because it is responsible for all the electoral malpractices in Nigeria. Voters should not be induced by financial consideration. They should at all times vote according to their conscience and will.

5. There should be stringent legislation against all electoral offences in future. We recommend life jail or ban from future election as punishment for the offenders.

6. There should be adequate security at the polling booth so those politicians who want to buy peoples votes, and have the intention to commit electoral vices will be stopped.

7. All state INEC officials should be transferred to other states during election. So that familiarity will not provide leeway to manipulations.

8. The live of the common man should be protected by the government. This way, people will not sell their vote. According to Abel Guobadia former INEC chairman, many Nigerian citizens are poor, so the government needs to improve the standard of living of the masses or

electorates, making them self sufficient enough to be able to shun any temptation from politicians whose aim is only rob them their power of choice.

9 The economic structure of capitalism and its concomitant market democracy should be revisited. The lower social classes in Nigeria will continue to be politically short-changed in capitalist socio-economic formation where the majority poor classes have political chances of competition in election.

10 Voter registration should be conducted on a permanent basis just like birth and death registration, to ensure continuous capturing of voters that have attained 18 years and above such should be displayed on international gate way of information and communication-the internet-for all to see.

11 Finally, zoning bias should be expunged in the politics of Imo state for this has caused a lot of political wrangling in the state. Thus, however, the candidate and popular among others should rule.

## CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that election is the process of selecting leaders through voting. Voting is a critical variable in the electoral process. Therefore, the voting patterns in any ideal election should follow the direction or pattern which will see the popular candidates for election emerging winners and helping to solve the socio-economic and political problem in Nigeria.

This is because, at the heart of the problem with Nigeria today is leadership. There is no free and fair election that will usher in credible leaders who has the interest of their people at heart. The course of character and behaviour modification is critical in Nigeria and should be championed. Orientation and re-orientation of the electorate on the values of election through process of political socialization based on our indigenous values should have a prime of place in our electoral system.

It is only when credible and trusted leaders like Rochas Okorochoa is trying to prove to Imo people that Nigerians can bit their chest and say "we have started" lest, no way for Nigeria in the pursuits of matching with the best democracies in the world.

Also INEC should be given enough antinomy to do its work. There should be rotation of the Resident Electoral commissions from their state to other state. This will enhance non-partisanship on their part finally we are agreed that voting patterns in the 2011 guber election in Imo state is characterized by zoning, personality of candidates. The direction of votes and behaviour of electorate went to this direction.

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