

Repositioning Nigeria's Election Outcomes through the Synthesis of Wasted Votes and Proportional Representation: A Descriptive Approach to the 2019 Nigeria National Assembly Elections

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Abstract: *The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) organizes and conducts elections in Nigeria as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution (as amended). This paper investigates the effects of wasted votes as a product of first past the post electoral system. Past studies have not really captured the effects of wasted votes in the 2019 National Assembly Elections in Nigeria as a result of low women representation. This paper therefore, examines this gap; identifies challenges and suggests ways of tackling them. The paper is descriptive. For data, the paper uses a combination of primary and secondary materials. The finding is that wasted votes have promoted exclusion of women in election outcomes. This paper uses Duverger's Theory to understand the study. It then concludes the need for the combination of first past the post and proportional representation in future elections as a way of promoting women inclusion in the electoral system for Nigeria. It advocates increase in the allocation of seats to women in the national assembly; reorientation of constituents and stakeholders on the importance of proportional representation to reducing wasted votes and positively reposition election outcomes in Nigeria's future elections.*

Keywords: Electoral System, First Past the Post (FPTP), Women Representation in the Nigeria National Assembly, Proportional Representation (PR)

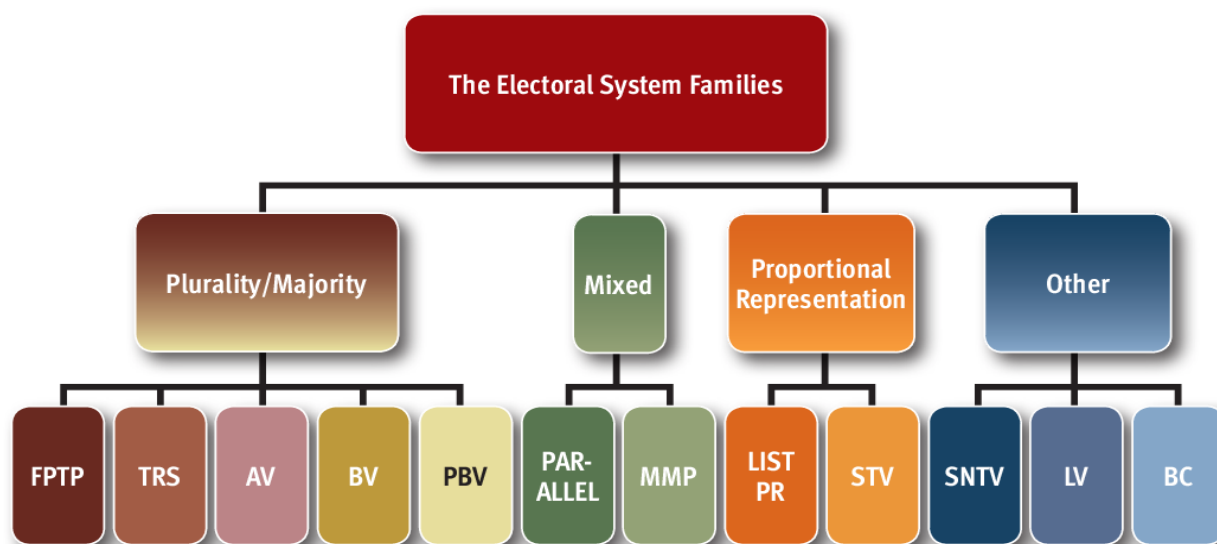


Diagram of The Electoral Systems Families taken from the online open source

1. Introduction

Nigeria, a federal republic, commenced its Fourth Republic with the presidential system (executive, judiciary and legislature) as a democratic nation in 1999. The country is made up of 36 states, a federal capital territory and 774 local governments.

The National Assembly (sometimes called legislature) is bicameral and comprises the Senate (109 members) and House of Representatives (360 members). The president leads the executive; justice system resides with the judiciary; and the national assembly is responsible for representation, law making and oversight. Power separation is embedded

among the three arms of government to serve as checks and balances.

According to Pelizo and Starpenhurst (2014), the legislature's role of representation, law making and oversight empowers it to exert accountability from other arms. This amplifies the belief that power resides with the people because the people's votes are vital tools for either retaining the lawmakers or dispensing with their services for non-performance.

The president, for instance, has the power to veto a decision but the legislature can challenge that decision and overturn

the veto. Other aspects of the presidential system include promoting efficiencies and checking inefficiencies.

Erunke (2011) describes sustainable democracy as the practice which allows for persistence of democratic projects over a long period of time without any external interference. Other scholars, (Ademola, 2011; Jega, 2006; & Yagboyaju, 2007) reiterated the institutionalization of democratic process for sustainability.

Democracy is desirable but often provokes gridlock. Gridlock occurs when the executive and legislature are in opposition: This happened between former President Olusegun Obasanjo and former Speaker Ghali N'Abba (1999 - 2003) in the 4th National Assembly; and President Muhamadu Buhari and former Senate President Bukola Saraki (2015 - 2019) in the 8th National Assembly.

INEC, Nigeria's Election Management Body (EMB), is legally responsible for conducting election in Nigeria. Between 1999 and 2019, INEC has conducted six different presidential and general elections.

2. Concept Definition

Electoral Systems, First Past the Post (FPTP), Women representation in the Nigeria National Assembly, Proportional Representation (PR) are succinctly conceptualized as they are used in this paper to emphasize how voters' apathy through the mechanism of wasted votes has excluded women from election participation as a result of non - inclusion of women in the representative Assembly due to alleged election manipulations, rigging, electoral violence, and other election vices.

2.1 Electoral systems

Electoral systems are the architecture of rules and procedures explicitly defining how society is politically organized by drawing boundaries of interaction; eligibility; and freedom of participants; and roles of state in the electoral process. The International IDEA (2020) observes that electoral system translates the votes cast in a general election into seats won by parties and the candidates. Philips Shively, cited in Jacob and Idris (2010) defines electoral system as a set of rules and procedures designed to guide elections in the choice of leaders and policies through votes.

2.2 First Past the Past (FPTP)

First Past the Past is an election method where, to win an election and represent a constituency, a candidate must secure more votes during election than other candidates. But wastage of votes is one of the features of first past the post. Various scholars have proposed different explanations for the first past the post and wasted votes in the electoral system adopted by INEC in Nigeria. According to Reynolds et al (2005), the candidate that gets more votes than any other contender even if this does not equal an absolute majority is declared the winner.

One of the purported advantages of first past the post is that it is simple - a single vote is registered; the candidate with

the largest number of votes wins; the margin of the votes is immaterial.

2.3 Women Representation in the Nigeria National Assembly

Globally, women are underrepresented in politics. Nigeria, recently exhibited one of the lowest rates of female representation in parliament across Africa and globally by ranking 181st out of 193 countries according to the International Parliamentary Union (PUNCH, June 27, 2019).

In Nigeria's 9th National Assembly, women occupy 7 out of 109 seats in Senate. One (1) was elected from the entire 19 Northern States of the Federation that make up the North - West, North - Central and North - East geopolitical zones. In the South - East, Anambra alone produced the only 2 female Senators for the entire region, while in the South - West; only 1 female Senator from Lagos State made it to the Federal Parliament. The remaining 3 female Senators are from the South - South states of Akwa - Ibom, Cross River and Rivers, respectively. Just 11 are women out of the 360 seats in the House of Representatives.

In 1997, the National Assembly had 3 (2.8 per cent) female Senators. In 2003, they were 4 (3.7 per cent). In 2007, the National Assembly had 9 (8.3 per cent) female senators.

In 2011, the number declined to 7 (6.4 per cent) while in 2015, the 8th National Assembly had the same number of 7 (6.4 per cent) female Senators, a statistic that portray Nigeria as "a gender insensitive country" when it comes to political participation. Also, no female has been elected president; none has been elected vice president nor elected as governor in the Fourth Republic.

According to figures by the National Population Commission (NPC) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria has a population of about 200 million people with approximately 51 per cent males and 49 per cent females. The population figures have however never been in favor of women in elective positions.

In 2016, the Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Bill was sponsored by Abiodun Olujimi. The Bill sought to guarantee the rights of women to equal opportunities in employment; equal rights to inheritance for both male and female children; equal rights for women in marriage and divorce, equal access to education, property/land ownership and inheritance; protects the rights of widows; guarantee appropriate measures against gender discrimination in political and public life and ensure the prohibition of violence towards women. The gender divide in Nigeria's political landscape has more to do with culture and religion than with women's intellectuality (Yakuba, 2007).

Globally, it has been recognized that inclusivity in political participation is a fundamental aspect of modern democracy. Improved representation of women has been shown to have benefits such as improved policy changes, economic growth, enhanced peace building and a more egalitarian society (Mozaffar, 2002).

Mozambique and South Africa have shown more commitment to increasing the representation of women in parliament. Scholars (Adeleke, 2015; Igbuzor, 2012; Agbalajobi, 2010; Oni & Segun, 2012; Ihemeje, 2013; Anifowose, 2004; Olumese, 1998) have identified women's low participation in political representation. This factor has undermined the full potentials of both men and women for promoting good governance.

Women's participation in governance through legal means is necessary for robust development because without women's active participation and the incorporation of their perspectives, development and peace remain elusive.

Nigeria's 2006 census recorded that women are about half the national population in Nigeria because they constitute 48.78%. Unfortunately, this critical size has not translated into increased political participation of females in this country (Suleiman, 2017; Adu, 2008; Omotola, 2007; Premium Times, 2015) largely because tradition and culture have set limits to women's involvement and participation in politics and governance. Some scholars have noted that various domains in Nigeria treat women as second class citizens because they consign their roles to child - bearing and home making.

Women have demonstrated dedicated efforts to increase participation and govern their lives (Suleiman, 2017, Omotola, 2007). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) raised the profile of women and the Nigerian Government domesticated it through the National Committee on Affirmative Action (Wikipedia, 2008) but the global participation - rating of women in politics and governance is still very low in Africa. There have, however, been exceptional cases of increased women participation in South Africa because of the practice of proportional representation.

First past the post; voter - apathy; and wasted votes have further deepened women's marginalization as recorded in the 1999 elections into the National Assembly. This paper attempts to address the exclusion of women and wasted votes so as to reposition election outcomes in Nigeria.

Women's exclusion has attracted critical public attention. Respondents to interviews expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with the way and manner seats are allocated to women in Nigeria's Parliament. Over 67 percent of 100 interviewees, agreed that women are under - represented in Nigeria's Parliament. This negative rating of women inclusion in Nigeria First Past the Post electoral system shows women marginalization in Nigeria's politics. The situation is worse at the State Houses of Assembly, where a good number of states in Nigeria do not have a single woman in their State Assembly. In some of these states, men chair Women Affairs Committee because there is no woman available to take the role.

However, the 9th National Assembly through Deputy Chief Whip, Nkeiruka Onyejocha (PDP, Abia) and 85 others sponsored a Bill proposing the creation of one additional senatorial seat in each state of the federation and Abuja. The seat would only be occupied by women. The Bill had been

considered for second reading and passed. Currently, each Nigerian state has three senatorial seats while Abuja has one. Any eligible adult can contest for the senatorial seats but it has always been dominated by men.

2.4 Proportional Representation

There are three basic types of Proportional Representation (PR) systems: Party List (PL); Mixed Member Proportional (MMP); and Single Transferable Vote (STV).

Proportional Representation: A constituency is distributed according to the number of votes cast for party lists in Proportional Representation, but there are significant differences in how this is done in different systems (Norris, et al, 2004). In South Africa and Mozambique, party lists may be open. In this situation, voters have the option of expressing their choices for specific candidates on the list, in which case, voters can only choose a political party, and the political party sets the candidate ranking. Party lists can also be countrywide (as in Israel) where the entire country is divided into 120 constituencies.

According to Farrell (2011), Thomas Hare is the approach's creator and one of four people linked with the beginning of Proportional Representation system. The others include Victor d'Hondt of Belgium, Edward Hagenbach - Bischoff of Switzerland, and Andre Saint - Lague of France. The Hare formula, sometimes known as the Hare Quota, is a Proportional Representation system that employs the greatest remainder technique, which is calculated by dividing the total valid vote by the number of seats to be filled in the electoral district plus one.

2.5 Literature Review

Political apathy, especially of women, is a combination of masculinization of politics and marginalization of women (Ette & Akpan - Obong, 2022). It is part of the general decline in citizens' involvement in political activities of a particular country or nation (Fagunwa, 2015). Citizens of a country may be very active politically in public opinion aggregation, policy formulation, civic engagement with government and political leaders in the attendance and participation in political functions and activities (summits, seminars, rallies, debates, town hall meetings etc.), and yet refused to turn out to vote on the days of elections. This is why electoral systems can be measured in the context of voter participation in the electoral process (voter turnout). The concepts of vote, election, voter, voter turnout and democracy within the sub - field of political apathy need comprehension for synergy of analysis.

A vote is simply the official choice citizens make during an election. When candidates present themselves for public or political offices, citizens make choices by way of expressing approval or disapproval for or against a particular candidate who presents himself/herself, or is presented by a political party, for an election. A voter is the person legally and constitutionally empowered to exercise this very important civic duty, right or obligation. This right is exercised in an election. Election is the official act or process by which citizens of a democracy choose their representatives for

public or political offices. When elected, citizens expect political accountability from their political representatives with the exercise of their mandates. According to Ebenezer (2017), when this is not the case “voter apathy ensues and it results in low voter turnout” during elections.

Voter turnout is simply the percentage of eligible voters who cast their ballots in an election. Pintor, R., Gratschew, M. & Sullivan, K. (2010) argued that voter turnout is usually expressed as the percentage of voters who cast a vote (including those who cast blank and invalid votes) in an election. Geys (2006) insisted that it is “the total number of people who vote in a given election, usually given as a percentage”. The level of political participation through voter turnout, according to Ebenezer (2017), determines the respect or disrespect such government gets from the people. Political apathy can only be measured adequately in a democracy. Dunn (2004) defines democracy as “self - government, a way of living together in political freedom which ennobled the characters and refined the sensibilities of an entire community, a society governing itself where citizens choose freely and immediately for themselves”. The requirement for democracy is people’s consent. This consent is supposedly given through elections and voter turnout. Lack of voter turnout or the existence of political apathy is seen, in most cases, as lack of consent in the democratic or political process or system, respectively.

A comprehensive understanding of electoral systems requires an understanding of the intricacies of politics, governance and political inclusiveness in such political systems. Politics, in this context, refers to the activities that relate directly or indirectly to influencing or redirecting the actions or inactions of government and the political class especially in power relations and policy directions, formulations and implementations. The unwillingness of the citizens (especially the electorate) to fully and actively engage in the political system, results in political apathy. This could be due to disenchantments, indifference or contentment for or against the electoral or political system.

Political apathy was also measured through the demography of political participation in elections in Nigeria, South Africa, and Mozambique especially with respect to the 2018 and 2019 national assembly elections in these countries. This is because, the mandate of representation in the three countries that practice representative democracy, presupposes proxy political participation by political representative obtained and democratically given during elections. Lack of political participation of most citizens in most democracies beyond casting of ballots during elections, is judged in the context of the empowerment and ennoblement of political representatives to actively participate in the process on their behalf.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

It is pertinent to denote a theoretical framework to this paper. The aim of this paper is to review related theories on the subject matter, and to select the appropriate theory that will anchor the paper. Theories are defined as a set of interrelated concepts which provide a systematic view of phenomenon (Smith, 2008). Theories act as a vehicle that

drives the study. As electoral system is a complex phenomenon, no one theory explains it all.

There are several theories like the social choice, elite theory, and behavioral theory but this paper however adopts the Duverger's theory because it is the most relevant to the paper.

In Pippa Norris’ study conducted in 1997, which is that the plurality rule favors a two - party system while proportional systems lead to multi - party systems. This raises a question of how to count parties, particularly very small ones. In recent years, Lijphart (1994) reconsidered the evidence for this assumption. Between 1945 and 1990, Lijphart compared 27 advanced industrialized democracies based on the Laakso and Taagepera measure of the Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties (ENPP), which takes into consideration account not only of the number of parties but also their relative sizes.

In addition, Lijphart found that the ENPP was 2.0 in plurality systems, 2.8 in majority systems and 3.6 in proportional systems. Within proportional systems, he found that the minimum votes also had an effect on the inclusion of minor parties (Norris, 2004).

Pippa Norris used the same measure of effective number of parliamentary parties to expand the scope of the analysis to cover a wider range of democracies, including developing and developed societies, particularly in the elections held in the mid - 1990s. The results of that analysis showed that the ENPP was 3.1 in majority systems, 3.9 in mixed or semi - proportional systems and 4.0 in proportional systems.

3. Duverger’s Theory

Duverger’s Theory (1950), sometimes referred to as Duverger’s Law, stipulates that single ballot plurality - rule elections first past the post) structured within single - member districts tend to favour a two - party system. Duverger explained that the electoral system is of due importance and the single - ballot majority vote is consistent with the dualism of parties. Duverger’s explanation of vulnerable parties was fully commensurate with the rational - choice model, while his understanding of inclusion depended on the social and economic molding of voters. However, the two previous trends, the analysis of Duverger on women was effective enough to continue for a long time. Thus, he concluded that the electoral system is of due importance and the single - ballot majority vote is consistent with the dualism of parties. Duverger argued that the number of parties could be minimized through the mechanical factor, the under - representation of the third party, and the psychological factor, as well as voters’ awareness that they may lose their votes if they vote for a third party (Schlesinger, 2006). That analysis was conducted by William Riker who named it “Duverger’s Law” in 1982. Since then, “Duverger’s law” has become a core element for studying political parties.

Pippa Norris sought to assess the effects of electoral rules on political conduct, particularly in more than 30 states, and concluded that Duverger’s main assumption on multi -

electoral systems favor party dualism of parties, whereas Proportional Representation systems are associated with multi - party system (Schlesinger, 2006).

Christopher D. Raymond concluded that the results of his study proposed that adopting proportional systems caused an exacerbation of the party system's fragmentation that led to the development of the multi - party systems in those states adopted it. The result proved the positive effect of the secular trend on party system's fragmentation, which also led to the development of multi - party systems (Raymond, 2014).

4. Findings

Gauja (2010) stated that modern democracy relies on free, fair and credible elections. Oguejiofor (2018) noted that the outcomes of elections can impact voters' freedom, taxes, and other aspects of daily life taken for granted.

Therefore, free, fair and credible elections are essential factors for sustainable development in any country (Sorensen, 2007). International Peace Institute (IPI, 2011) stated that elections have facilitated the emergence of democratic governments in Nigeria, Algeria, Mozambique, Mali, Senegal, and South Africa.

In Nigeria, the winner emerges after securing a simple majority. But section 134 (2) and 179 (2) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) prescribes a minimum level of vote spread for victory in presidential and gubernatorial elections.

This paper shows that Nigeria's First Past the Post system has become anachronistic to modern democracy as many other African countries have adopted Proportional Representation electoral system. The findings have shown that First Past the Post has a direct correlation to promoting voters' apathy because its operation does not engender clash of ideas.

The findings also shows that women inclusion in the Nigeria's Parliament is low because the current 9th National Assembly has few women in spite of the Beijing Conference's 35 percent affirmative action for women. Successively, there has been a drastic decline in the number of women elected into political offices in Nigeria from 2015 to 2019.

This section contains the responses of a cross section of scholars, politicians, and parliamentarians on how to review ftp to improve and advance democracy.

Professor Attahiru Jega, the former Chairman of the Nigerian Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) averred that Nigeria uses first past the post system as a legacy of colonial rule was revelatory.

According to Jega, first past the post is an easier system to use but then he admitted that he had earlier spoken about the advantages and use of Proportional Representation in his lectures and the discussion in the Uwais Electoral Reforms Committee of 2008 because he was a member. He further

stated that given Nigeria's diversity, it is important to include Proportional Representation in the country's electoral system so that Nigeria can have a mixed system but that First Past the Post can also be retained and INEC should be adequately funded.

Sam Egwu a foremost political scientist in his lecture series (2021), also stated that the traditionally challenged groups like the women should be given seats using Proportional Representation electoral system. He said that Nigeria should borrow a leaf of Proportional Representation in order to promote peaceful coexistence and to accommodate different groups into the governance systems especially the legislature.

Ibrahim Sule, one of the interview respondents, noted that Proportional Representation makes for inclusion of women and other vulnerable groups and should be entrenched in Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (as amended) so that political crises and conflict can be minimized if not totally eliminated by adopting the Proportional Representation system to the current electoral system in Nigeria.

Yusuf Mariaga, an interview respondents stated that there is need for a change in Nigeria's current electoral system in order to be at the same level with other African democracies and that it is unethical that politicians have not attempted to use Justice Uwais' Electoral Reforms Report of 2008 despite concerted efforts. He said that if those ideas were reviewed, they can add value to the solutions to our Nigeria's electoral challenges.

A member of Yiaga Africa a civil society organization also affirmed in a related interview in 2021, that a section of Uwais' Electoral Reforms Report advocated women inclusion in the National Assembly but there has been no effort by Nigeria's Government to consider and implement the Uwais Electoral Reforms Report. According to him, if implemented, it will mitigate some of challenges of poor voter turnout during elections.

Hassan Mamman, another respondent, said that it is difficult to conduct elections because politicians are too desperate, self - centered and desire to win elections by all means. He noted that there is need to constantly improve the competence, capacity, professionalism, and the efficiency of the EMB and advocated that Proportional Representation be included in Nigeria's electoral system.

Adam Ogumogu Marbo, another respondent averred that democracy is about allowing people to determine and choose their leaders and elections provides the mechanism for it to happen. In his opinion, Nigerian elections are characterized by wasted votes and this appears to be one of the major reasons that discourage the electorate from going out to vote during elections. He said that if the current electoral system is reviewed to accommodate Proportional Representation, it would mitigate wasted votes in Nigeria's elections.

Chinedu Okechukwu, another respondent revealed that Nigeria's current electoral system was put in place by the colonial masters and it favors a relatively few members of Nigeria's population. He said that it is obvious that the

winner is often not popular because the votes cast outweighs the winner's number of votes cast, a situation that undermines women and other under-represented groups in Nigeria. He also explained that Proportional Representation electoral system ought to be implemented to curb the menace of incessant wastage of votes.

Adeye Faluyi, another respondent noted that in recent times an electoral reform agenda of women inclusion has thrown up a lot of discussions. One of such discussions is either to move away from First Past the Post or combine First Past the Post with Proportional Representation. According to Adeye, it is high time Nigeria tested the workings of other electoral systems as other democracies in Africa.

Hon. Obua Azibapu Fred, a politician averred that Nigeria's size and infrastructural challenges have been complicating efforts to provide basic rights such as access to voting to some of its most marginalized citizens. Many of these citizens experience extreme difficulties in exercising their political rights. Further barriers to women inclusion in the political process exist through economic, social and psychological methods. Many of the driving issues in the 2019 elections are particularly important to Nigerians with women who are often negatively affected by violence and poverty. However, systemic failures in the political process have led to widespread disenfranchisement and lack of representation. Obua also stated that Nigeria is not democratically balanced to infuse other electoral practices into the current system and that is the reason for rejecting a Bill that sought women's inclusion into the National Assembly by 95.9 percent of the legislators. He said, as Nigeria's democracy grows, there would be need to infuse Proportional Representation electoral system.

Mrs. Miriam Abire, another respondent remarked that women's inclusion in governance and the National Assembly is very important. She, however, noted that political violence negates women's chances at the polls and in political participation and these have been discouraging many women from embarking on politics like men. She suggested that the State should ensure full security for women and girls during election periods just as it should end impunity. According to her, political parties should commit to non-violent campaigns and desist from hate speech.

In view of the issues raised by respondents, the following important factors need to be considered: Voter education should emphasize the need not to promote violence. In other words, non-violence should be mainstreamed in all awareness-raising and voter-education campaigns by all stakeholders. Violence of any kind, particularly politically motivated violence negates women's chances at the polls and in political participation. Perpetrators of violence must be brought to justice. The State should ensure freedom of movement, expression and assembly for all citizens especially women.

Nigerian women need more than economic empowerment to succeed at the polls. Political parties and their members should be trained to engender women's participation in politics because their impact on democracy and governance

has to be integrated and mainstreamed into civic education. The training should expose political parties and all stakeholders to the basic principles of internal democracy, gender and democratic governance. There should be a mandatory inclusion of gender sensitive provisions in party's constitution and manifestoes. This will serve the purpose of mainstreaming gender into both the parties' constitution and their activities.

There should be a thorough assessment and examination of party's primaries with a view to formulating and implementing reforms that will support a more level playing field. Women, however, should become much more proactive and be seen to participate in fighting corruption and bribery in elections. Women should form a synergy and get to the forefront in calling for electoral reforms and advocate the restriction of money politics in elections.

There should be a concerted move to ensure adoption of the recommendations of the Justice Uwais Electoral Reform Commission on representation of women and persons with disabilities on Proportional Representation basis with respect to selection of candidates for elective offices as circumstances may permit by political parties during party primaries. This will be in line with the temporary measures to accelerate equality between men and women.

In Africa, the first past the post and proportional representation have gained traction because voting is a major aspect of the electoral process. Implicit in first past the post, is the concept of winner-take-all. The winner-take-all was introduced to Nigeria by the British during the colonial period but this method is neither known nor practiced in developed democracy because it is anachronistic.

Winner-takes-all often deploys divisive campaigns, fails to address challenges of development and ignore entire constituencies. Under winner-take-all, there is no incentive to reach out to opponents or build cross-party support rather; negative campaigning is often played up as a strategy.

INEC adopted first Past the Post (FPTP) where, to win an election, a candidate must secure more votes during election than other candidates to represent his constituency. FPTP was adopted to strengthen; improve and ensure the sustainability of democracy and to avoid election rigging; ballot box snatching; non-inclusiveness; and voter apathy. On the contrary, FPTP has been promoting thuggery; vote-rigging; ballot box snatching; violence; loss of votes, properties and lives of election officials, politicians and the electorate. It also disenfranchises many voters; created voter-apathy and voter alienation. Alienated voters have been seeking alternatives for inclusiveness but realize that FPTP denies them power to exercise a meaningful choice. How can these problems be transformed for inclusiveness in the electoral system?

Many African countries have stopped using only first-past-the-post electoral system rather they combine proportional representation with the first-past-the-post.

5. Conclusion

Each electoral system has its strong and weak points. In fact, every supportive argument for each system seems to have a counterfactual argument against it. This is why some researchers argue that it is not First - Past - The - Post or Proportional Representation electoral system *per se* but that the main issues are the practitioners that primarily constitute the heart of the challenges associated with inclusion of vulnerable groups.

However, there are some major issues for determination as part of Nigeria's electoral system. Top among them is the democratic instability that has been directly or indirectly associated with the First Past the Post electoral system in Nigeria. Of particular importance is the cut - throat competition associated with electoral politics under the First Past the Post system. Other outcomes of the First Past the Post system include the emergence of indiscipline; internal fractious parties and the lingering feelings of marginalization among the minority groups, women, and vulnerable groups.

In this regard, the adoption of a modified form of Proportional Representation electoral system, which can emerge from a combination of some elements of First Past the Post and Proportional Representation systems is worthy of adoption for addressing the weaknesses and problematic nature of Nigeria's First Past the Post.

The First Past the Post which Nigeria has been operating since political independence in 1960 has the notable advantages of simplicity, fostering stable government, and establishing strong links between members of National Assembly and their constituents. However, it has the major disadvantage of heightening pre, during and post - election tension by excluding women and other minority groups from fair representation.

The major advantage of hybrid arrangement is that it retains all the advantages of First Past the Post electoral system, and seeks to promote greater inclusiveness, reduces wasted votes, and post - election tension by adopting Proportional Representation.

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