



## Assessing the Effects of E-Governance and its Application by the Independent National Electoral Commission during the 2019 General Election in Nigeria

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**Abstract.** This study assessed the effects of e-governance and its application by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) during the 2019 general election in Nigeria. Specifically, the study looked into the application of e-governance and modern technology in the conduct of the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. It tried to look at the imports of technology in achieving set out goals by INEC. It also looked at the scope of e-governance and its advantages which have improved the quality of services of INEC, reduced paperwork, improved administration of electoral laws and a lot more. It further x-rayed how INEC deployed the use of the card reader in the process of the 2019 general election. Although there were some hiccups like breakdown of the card reader, inadequate training of the ad-hoc staff and poor sensitization of the people on the use of the device, there were a lot of successes like reduction of rigging and manipulation of figures and ensuring that an individual votes only once for a particular election. The research used both primary and secondary sources of data analysis. The primary sources consisted of the electorates who participated in the election, data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) which was the electoral body and reports from civil societies who directly participated in the exercise. Books, journals, the internet and other existing literature on the subject matter made up the secondary sources. The study recommends among others that the federal government should as matters of urgency ensure the strict application of e-governance and modern technology in the conduct of all subsequent elections in Nigeria without which such election should be nullified. The government should ensure that card readers and other devices used in the electoral process are of good quality in line with international best practices. This will prevent rigging and manipulation of election results among others.

**Keywords:** Government, E-Governance, Technology, Election, INEC

### 1. Introduction

The essence of the public service is to give meaning to the lives of the people who make up the population under administration. It attempts to secure the common good of all and taking into considerations all aspects of life. The major reason for its existence is to render services to the public. Services rendered to the public are considered to be effective and efficient if such services meet the need of the people in terms of quality, convenience, cost, time of delivery and if they are provided in an equitable and transparent manner to address and redress the service delivery laxity in the public sector. In the primitive era, the public service performed their functions using traditional mode of operation: records were kept manually making it more prone to errors and mutilation; the scope of operation were limited to the location of the organization with little or no knowledge about the external environment; and services were rendered at a slow pace at exorbitant rates.

With the increase in population and advancement in technology, the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the traditional mode of operation adopted by the public service became more obvious. Electronic governance was thus introduced to tackle the challenges posed by the traditional mode of operation. Though e-governance implementation in Nigeria varies from level to level of government as well as agency to agency, there was actually an attempt at providing a unified, national framework of ICT adoption in governance.

Sunday (2014) stated that e-governance has become a necessary political mechanism in evaluating government's performances in many developed parts of the world. This shows that with the trend of globalization and technology which is now the order of the day, it has become pertinent for government to key into this approach in getting things done. The use of ICT in government businesses to promote government's roles in service delivery, public administration and promoting active participation in democracy has been gaining an impelling force in the global community (Heeks,

2010).

The need for adopting ICT in government, that is, E-governance, came as an awareness that no country or its government can function properly in the information or digital age without the use of the web and other mobile internet technologies. Seeing the importance of E-governance via ICT, the Nigerian Federal Government deemed it necessary for the country to have a national policy on ICT. According to Olatokun and Adebayo as cited in Nchuchuwe & Ojo (2015), the Federal Government of Nigeria, in 2001, announced ICT as a policy of national importance. This further culminated in the creation of the Nigerian Information Technology Policy in the same year. National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was thus created in April, 2001 to implement the Nigerian Information Technology Policy and co-ordinate general IT development in the country. In 2007, the enabling Act - the National Information Technology Development Act - was enacted by the National Assembly and this act mandated NITDA to create a framework for the planning, research development, standardization, application, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and regulation of Information Technology practices, activities and systems in Nigeria (NITDA, 2017).

In terms of governance, the Nigerian Information Technology Policy holds that the government, through the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) shall use IT as the major driving force to re-engineer and rapidly transform governance to interface with the needs of its citizenry by establishing transparent "Government Wide Information System (GWIS)" at national, state and local government levels. The major objectives of this policy includes: to replace traditional governance with electronic governance, create knowledge-based and Simple Moral Accountable Responsive and Transparent (SMART) governance, reduce bureaucracy, maximize productivity and quality, eliminate waste, increase efficiency, create an easy and free access to government information, and reduce the cost of service delivery (Nigerian National Policy For Information Technology, 2000).

In 2011, the Federal Government consequently created a new Ministry called the Ministry of Communications Technology which was saddled with the mandate of streamlining ICT development and progress in line with the nation's plan for E-government. In 2012, a National ICT draft policy was presented by the ministerial committee on ICT policy harmonization which included several policy recommendations and reports. The following are the policy thrust of the National ICT draft policy of 2012, as it pertains to E-government:

- To facilitate the implementation of e-governance initiatives.
- To develop frameworks and guidelines, including interoperability and e-government framework for the enhanced development and use of ICT in the government.
- To develop and implement ICT training programs for public sector employees, in connection with

introduction of e-government and other digital functions within government offices.

- To coordinate the integration of national e-government network infrastructure and services.
- To promote e-government and other e-services that would foster broadband usage.

With the enabling act, various government agencies such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) embarked on the implementation of ICTs in their operations. The Independent National Electoral Commission was established by section 153 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to among other things organize elections into various political offices in the country. For the first time in Nigeria's electoral history, electronic voter authentication system with the aid of smart card readers, were deployed for the 2015 general elections. The use of the card readers for the purpose of accreditation of voters was one of the innovations introduced by the commission to improve the integrity of the electoral process. This didn't violate section 52 (2) of the Electoral Act 2010, as amended, or the 1999 Constitution as amended. Whereas section 52 (2) of the Electoral Act prohibits the use of electronic voting, the card reader is not a voting machine and wasn't used for voting. The card reader was used only for accreditation of voters and only accreditation data was transmitted by it (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2017).

However, the senate on Thursday, March 30, 2017 passed amendments to the Electoral Act 2010, approving the use of electronic voting in future elections. It also approved that election results should be electronically transmitted to collation centers. The passage of the bill followed the consideration of the report of the Senate Committee on Independent National Electoral Commission on 'A bill for an Act to amend the Electoral Act No. 6, 2010 and for other related matters (SB 231 and SB 234)', (Odunsi, 2017).

The waves of electronic governance are rising through public organizations and public administration across the world. More and more government agencies are using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) especially the Internet or web-based network, to provide services between government agencies and citizens, businesses, employees and other non-governmental agencies (Fang, 2002).

In agreement with Fang (2002), Alshehri & Drew (2010) also added that the use of ICT is aimed at reducing costs, improving services, saving time and increasing effectiveness and efficiency in the public sector. Electronic governance and the Internet have made an essential change in the whole society structure, values, culture and the ways of conducting business by utilizing the potential of ICT as a tool in the daily work. The purpose of electronic governance is not only in the conversion of traditional information into bits and bytes and making it reachable via the internet websites or giving government officials computers or automating old practices to an electronic platform, but in the call for rethinking of the ways government functions are carried out today in order to

improve processes and integration.

REffat as cited in Mugambi (2013) said that ICT is increasingly used as a strategic tool to more efficiently support any Government's priorities and program delivery. In order to have a successful E-governance, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions which are at the very core of the electronic government infrastructure, have to be reachable by all citizens.

## 2. Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to assess the effects of e-governance and its application by the independent national electoral commission during the 2019 general election in Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- examine the application of e-governance and modern technology in the conduct of the 2019 general elections in Nigeria;
- ascertain the imports of technology in achieving set out goals by INEC;
- look at the scope of e-governance and its advantages which have improved the quality of services of INEC, reduced paperwork, improved administration of electoral laws and
- x-ray how INEC deployed the use of the card reader in the process of the 2019 general election.

## 3. Conceptual Clarification

### 3.1 The Concept of Electronic Governance

Quite a number of scholars have considered the concept of electronic governance thereby coming up with various definitions of the term.

E-Governance refers to how managers and supervisors utilize IT and Internet to execute their functions of supervising, planning, organizing, coordinating, and staffing effectively (Palvia & Sharma, 2007).

The application of the internet, web and telecommunications services in the administration of public services is referred to as E-governance or Electronic-governance (Nchuchuwe & Ojo, 2015).

According to Fang (2002), E-governance allows direct participation of constituents in political activities. It includes E-democracy, E-voting, and participating in political activities performed online. So, most broadly, the concept of E-governance covers government, citizens' participation, political parties and organizations, parliament and judiciary functions.

In the words of Fransz (2014), the complete transformation of the processes of governance using the implementation of information and communication technology is called E-governance.

According to Ojo as cited in Nchuchuwe & Ojo (2015), E-

governance can be referred to as the application of information communication technology by the government to enhance accountability, create awareness and ensure transparency in the management of government business. It is a political strategy through which the activities of government are made known through the adoption of modern communication technology.

Electronic governance or e-governance was defined by Wikipedia (2017) as the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for delivering government services, exchange of information, communication, transactions, integration of various stand-alone systems and services between government to customer (G2C), government to business (G2B), government to government (G2G) as well as back office processes and interactions within the entire government frame work.

From E-Governance: Concept and Significance (2007), E-governance is the use of technology to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, business partners and employees. It is the application of ICT to the processes of government functioning for good governance. In other words, e-governance is the public sector's use of ICTs with the aim to improve information and service delivery, encourage citizen participation in decision-making and make government more accountable, transparent and efficient. E-governance is the application of ICT in government functioning to bring in SMART governance implying: simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent governance.

In the words of Priya & Dalakoti (2008), E-governance is the application of information and communication technologies to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of informational and transactional exchanges within the government, between government and national, state, municipal and local levels government agencies, citizen and businesses, and eventually empower citizens through access and use of information.

Kumar (2015) opined that E-governance applies to interaction between citizens, government organizations, public and elected officials, and includes democratic processes, open government and transparent decision making. It goes far beyond mere computerization of stand-alone back office operations. It is a means to fundamentally change how the government operates and this implies a new set of responsibilities for the machinery of the government.

### 3.2 Scope of Electronic Governance

E-Governance: there are four the types of interactions in E-governance which include the following:

- Government to Government (G2G)
- Government to Citizens (G2C)
- Government to Business (G2B)
- Government to Employees (G2E)

**G2G (Government to Government):** In this case, Information and communications Technology are at the periphery of government. This kind of interaction is only within the sphere of government and can be both horizontal i.e. between different government agencies as well as between different functional areas within an organization, or vertical i.e. between national, provincial and local government agencies as well as between different levels within an organization. The primary objective is to increase performance and productivity.

**G2C (Government to Citizens):** In this case, an interface is created between the government and citizens which enables the people to profit from efficient delivery of a large range of public services. This expands the availability and accessibility of public services on the one hand and improves the quality of services on the other. It gives citizens the choice of when to interact with the government, from where to interact with the government and how to interact with the government to show their grievances and approval. The primary purpose is to make the government, citizen-friendly.

**G2B (Government to Business):** Here, E-governance tools are used to encourage the business community – providers of goods and services – to seamlessly interact with the government. This creates room for a smooth and pleasant business environment that allows business to thrive. The objective is to cut red tape, save time, reduce operational costs and to create a more transparent business environment when dealing with the government. These measures help to provide a congenial environment to businesses to enable them to perform more efficiently.

**G2E (Government to Employees):** Government is unarguably the major employer and like any organization, it has to interact with its employees on a regular basis. This interaction is structured to be a two-way process between the organization and the employee. It is the presence of ICT that gives the government the seamless source to interact with these employees on regular basis, to support them, motivate and supervise their activities while ensuring optimum satisfaction to both sides.

### 3.3 Benefits of Electronic Governance

According to E-Governance, Concept and Significance (2007), ICT applications impact upon the structures of public administration systems. Technological advancements facilitate the administrative systems by enabling:

- Administrative Development
- Effective Service Delivery

**Administrative Development:** Administrative reforms, often, have focused on procedural details and restructuring of systems and processes of government organizations. The basic objective of these reforms is to enhance capacities of the systems. ICTs can be used and are being used now to give further impetus to the process. They help in the following manners:

**Automation of Administrative Processes:** A truly e-governed system would require minimal human intervention and would rather be system driven. While initially the

solutions that were offered were quite primitive with poor information layout, inadequate navigation provisions, occasional disruption in services, periodic outdated content and little or no ‘back office’ support. However, technological advancements and increased pressure from citizenry have prompted improvements in these areas. Now administrative departments are computerized and connected through network. Software has been built and designed around government departments ensuring efficiency in operations. The departments have launched individual websites carrying information of their respective departments. This has enabled online carrying of operations and file movements. Budgeting, accounting, data flow, etc. has become easy. This has increased the efficiency of office operations and processes and has reduced unnecessary delays.

**Paperwork Reduction:** An immediate impact of automation would be on the paperwork. Paperwork is reduced to a greater extent with communication being enabled via electronic route and storage and retrieval of information in the electronic form. All this has led to the emergence of ‘less paper office’. This concept is defined as an office situation where all the information (file and mail) amongst various functionaries is distributed online. The concept is where files and mails (information) are transmitted over wires to small computers at each employee’s desk. Office work, such as, file movements, notings, etc. is computerized and documentation, report preparation, and databases are now maintained in computers.

**Quality of Services:** ICT helps governments to deliver services to the citizens with greater accountability, responsiveness and sensitivity. Quality of services improves, as now the people are able to get services efficiently and instantaneously. As volumes of transactions and information can be electronically handled and delivered over a wider area through the net and web, qualitative services become possible in least time, in least cost, in least difficulty and in greater convenience.

By ensuring online redress of grievances the accountability of officials is ensured. They have become sensitive to the issues affecting people. Monitoring by way of video teleconferencing has further facilitated central monitoring, reporting and face to face communication that has assured effective service delivery by the officials.

**Elimination of Hierarchy:** ICT has reduced procedural delays caused by hierarchical processes in the organization. Through Intranet and LAN, it has become possible to send information and data across various levels in the organization at the same time. Computerization and communication patterns facilitated by ICT have increased efficiency and have led to the involvement of all levels in decision-making.

**Change in Administrative Culture:** Bureaucratic structures have been plagued by characteristics aptly described by Victor Thompson as ‘bureau-pathology’. From the days of New Public Administration, efforts have been made to find ways to deal with the pathological or dysfunctional aspects of bureaucratic behaviour and to make delivery of public services effective and efficient. With e-governance, public actions coming under public glare would certainly induce norms and values of accountability, openness, integrity,

fairness, equity, responsibility and justice in the administrative culture. Rather, administration would become efficient and responsive.

**Effective Service Delivery:** ICTs play an important role in effectively delivering services to the people. ICTs ensure:

**Transparency:** By dissemination and publication of information on the web. This provides easy access to information and subsequently makes the system publicly accountable. Also as web enables free flow of information, it can be easily accessed by all without any discrimination.

**Economic Development:** The deployment of ICTs reduces the transaction costs, which makes services cheaper. For example, rural areas suffer on account of lack of information regarding markets, products, agriculture, health, education, weather, etc. and if all this could be accessed online would lead to better and more opportunities and thereby prosperity in these areas.

**Social Development:** The access to information empowers the citizens. Informed citizens can participate and voice their concerns, which can be accommodated in the programme/project formulation, implementation, monitoring and service delivery. Web enabled participation will counter the discriminatory factors affecting our societal behaviour.

**Strategic Information System:** Changing organizational environment and increasing competitiveness have put pressures on the performance of the functionaries. Information regarding all aspects need to be made available to the management at every point to make routine as well as strategic decisions. ICTs effectively enable putting such strategic information systems in place.

After the above-mentioned discussion on the significance of ICTs in governance, we will now highlight certain measures that will enable its effective implementation.

Furthermore, from E-Governance: Conceptual Framework (2007), E-governance is about reform in governance, facilitated by the creative use of Information and communications Technology. It is expected that this would lead to:

**Better access to information and quality services for citizens:** ICT would make available timely and reliable information on various aspects of governance. In the initial phase, information would be made available with respect to simple aspects of governance such as forms, laws, rules, procedures etc. later extending to detailed information including reports (including performance reports), public database, decision making processes etc. As regards services, there would be an immediate impact in terms of savings in time, effort and money, resulting from online and one-point accessibility of public services backed up by automation of back end processes. The ultimate objective of e-Governance is to reach out to citizens by adopting a life-cycle approach i.e. providing public services to citizens which would be required right from birth to death.

**Simplicity, efficiency and accountability in the government:** Application of ICT to governance combined with detailed business process reengineering would lead to simplification of complicated processes, weeding out of redundant processes, simplification in structures and changes in statutes and regulations. The end result would be

simplification of the functioning of government, enhanced decision making abilities and increased efficiency across government – all contributing to an overall environment of a more accountable government machinery. This, in turn, would result in enhanced productivity and efficiency in all sectors.

**Expanded reach of governance:** Rapid growth of communications technology and its adoption in governance would help in bringing government machinery to the doorsteps of the citizens. Expansion of telephone networks, rapid strides in mobile telephony, spread of internet and strengthening of other communications infrastructure would facilitate delivery of a large number of services provided by the government. This enhancement of the reach of government – both spatial and demographic – would also enable better participation of citizens in the process of governance.

### 3.4 Challenges of Implementing Electronic Governance

According to Abasilim & Edet (2015), the following are considered as factors impeding the effective implementation of E-governance in Nigeria's public service:

**Lack of ICT Infrastructure:** This is a crucial challenge to the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's public service. As it has been explained in the definition of e-governance above, it is the application of ICTs in the operations of government business. Nigeria's public service is still lacking in basic ICT infrastructure. For instance, some of the offices still lack common computers let alone the common skills for its operation. What you see in their daily activities is the traditional way of doing things. That is, they are still known for doing a lot of paperwork which if e-governance is embraced fully would have reduced. In a better case, you will see the combination of both the traditional way of doing things alongside the digital approach. There are still no access to internet networks in most public sector offices, no regular power supply and so on. All these pose a challenge to the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's public service.

**Attitude or Resistance to Change:** This is also a challenge in the public sector. Most of them are still used to the old way of carrying out government activities. That is, they are still known to be working with a lot of papers, carrying files from one desk to the other or from one office to the other. Their resistance to e-governance implementation in their services is what has culminated in the poor rating of the implementation of e-governance in the public service. Some of the reasons for this, is that most of the public servants are not computer literate, not qualified, have little or no training in the installation, maintenance, designing and implementation of ICT infrastructure.

The challenges of e-governance in Nigeria are the same as with many other developing countries of the world. There appears to be a consensus among authors that the number one problem of e-governance implementation in Nigeria is poor internet and telecommunications infrastructures (Nchuchuwe & Ojo, 2015).

Omeire and Omeire as cited in Nchuchuwe & Ojo (2015) gave a detailed analysis of the challenges of e-governance implementation in Nigeria. They include:

**Low ICT literacy rate:** The low usage of ICTs by the Nigerian public serves as an impediment to the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria. Most Nigerians see the use of computers and the internet as very complex for them. Even among the educated class, ICT compliance is not high.

**Lack of necessary regulatory/ legal framework:** In spite of the various legislations and policies put forward to promote e-governance in Nigeria, the implementation has always been below expectations. Some of the ICT services from the government are not properly regulated, for instance, sending and receiving emails.

**Poor ICT infrastructure:** Internet service and telecommunications structure are still in their embryonic state in Nigeria. In addition, internet and telecommunication services are very expensive, thus, a large section of Nigerians who cannot afford these services are alienated from participating in e-governance.

**Corruption:** The implementation of e-governance in Nigeria is not spared from the tentacles of the hydra-headed monster called corruption. Just as it is with a typical government policy in Nigeria, e-governance has had most of its execution stalled because of the pervasiveness of corruption. Since e-governance has the capability of reducing corruption, the forces of corruption in government establishments will oppose and do everything they can to ensure its failure.

**Lack of committed leadership:** Since the idea of e-governance implementation and the national ICT policy was conceived in 2001, neither the previous and present governments have demonstrated the strong political will and commitment to see to its success. The interests of the leadership over the time have been anything but passive. The policy is not given the adequate attention it requires for its success. - Epileptic power supply: The perennial problem of unstable electricity has further compounded the accessibility of the web in Nigeria by the public. Likewise, the situation has made internet services costly because of the use of "generators" to power cyber cafes.

**Bureaucratic Bottlenecks:** Red-tape is a huge impediment to the flexibility which e-governance proposes. With the insistence on adhering to unneeded due processes, rules and regulations, most of which are duplicated, the purpose for e-governance is defeated.

This is because e-governance, when implemented, ensures a very speedy, flexible system that gets rid of time wasting and all forms inefficiency. Thus, the continued practice of bureaucratic bottlenecks becomes counter-productive to e-governance.

#### 4. The Application of Electronic Governance by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

Having understood how e-governance works in the interest of the society, we looked at how it improved the processes of electioneering in the Nigerian State. According to Agba,

Ochimana and Abubakar (2013), Public Service is the activities of government employees and its institutions aimed at formulating and implementing governmental policies and programmes for the interest of the masses (Public). Ezeanni (2006) goes on to say that Public Service has to do with the totality of services that are organized under government.

The Independent National Electoral Commission was established by section 153 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1998 by decree No. 17 of that year by the Federal Military Government to among other things organize elections into various political offices in the country.

The functions of INEC as contained in Section 15, part 1 of the Third schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and section 2 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) include the following:

- Organize, undertake and supervise all elections to the offices of the President and Vice-President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a State, and to the membership of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly of each state of the federation;
- Register political parties in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and act of the National Assembly;
- Monitor the organization and operation of the political parties, including their finances, conventions, congresses, and party primaries;
- Arrange for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties, and publish a report on such examination and audit for public information;
- Arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote and prepare, maintain and revise the register of voters for the purpose of any election under this constitution;
- Monitor political campaigns and provide rules and regulations which shall govern the political parties;
- Conduct voter and civic education;
- Promote knowledge of sound democratic election processes; and
- Conduct any referendum required to be conducted pursuant to the provision of the 1999 constitution or any other law or Act of the National Assembly.

The mission of INEC is to serve as an independent and effective Election Management Bodies committed to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections for sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

The vision of INEC is to be one of the best Election Management Bodies (EMB) in the world that meets the aspirations of the Nigerian people.

Autonomy, transparency, integrity, credibility, impartiality, dedication, equity, excellence and teamwork are the values

that guide INEC in the performance of its duties.

Alebiosu (2015) contended that a number of technologically based reforms (e.g. biometric Register of Voters, Advanced Fingerprints Identification System) were embarked upon by Prof Attairu Jega of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). These technologically based reforms by INEC were further taken to another height in the 2015 general elections with the use of the Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) and introduction of Smart Card Reader technology, a device used to scan the PVC in order to verify the identity of a voter in a polling booth. The smart card reader was one of the greatest innovations of biometric verification technology and a controversial crucial aspect of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. Concerned about the massive electoral fraud witnessed in the past general elections in Nigeria, INEC deployment of the card reader in 2019 general elections was to ensure a credible, transparent, free and fair election in order to deepen Nigeria's electoral democracy. However, the use of the electronic device in the 2015 general elections generated debate among election stakeholders before, during and it became a major part of the 2019 general election.

In spite of the assurances given by INEC to address the issues that aroused with the card readers after it was used in the 2015 general elections, in 2019, we also witnessed the inability of the device to deliver effectively in a large number of polling units especially in the Presidential and National Assembly Elections in the country. It will be recalled that Prof. Jega enumerated some of the challenges that the card readers encountered during the 2015 general elections as:

- The level of awareness among the electorates about the card reader was poor.
- The training given to the ad hoc and INEC staff on the use of the card reader was inadequate.
- A large number of the trainees did not have the opportunities of operating the device.
- Card reader breakdown was also witnessed during

the elections.

- A number of the smart card readers were not smart enough to function effectively.
- Wherein the card readers functioned, a few of the devices were confronted with the challenge of PVC authentication and biometric data verification of the voters in the polling units.

## 5. Challenges and successes of E-governance during the 2019 general election

Despite the inability of the smart card reader to function effectively and according to plan, it was recorded also in all the zones of the country as visited that people were subjected to manual voting to avoid disenfranchising a large chunk of the Nigeria voting population; the indiscretion of some INEC officials to allow for manual authentication of registered voters and the issue of power failure on some of the machines, systemic and structural challenges were also a problem to the total execution of the mandatory policy of the use of the card reader for the 2019 general election in Nigeria. Fatai Abiodun in his paper on the 2019 general election in Nigeria examined the role of technological devices introduced in the electoral process and their challenges in improving the integrity of the 2019 elections. Although consumed by technical hitches such as flopping of card readers, delay in accreditation and voting, the failure of polling officials to operate the technology efficiently, he believes that the use of the technology in the 2019 elections improved the quality of the election and also deepened democracy in Nigeria.

It is noteworthy that INEC through the introduction of the card reader took election and electioneering processes in Nigeria to another level which was technologically befitting. The card reader however, changed the perception of many Nigerians towards elections.

The results of the presidential election as announced in the early hours of 27 February 2019 were as follows:

Candidate	Running mate	Party	Votes	%
<a href="#">Muhammadu Buhari</a>	<a href="#">Yemi Osinbajo</a>	<a href="#">All Progressives Congress</a>	15,191,847	55.60
<a href="#">Atiku Abubakar</a>	<a href="#">Peter Obi</a>	<a href="#">People's Democratic Party</a>	11,262,978	41.22
Felix Nicolas	Ado Baba	Peoples Coalition Party	110,196	0.40
<a href="#">Obadiah Mailafia</a>	Nasiru Tanimowo Nurain Bolanle	<a href="#">African Democratic Congress</a>	97,874	0.36
Gbor John Wilson Terwase	Gerald Chukwueke Ndudi	<a href="#">All Progressives Grand Alliance</a>	66,851	0.24
<a href="#">Yabagi Sani</a>	Olateru Olagbegi Martin Kunle	<a href="#">Action Democratic Party</a>	54,930	0.20
Akhimien Davidson Isibor	Hamman Ibrahim Modibbo	Grassroots Development Party of Nigeria	41,852	0.15
Ibrahim Aliyu Hassan	Adeleke Adesoji Masilo Aderemi	African Peoples Alliance	36,866	0.13
<a href="#">Donald Duke</a>	Shehu Musa Gabam	<a href="#">Social Democratic Party</a>	34,746	0.13
<a href="#">Omoyele Sowore</a>	Rufai Rabiuh Ahmed	<a href="#">African Action Congress</a>	33,953	0.12
Da-Silva Thomas Ayo	Muhammad Aisha Abubakar	Save Nigeria Congress	28,680	0.10
Shitu Mohammed Kabir	Olayemi Memunat Mahmud	Advanced Peoples Democratic Alliance	26,558	0.10
Yusuf Mamman Dantalle	Prince Duru Nwabueze	Allied Peoples' Movement	26,039	0.10
<a href="#">Kingsley Moghalu</a>	Abdullahi Umma Getso	<a href="#">Young Progressives Party</a>	21,886	0.08
Ameh Peter Ojonugwa	Edun Kehinde	<a href="#">Progressive Peoples Alliance</a>	21,822	0.08
Isaac Babatunde Ositelu	Nafiu Muhammad Lawal	Accord Party	19,219	0.07
<a href="#">Fela Durotoye</a>	Abdullahi Khadijah Iyah	<a href="#">Alliance for New Nigeria</a>	16,779	0.06
Bashayi Isa Dansarki	Adepoju Oluwatoyin Grace	Masses Movement of Nigeria	14,540	0.05
Osakwe Felix Johnson	Mohammed Alhaji Ali	<a href="#">Democratic People's Party</a>	14,483	0.05

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Abdulrashid Hassan Baba	Uchendu Uju Peace Ozoka	Action Alliance	14,380	0.05
Nwokeafor Ikechukwu Ndubuisi	Ali Abdullahi	Advanced Congress of Democrats	11,325	0.04
Maina Maimuna Kyari	Oluwole Yetunde Folake	<a href="#">Northern People's Congress</a>	10,081	0.04
Victor Okhai	Iyan Tama Hamisu Lamido	Providence Peoples Congress	8,979	0.03
Chike Ukaegbu	Safiya Ibrahim Ogoh	Advanced Allied Party	8,902	0.03
<a href="#">Oby Ezekwesili</a>	Galadima Ganiyu Oseni	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria	7,223	0.03
Ibrahim Usman Alhaji	Nwafor-Orizu Onwa	National Rescue Movement	6,229	0.02
Ike Keke	Johnson Omede	New Nigeria People's Party	6,111	0.02
Moses Ayibiowu	Idoko Michael Emaiku	National Unity Party	5,323	0.02
Awosola Williams Olusola	Seiyefa Fetepigi	Democratic Peoples Congress	5,242	0.02
Muhammed Usman Zaki	Akpan Tom Ezekiel	<a href="#">Labour Party</a>	5,074	0.02
Eke Samuel Chukwuma	Musa Hadiza Aruwa	Green Party of Nigeria	4,924	0.02
Nwachukwu Chuks Nwabuikwu	Tijjani Aisha Ali	All Grassroots Alliance	4,689	0.02
<a href="#">Hamza al-Mustapha</a>	Opara Robert	Peoples Party of Nigeria	4,622	0.02
Shipi Moses Godia	Okwuanyasi Abiola Kika Shaliat	<a href="#">All Blended Party</a>	4,523	0.02
<a href="#">Chris Okotie</a>	Binutu Adefela Akinola	Fresh Democratic Party	4,554	0.02
<a href="#">Tope Fasua</a>	Yakubu Aminu Zakari	<a href="#">Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party</a>	4,340	0.02
Onwubuya	Ahmad Muhammad Nourayni	Freedom And Justice Party	4,174	0.02
Asukwo Mendie Archibong	Ite Donald-Ekpo	Nigeria For Democracy	4,096	0.01
Ahmed Buhari	Nwagu Kingsley Philip	Sustainable National Party	3,941	0.01
Salisu Yunusa Tanko	James Funmi	<a href="#">National Conscience Party</a>	3,799	0.01
Shittu Moshood Asiwaju	Okere Evelyn	Alliance National Party	3,586	0.01
Obinna Uchechukwu Ikeagwuonu	Omotosho Emmanuel	<a href="#">All People's Party</a>	3,585	0.01
Balogun Isiaka Ishola	Shuaibu Muhammad	United Democratic Party	3,170	0.01
Obaje Yusufu Ameh	Sule Olalekan Ganiyu	Advanced Nigeria Democratic Party	3,104	0.01
Chief Umenwa Godwin	Ibrahim Saheed Olaika	All Grand Alliance Party	3,071	0.01
Israel Nonyerem Davidson	Hassan Dawud Jidda	Reform and Advancement Party	2,972	0.01
Ukong Frank	Musa Saidu Shuaibu	<a href="#">Democratic Alternative</a>	2,769	0.01
Santuraki Hamisu	Ufondu Chinwe Florence	Mega Party of Nigeria	2,752	0.01
Funmilayo Adesanya-Davies	Mercy Olufunmilayo Ibeneme	Mass Action Joint Alliance	2,651	0.01
<a href="#">Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim</a>	Agwuncha Nwankwo Arthur	Peoples Trust	2,613	0.01
Ali Soyode	Abdullahi Balkisu Mustapha	Yes Electorates Solidarity	2,394	0.01
Nsehe Nseobong	Abuh Mohammed	Restoration Party of Nigeria	2,388	0.01
Ojinika Geff Chizee	Yakubu Usman U.	Coalition for Change	2,391	0.01
Rabia Yasai Hassan Cengiz	Uhuegbu Chineme Justice	National Action Council	2,279	0.01
<a href="#">Eunice Atuejide</a>	Bello Muhammad Jibril	<a href="#">National Interest Party</a>	2,248	0.01
Dara John	Abubakar Salisu	Alliance of Social Democrats	2,146	0.01
<a href="#">Fagbenro-Byron Samuel Adesina</a>	Ado Ummar Abbas	Kowa Party	1,911	0.01
<a href="#">Emmanuel Etim</a>	Adeola Zainab Hazzan	Change Nigeria Party	1,874	0.01
Chukwu-Eguzolugo Sunday Chikendu	Salihu Iman Aliyu	Justice Must Prevail Party	1,853	0.01
Madu Nnamdi Edozie	Adamu Abubakar	Independent Democrats	1,845	0.01

Osuala Chukwudi John	Muhammad Falali	Re-build Nigeria Party	1,792	0.01
Albert Owuru Ambrose	Yahaya Shaba Haruna	Hope Democratic Party	1,663	0.01
David Esosa Ize-Iyamu	Kofar Mata Maryam Umar	Better Nigeria Progressive Party	1,649	0.01
Inwa Ahmed Sakil	Nkwocha Echemor Nkwocha	<a href="#">Unity Party of Nigeria</a>	1,631	0.01
Akpua Robinson	Ahmadu Umaru	National Democratic Liberty Party	1,588	0.01
Mark Emmanuel Audu	Okeke Moses	United Patriots	1,561	0.01
Ishaka Paul Ofemile	Vincent Akinfelami Akinbanai	Nigeria Elements Progressive Party	1,524	0.01
Kriz David	Azael Vashi Chechera	Liberation Movement	1,438	0.01
Ademola Babatunde Abidemi	Tataji Aisha Asabe	Nigeria Community Movement Party	1,378	0.01
A. Edosomwan Johnson	Nasiru Mohammed	National Democratic Liberty Party	1,192	0.00
Angela Johnson	Zayyanu Abubakar	Alliance for a United Nigeria	1,092	0.00
Abah Lewis Elaigwu	Omohimua Michael Okojie	Change Advocacy Party	1,111	0.00
Nwangwu Uchenna Peter	Adebiwale OlaREWaju Odunlade	We The People Nigeria	732	0.00
Total			27,324,583	100.00
Valid votes			27,324,583	95.49
Invalid/blank votes			1,289,607	4.51

Total votes	28,614,190	100.00	
Registered voters/turnout	82,344,107	34.75	
Source: <a href="#">Independent National Electoral Commission</a>			

Unsurprisingly, voter turnout was abysmally low in comparison with the previous elections. With a 35% voter turnout going by the INEC records as shown above, the country recorded the lowest turnout on the continent, which speaks volume of the growing public disenchantment and mistrust in the electoral process (Ojetunde, 2019). The 2019 general election in Nigeria was adjudged fair because some electorates voted due to the application of the Card Reader while some other people were allowed to vote manually although this method had credibility issues; it was still used to identify and authenticate genuine voters. This led to the following:

Nigerians still calling for a total e-procedure that will see to a total form of e-voting that would create room for a free and fair electoral result that can be trusted.

Demanding for a reduction in the series of election rigging and manipulations which has characterized the Nigerian elections in the past years.

With the card reader and PVC, the one man one vote mantra was achieved because it blacklisted and left out people who double registered or had in mind to vote twice during a particular election.

The card reader ensured that the number of duly accredited voters were the same number that voted or less and not more than.

Premium Times through its correspondents on ground found that some of the INEC officials had issues with the usage of the smart card readers due to its features and inability to operate the machines. According to Premium Times, in Polling Unit 006 at Kofar Kudu Primary School in Gezawa Local Government of Kano State, voting did not start until 11:30 am as a result of a smart card reader malfunction. In Polling Unit 011 of Shiyar Ajiya, Tambuwal/Shinfiri, in Tambuwal Local Government of Sokoto State, there was a problem with the card reader that disrupted the voting from 11:00 am to 11:21 am.

**6. Recommendations**

- The federal government should as a matter of urgency ensure the strict application of e-governance and modern technology in the conduct of all subsequent elections in Nigeria without which such election should

be nullified.

- The government should ensure that the entire electioneering process should be technologically advanced and all information thereto be electronically transmitted by INEC.
- To ensure that the quality of services of INEC is improved, the government should ensure that permanent and ad-hoc personnel of INEC are properly trained by ICT experts on how to operate some of the electronic gadgets for the elections and that the electoral laws are strictly implemented.
- The government should ensure that card readers and other devices used in the electoral process are of good quality in line with international best practices. This will prevent rigging and manipulation of election results.

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