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# THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTORAL ACT ON THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN OYO STATE

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## ABSTRACT

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*The struggle for political inclusion of people with disabilities in political participation generally and the election process specifically is one of the central focuses of the global movement for sustainable development as championed by the UN. Nigeria as a nation is not an outlier in its recognition of the universal rights of voters with disabilities. The purposeful selection of Oyo State (South West) Nigeria for this study was to examine the apparent shortcomings in voting behavior of people with disabilities. The study likewise used a mixed-methods approach, with primary data being collected through a standardized questionnaire that was given to 400 randomly chosen respondents. Purposeful selection was made from among the registered members of the Joint Actions of People with Disability in Nigeria (JONAPWP). Secondary data was sourced from relevant data from journals, text books and online materials. In analyzing the data, the researcher used simple percentages to reconcile findings from both quantitative and interview. Findings review participation of persons with disabilities in 2023 general elections in Oyo State is not encouraging. In view of the research findings, the study recommends the need for increase in sensitization drive for voting rights by all ancillary bodies related to the conduct of elections in Nigeria.*

## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Globally, it is acknowledged that 10% of the population in every given country is made up of individuals with disabilities (UNESCO, 2013). The UN and World Health Organization both estimate that 15% of the world's population, or 1 billion people, are people with disabilities. However, considering the size of this community, it should be given a voice in all political involvement, including voting during the electoral process. However, as previous academic studies like Rufai (2012) and Adebayo (2015) have demonstrated, Nigeria, like other third-world nations, still has difficulties in integrating a particular category of eligible voters, such as people with disabilities, into the voting process. The inadequacy of effective electoral rules that can affect disabled voters' voting behavior has been one of the biggest obstacles to the inclusion of people with disabilities (Jenifer 2011). The National Disability Act was passed just before the elections in January

2019, but the European Union Election Observation Mission in Nigeria during the 2023 general election claims that the Act only makes a cursory mention of political participation and does not, therefore, fully implement the UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The research also claims that the country's legal system is extremely discriminatory because it forbids people with disabilities from participating in political activities. The research confirmed that a lack of legal definition and processes that haven't been used in practice were what made the discriminations conceivable. In a similar vein, the Nigeria Association of Civil Society Groups asserts in its report on the 2023 general election that there is still no legal framework in place in the nation to mainstream people with disabilities into society. In order to secure the eradication of all obstacles to the engagement of people with disabilities in all facets of political

participation, policies must be developed. This study however looked at the level of how electoral acts influenced the voting behaviour of persons with disabilities in the 2023 general elections in Oyo State.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Voting Behaviour**

The concept of voting behaviour has been described by various scholars from different perspectives. In the word of Robin (2011), voting behaviour is a form of political participation which refers to the factors and manners in which a particular group of people partake in electoral activities. Oriavwote (2000) submitted that voting behaviour may be described as the process by which citizens choose candidate into public office in a state. Voting behaviour therefore, represents the main form of electoral participation in a liberal democratic society.

Aotearoa (2011) submitted that voting behaviour is the most obvious and direct way in which a whole population (be it able or disabled) can affect government policies. Zahida and Younis (2014) opined that voting behaviour is a set of personal electoral activities including participation in electoral campaigns, turnout at the polls, choosing whom to vote for at the election or campaigning and standing as a candidate during the election.

In the word of Plano and Riggs (2005), voting behaviour is an aspect of political participation which is concerned with the ways in which people tend to vote in public elections and reasons why they vote as they do. The term voting behaviour has recently been expanded in meaning and is taken as a major broader area of study, subsumed within the broader designation of political participation. It involves human voting behaviour in the context of voting and any other related activities in electioneering

administration. Olaniyi (2004), conceptualized voting behaviour as one of the major forms of political participation that is always discussed in relation to election and voting activities.

### **Persons with Disabilities**

Disability is a physical or mental impairment that limits or assumed to limit one or more major aspects of life activities of a person with such impairment (FMWASD, 2011; Disable World, 2021). Disability conditions in human being mean a situation which rendered human being incapable of a full realization of his or her potentials for purposes of participating in the life and the developmental processes of his or her society (Woodward, 2015). The disability can be physical, intellectual and sensory. It can also be total or partial. It can be caused congenitally, by disease, by accident, through negligence, neglect or by

judicial pronouncement. Disability is defined in various ways depending on the paradigm that is being considered. The medical model of disability is strongly normative, based on the individual and his or her medical condition and people are considered to be disabled on the basis of being unable or less able to function as a “normal” person (Mitra, 2006).

Schur, Lisa, Shields and Schriener (2005), and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020) submitted that disabilities are impediments which affect a person’s ability to function. These impediments are caused by various changes in the sub-system of human body. Persons with disabilities vary in the forms and types. Thus, they could be with physical disability, affected functionality of limbs, total or partial loss of sight, the hearing impaired, affected by leprosy, intellectual disability, spinal cord injury and the albinos.

## **Government Policies and Voting**

### **Behaviour of Persons with Disabilities**

The Universality of the Franchise is important not only for nationhood and democracy. The vote of each and every citizen is a badge of dignity and of personhood. The right to vote is regarded as one of the fundamental cornerstones of democracy, and at the beginning of the 21st century, the recognition of this right appears to be beyond debate. However, for persons with disabilities globally, the right to vote remains out of reach, due to the long-held perception that they do not have the decision-making capacity that is required for voting. More often than not, it has gone unremarked that the very same constitutions or legislative enactments that proclaim the principles of non-discrimination and universal suffrage also exclude persons with disabilities from voting and from standing as

candidates in elections (Helène, 2014 and Disabled World, 2021).

McColl and Stephenson (2008) submitted that the right to vote, as an aspect of the right to public participation, is set out in article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 21(1) provides that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. In article 21(2), the principles of ‘periodic and genuine elections’, ‘universal and equal suffrage’ and ‘secret vote’ are set out as expressing the will of the people, which forms the basis of the authority of government. The two scholars further explained that the universality of the franchise is important not only for nationhood and democracy. The vote of each and every citizen is a badge of dignity and of personhood. The adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006 has

necessitated a re-examination of this perception, leading to the growing recognition internationally that a universal limitation on the right to vote of persons with disabilities can no longer be justified. The Convention sets out a wide range of rights including, civil and political rights, the right to live in the community, participation and inclusion, education, health, employment and social protection among others. It's coming into force marks a major milestone in efforts to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights of persons with disabilities.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted combination of both qualitative and quantitative research design. Mixed method was adopted for in-depth investigation so as to complimenting quantitative data with qualitative information. Both research designs were used for collecting data through instruments which were unstructured and structured methods, these include: individual interview (one on one) and structured questionnaire specially designed and used in gathering information from persons with disabilities.

### **Research Question, Research Objectives, Research Design and Research instrument to be adopted**

S/N	Research Questions	Research Objectives	Research Design	Research Instruments
1.	To what extent does the electoral acts influence the voting behaviour of persons	accessing the level of how electoral acts influenced the	Descriptive survey method	Survey questionnaire and key Informant Interview

with disabilities in 2023 general elections in Oyo state	voting behaviour of persons with disabilities in the 2023 general elections in Oyo state		guide
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**Table;** the table above shows the research question, research objectives, research design and the research instruments to be adopted in the study.

**The Population of the Three Senatorial District Areas of persons living with disability in Oyo State**

S/No.	Senatorial district	Total Numbers of Persons with Disabilities	Statistics of Samples	Numbers of Questionnaire
1.	Oyo South	453	18.68	74.75
2.	Oyo North	800	33.00	132.01
3.	Oyo Central	1171	48.30	193.23
	Total	2424	100	400

The table above shows the distribution of respondents based on the senatorial district, it is important to note that of the three senatorial district 453 respondent of the 2424 respondents which represent about

18.6 percentage is from Oyo south, while 33 percentage of the sample are from Oyo state and about 45 percentage of the respondent which is the highest is from Oyo central

**FINDINGS**

**Presentation of findings in line with the research Questions Related to INEC Policy and Implementation on 2023 General Election in Oyo State**

INEC policy and implementation on 2023 general election of persons living with disabilities in Oyo State, this study is expected to give a clear vision on the voting behavior of persons living with disabilities, in achieving this objective hence the following questions were raised.

This section aims to analyse the findings of the study based on the research question three, which is designed to establish the

**Table 11.1 I would have voted during the 2023 General elections if I was aware of my voting rights**

L.G.A	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Total
Afijio Jobele	4	1	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Akinyele Moniya	28	7	20	5	12	3	4	1	3	0.75	67
Atiba Ofa Meta	-	-	5	1.25	4	1	6	1.5	4	1	20
Atisbo Tede-Okeogun	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	4
Egbeda Egbeda	-	-	-	-	10	2.5	6	1.5	4	1	20
Ibadan North	8	2	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Ibadan North-East	28	7	-	-	4	1	-	-	20	5	52
Ibadan North-West	16	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	5	36
Ibadan South-East	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	8
	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.5	4
	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.5	4



Ibadan South-West	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.5	4
Ibarapa Central	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.5	4
Ibarapa East	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1.25	5
Ibarapa North	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1.5	6
Ido	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5
Irepo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	4
Iseyin	-	-	16	(4)	-	-	-	-	8	2	8
Itesiwaju	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	6.25	-	-	25
Iwajowa	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	2	-	-	8
Kajola	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1.5	-	-	6
Kajola	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	2	-	-	8
Lagelu Oyo	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1.5	-	-	6
Ogbomosho North	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	4
Ogbomosho South	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	4
Ogo Oluwa	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	2	-	-	8
Okeho	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1.25	5
Okeho	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1.5	6
Olorunsogo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	3.25	13
Oluyole, Nigeria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	4
Oluyole, Nigeria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	4
Ona Ara	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4	1	400

Orelope											
Ori Ire											
Oyo East											
Oyo West											
Saki East											
Saki West											
Surlere, Oyo State											
<b>Total</b>											

**Source:** Field Data, 2022.

Table 11.1 above shows the analysis of data with respect to whether the respondents would have voted during the 2023 General elections if they aware of their voting rights in Oyo, Nigeria. The first row presents the response rate of Asa Local Government; 4 representing (1%) and 4 representing (0.5%) strongly agree and agree respectively. In Akinyele Moniya Local Government, 28 respondents representing (7%) of the respondents strongly agree, 20 representing (5%) of the total respondents in Oyo State

agree, 12 representing (3%) of the total respondents have not decided; 4 of the total respondents in Oyo State representing (1%) disagreed while 3 of the total respondents in Oyo State representing (0.75%). This translate to mean that respondents views in Akinyele Moniya Local Government is tilted towards negativity. For Atiba Ofa Meta Local Government, none of the respondents strongly agree, 5 of the total respondents in Oyo State representing (1.25%) agree, 4 representing (1%); 6

representing (1.5%) disagree and 4 representing (0.5%) strongly disagree respectively. This translate to mean that respondents views in Atiba Ofa Meta Local Government is also tilted towards negative direction. For Atisbo Tede-Okeogun Local Government, all the respondents i.e. 4 respondents representing (1%) of the total respondents strongly disagree to the opinion that they would have voted during the 2023 General elections if they aware of their voting rights. In the case of Egbeda Egbeda Local Government, 4/4 respondents representing (1%) of the total respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively. This is also sloping towards negative direction. For Ibadan North Local Government, 10 respondents representing (2.5%) of the total respondents are undecided; 6 respondents representing (1.5%) disagreed and 4 respondents representing (1%) strongly disagreed respectively. This translates to mean that the

responses in Ibadan North Local Government are skewed towards negative direction. Regarding Ibadan North-East Local Government, 8/8 respondents representing (2%) each cumulating to 16 administered questionnaire in the Local Government strongly agree and agreed respectively.

In a different dimension of response, the respondents in Ibadan North-West Local Government are fairly distributed, they are not here nor there. As 28 respondents representing (7%) of the total respondents strongly agreed, 20 respondents representing (5%) of the total respondents strongly disagreed. The remaining 4 respondents representing (1%) of the total respondents have not decided. Fairly similar response is applied to Ibadan South-East, Ibadan South-West, Ibarapa Central, Ibarapa East, Ibarapa North and Ido Local Governments. The respondents are equally distributed. That of the Ibadan South-East is a bit higher with

just (1%) of the total respondents. In Ibadan South-East, Ibadan South-West, Ibarapa Central, Ibarapa East, Ibarapa North and Ido Local Governments, the responses are equally distributed on either strongly agree or strongly disagree. This leave the study to no conclusion on which side to take. In respect to Irepo, Iseyin, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Kajola and Lagelu Oyo Local Governments, all the responses are negative slopped as all the respondents based on the total number of questionnaire administered and retrieved disagreed. The responses from Irepo, Iseyin, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Kajola and Lagelu Oyo Local Governments i.e. 5, 6, 5, 4, 4 and 8 representing (1.25%, 1.5%, 1.25%, 1%, 1% and 2%) respectively strongly disagree respectively.

While the responses are negatively slopped in Ogbomosho North Local Government with the total respondents i.e. 16 representing (4%) agreed; the responses are positively slopped in South Local

Government with the total respondents i.e. 25 representing (6.25%) disagreed. Which translate to mean that the responses in Ogbomosho-based Local Governments when combined together are negatively slanted. The responses of the remaining Local Governments also are not favouring the fact that they would have voted during the 2023 General elections if they aware of their voting rights. The responses in Ogo Oluwa, Okeho, Olorunsogo, Oluyole, Nigeria, Ona Ara, Orelope, Ori Ire, Oyo East, Oyo West, Saki East, Saki West and Surlere, Oyo State. It's either the total respondents from each Local Government disagree or strongly disagreed. For example, the 13 respondents representing (3.25%) from Oyo West Local Government strongly disagreed; while 8 respondents representing (2%) from Ogo-Oluwa Local Government disagreed respectively. Based on the presentation of data we may come to a conclusion that the respondents would have

voted during the 2023 General elections if State.

they aware of their voting rights in Oyo

**Table 11.2 Awareness creation by the government agency made me to vote during the 2023 General election**

L.G.A	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Total
Afijio Jobele	4	1	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Akinyele Moniya	28	7	20	5	12	3	4	1	3	0.75	67
Atiba Ofa Meta	-	-	5	1.25	4	1	6	1.5	4	1	20
Atisbo Tede-Okeogun	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	4
Egbeda Egbeda	-	-	-	-	10	2.5	6	1.5	4	1	20
Ibadan North	8	2	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Ibadan North-East	20	5	-	-	4	1	-	-	28	7	52
Ibadan North-West	16	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	5	36
Ibadan South-East	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	8
Ibadan South-West	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.5	4
Ibarapa Central	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.5	4
Ibarapa East	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.5	4
Ibarapa North	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1.25	5
Ido	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1.5	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1.25	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5

Irepo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>	1	4
Iseyin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8</b>	2	8
Itesiwaju	-	-	<b>16</b>	(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Iwajowa	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>25</b>	6.25	-	-	25
Kajola	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>6</b>	1.5	-	-	6
Lagelu Oyo	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8</b>	2	-	-	8
Ogbomosho North	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>6</b>	1.5	-	-	6
Ogbomosho South	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>	1	-	-	4
Ogo Oluwa	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>	1	-	-	4
Okeho	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8</b>	2	-	-	8
Olorunsogo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>5</b>	1.25	5
Oluyole, Nigeria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>6</b>	1.5	6
Ona Ara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>13</b>	3.25	13
Orelope	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>	1	4
Ori Ire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>	1	4
Oyo East	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	<b>4</b>	1	<b>400</b>
Oyo West											
Saki East											

Saki West											
Surlere, Oyo State											
<b>Total</b>											

**Source:** Field Data Obtained, 2022.

Table 11.2 above shows the analysis of data with respect to whether awareness creation by the government agency made the respondent to vote during the 2023 General election in Oyo, Nigeria. The first row presents the response rate of Asa Local Government; 4 representing (1%) and 4 representing (0.5%) strongly agree and agree respectively. In Akinyele Moniya Local Government, 28 respondents representing (7%) of the respondents strongly agree, 20 representing (5%) of the total respondents in Oyo State agree, 12 representing (3%) of the total respondents have not decided; 4 of the total respondents in Oyo State representing (1%) disagreed while 3 of the total respondents in Oyo State representing (0.75%). This translate to mean that

respondents views in Akinyele Moniya Local Government is tilted towards negativity. For Atiba Ofa Meta Local Government, none of the respondents strongly agree, 5 of the total respondents in Oyo State representing (1.25%) agree, 4 representing (1%); 6 representing (1.5%) disagree and 4 representing (0.5%) strongly disagree respectively. This translate to mean that respondents views in Atiba Ofa Meta Local Government is also tilted towards negative direction. For Atisbo Tede-Okeogun Local Government, all the respondents i.e. 4 respondents representing (1%) of the total respondents strongly disagree to the opinion that awareness creation by the government agency made the respondent to vote during the 2023 General

election. In the case of Egbeda Egbeda Local Government, 4/4 respondents representing (1%) of the total respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively. This is also sloping towards negative direction. For Ibadan North Local Government, 10 respondents representing (2.5%) of the total respondents are undecided; 6 respondents representing (1.5%) disagreed and 4 respondents representing (1%) strongly disagreed respectively. This translate to mean that the responses in Ibadan North Local Government are skewed towards negative direction. Regarding Ibadan North-East Local Government, 8/8 respondents representing (2%) each cumulating to 16 administered questionnaires in the Local Government strongly agree and agreed respectively.

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questionnaire administered and retrieved disagreed. The responses from Irepo, Iseyin, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Kajola and Lagelu Oyo Local Governments i.e. 5, 6, 5, 4, 4 and 8 representing (1.25%, 1.5%, 1.25%, 1%, 1% and 2%) respectively strongly disagree respectively.

While the responses are negatively slopped in Ogbomosho North Local Government with the total respondents i.e. 16 representing (4%) agreed; the responses are positively slopped in South Local Government with the total respondents i.e. 25 representing (6.25%) disagreed. Which translate to mean that the responses in Ogbomosho-based Local Governments when combined together are negatively slanted. The responses of the remaining Local Governments also are not favouring the fact that the respondents would have voted if the electoral act was designed to protect their peculiar disabilities. The responses in Ogo Oluwa, Okeho,

Olorunsogo, Oluyole, Nigeria, Ona Ara, Orelupe, Ori Ire, Oyo East, Oyo West, Saki East, Saki West and Surlere, Oyo State. It's either the total respondents from each Local Government disagree or strongly disagreed. For example, the 13 respondents representing (3.25%) from Oyo West Local Government strongly disagreed; while 8 respondents representing (2%) from Ogo-Oluwa Local Government disagreed respectively. Based on the presentation of data we may come to a conclusion that awareness creation by the government agency did not make any impact on the respondent to vote during the 2023 General election in Oyo State.

## **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH IN OYO STATE IN CORROBORATION WITH THE RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEW**

### **The Influence of INEC Administrative Rules' Implementation on the Voting**

## **Behaviour of Persons with Disabilities in 2023 General Elections in Oyo State**

The questionnaire responses in Oyo State are supported by the interview reports where the interviewees without worry stated that:

Aside the provision of section 56 (1) and (2) INEC officers were directed to help person with disability in whatever area of voting process as stipulated in 2010 electoral Act. INEC officers were also directed to assist them while on queue and also they are to be attended to on bases of whenever they come. But the general believe of the respondents in Oyo State is that voting doesn't really count has greatly affect the voting behaviours of persons with disabilities, lack of trust in the electoral organizer and

relevant institutions. If all observed problems stated are taken care of, such actions will definitely greatly have a pushing effect on voting behaviours of persons with disabilities. The following are some of the measures recommended by the respondents to improve voting behaviour of persons with disabilities: Constitutional political inclusiveness of persons with disabilities, adequate electoral political sensitization of person with disabilities in Oyo State .

The failure of the policy was due to lack of sensitization from the political parties and some relevant agencies. Although, towards (very

close to) the 2023 general election, the INEC officials tried to sensitize persons with disabilities or persons with special needs but it was too little too late. More so, the encouragement was not totally there except the usual fire brigade mobilization of contestants immediately before the election.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommends the need for political parties to make provisions for preferential treatment to PWDs that are interested in conducting and contesting in election, and should also be exempted from paying for nomination forms. Also it should be legislated that every polling booth should have a designated officer to see to the needs of the persons with disabilities during the voting activities, a legislation should also be enacted to ensure that persons with

disabilities is allowed to the voting environment with a trusted family member in other to ensure the safety of their voting right. They should also legislate that all offices of INEC across the country should employ certain percentage of persons with disability as staff.

The security personnel's in each pooling units should be saddled with the responsibility of prime safety or utmost safety of persons with disability be paramount. The electoral legislative enactment should be of a wider coverage that would be seen protecting not only the interest of the blind but to all other categories of disabled wishing to observe their civic responsibility; lastly the language of the law/act should be accretive and compling so that the act eill be seen to be forceful and a must to be implemented to the later.

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