COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA
(NATIONAL & STATE ASSEMBLIES IN FOCUS)

BY
ORDERPAPER ADVOCACY INITIATIVE (OAI)
MARCH 2023

OrderPaper

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VOTER -   Validating the Office of The Electorate on Representation

USAID -   United States Agency for International Development

SCALE -   Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement

EOM -   Election Observation and Monitoring

Leg'ACEs -   Active Citizens Engaging the Legislature

NASS -   National Assembly

INEC -   Independent National Electoral Commission

FCT -   Federal Capital Territory

IREV -   INEC Result Viewing Portal

BVAS -   Bimodal Voters Accreditation System

RECs -   Resident Electoral Commissioners

RAC -   Registration Area Council

PEA -   Political Economy Analysis

PWDs -   Persons with Disabilities

PVC -   Personal Voters Card

IEC -   Information Education and Communication

PUs -   Polling Units

OAI -   OrderPaper Advocacy Initiative

NGO -   Non-Governmental Organisation

ii.   DISCLAIMER

This Report on the 2023 General Elections (National & State Assemblies) is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID).**

The contents are the responsibility of OrderPaper Advocacy Initiative (OAI) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. Government.

1. ABOUT ORDERPAPER ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

OrderPaper Advocacy Initiative is a Civil Society Organization (CSO) that delivers interventions in the legislative space to expand the frontiers for good governance and deepen democratic practice(s). Our objective is to amplify the voices and participation of under-served and under-represented populations in leadership and decision-making to promote inclusive service delivery. Our work on Legislative Strengthening and Accountability is strongly supported by a niche media (OrderPaper Nigeria) which has expanded the space for citizens to understand and equipped to interface with the legislature and legislators.

2. ABOUT THE VOTER PROJECT

The VOTER (Validating the Office of The Electorate on Representation) Project is a series of citizen awareness and engagement activities anchored on specially curated voter education; stewardship accountability for public officials, collating and interrogating campaign promises; and mounting an organised citizen monitoring and observatory of the 2023 National Assembly elections.

OrderPaper Advocacy Initiative is implementing the project with support from the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** under the **Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE)** Project by Palladium.

The VOTER Project is designed under the premise that the conduct of elections for executive (President and Governors) and legislative (National and State Assemblies) simultaneously tends to create a bandwagon effect on the outcome of the polls. In other words, citizens tend to focus less attention on the legislative candidates but rather vote across party lines for both elective offices once a choice is made for the executive position.

This has created a situation where candidates for the legislature are barely scrutinised and elected based on their merits and assessed capacities but by association with those seeking to be governors and/or president. Ultimately, this has robbed off on the quality of parliamentary representation and by extension, service delivery by elected representatives. The implementation of the Project is intended to address this bandwagon effect and avail the opportunity to elect a vibrant and effective set of legislators in the 2023 general elections.

The Project is anchored on the theory of change that if citizens base their electoral choices for legislative offices on quality representation based on established performance indicators; If citizens are adequately informed of the functions and roles of legislators; Then, advocacy for needed governance reforms and effective delivery of democratic dividends will be substantially enhanced.

The overall goal of the project is to ultimately impact the electoral cycle in terms of legislative positions on one hand; and on the other hand, engender a sustained citizen demand for legislative accountability from elected representatives going forward.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OrderPaper is grateful to the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** and the Palladium Group for the funding and technical support provided to produce this Report on the 2023 General Elections.

Our gratitude goes to our resilient and patriotic **Leg'ACEs (Active Citizens Engaging the Legislature)** who displayed commitment to observe and monitor the National Assembly elections on February 25 and the State Assembly elections on March 18, 2023, respectively.

We also want to thank the media, especially journalists in the National Assembly press corps for the coverage provided for our work prior to, during and after the conduct of the elections. To our civil society partners your support is noted and appreciated.

Finally, we appreciate all members of the **OrderPaper** Team for the dedication, diligence and unrelenting commitment to the implementation of the VOTER Project. The remarkable resilience invested into the election observatory by every member of the team is indeed exemplary.

4.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 General Elections into Presidential and National Assembly positions were conducted on February 25 and on March 18 for the Governorship and State Assemblies seats across Nigeria.

In line with its commitment to focus on the legislative polls, **OrderPaper** deployed citizen observers to the 360 federal constituencies and a majority of the 993 state constituencies on both days. To share both interim and conclusive elections observation reports with the public and relevant stakeholders, a Situation Room was set up to effectively process data real-time from deployed observers.

The data received from the field on both election days form the bulk of this Comprehensive Report on the 2023 General Elections (National and State Assemblies). In addition to these were outputs from several pre-election activities undertaken by **OrderPaper** as part of the build-up to the voting events, including legislative town hall, voter awareness, media engagements, desk and field research as well as targeted surveys, among others.

The summary outcome from these combined elections-related activities is a validation of the key assumption of the VOTER Project that legislative candidates both at the National and State Assemblies in Nigeria are voted for based on a bandwagon effect. Specifically, the electorate, who vote during the legislative elections, cast their votes substantially based on either their choice for the president and/or state governor or on party affiliation or affinity.

The bandwagon is enabled because both the executive (President and Governors) and legislative (National and State Assemblies) elections are contested for concurrently in the same electoral cycle and dates. It was therefore the case that the choice of voters for Senators and House of Representatives members were substantially influenced either by whom they were voting for as president or by the political parties they voted for.

It is our expectation that this Comprehensive Report on the 2023 General Elections alongside similar efforts by other domestic and international observer groups will provoke sufficient thoughts and stir conversations around possible electoral reforms that will address the bandwagon effect in Nigeria's elections.

Oke Epia
Executive Director
OrderPaper Advocacy Initiative

5.   BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

i. Legal Framework

Nigeria is a constitutional democracy that practises a presidential system of government. There are three arms that make up the government, viz: the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary; and these are operational at the federal and state levels of the federation.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) is the supreme law of the country. Established by Sections 47 – 49 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended), Nigeria's National Assembly consists of two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Sub-national governments of the 36 States each have a State House of Assembly while the National Assembly legislates for the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The Senate consists of 109 Senators, while the House of Representatives consists of 360 Members elected from several constituencies across Nigeria for a fixed four-year term of office.

Chapter IV of the Constitution stipulates the fundamental rights that accrue to every Nigerian citizen, including the right to vote and be voted for, having met the requirements of the law such as age, qualifications, etc. Sections 71 and 112 make provisions on elections into the National and State Houses of Assembly, including the rights and qualifications of candidates.

ii. The Electoral Environment, Legislation and Jurisprudence

The electoral system is guided largely by the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2022. These are supported by extant international legal instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

These two basic instruments provide the basis, guidance and guidelines for election-related activities like political campaigns, political party formation, registration, qualification to stand for elections, grounds for disqualification, the composition and conduct of election tribunals, campaign finance, among a host of others.

Essentially, the Electoral Act 2022 provides the legal framework for the conduct of elections in the country. It provides the basis for the election management body to formulate and issue guidelines for the electoral process, especially election day activities and resultant offshoots. Enacted after a stiff resistance to amend the 2010 Electoral Act, the 2022 electoral law legalised the use of technology in the conduct of elections; redefines over-voting and mandates INEC to maintain an inclusive approach towards providing support to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) during voting.

It also alters the timelines for the conduct of elections and creates new time frames for political parties to fulfil various requirements and activities concerning nomination of candidates for elections and commencement of campaigns. However, the most significant import of the Electoral Act 2022 lies in its endorsement and legalisation of electronic transmission of results of ballots cast at the Polling Units (PUs) to a central result collation portal.

This particular ingredient conferred the promise of a substantial layer of transparency and credibility on the conduct and outcome of elections. Furthermore, the law empowers INEC to determine the mode of voting and transmission of results as well as to review declaration of

election results made under duress.

Another important point to note about Nigeria's electoral system is that it lumps the legislative and executive elections - Presidential and National Assembly Elections - on the same day while the Gubernatorial and State Assembly polls are also lumped together but held on another day.

This template of conducting elections has resulted in a bandwagon trend where legislative candidates are largely elected based on their alignment with popular executive candidates and not necessarily on their individual merit; greatly affecting the quality of representation in our legislature. It is strongly argued that the majority of legislators who have served between the 4th and incumbent 9th National Assemblies emerged through a bandwagon.

iii. The Elections Management Body

Section 153 and the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution spells out the establishment of an election management body for Nigeria. It established the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at the national level and State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) at the sub-national level (comprising 36 states of the country).

Led by a Chairman and National Commissioners, the Commission also has state chapters led by respective Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Similarly, when it comes to Election Observation and Monitoring, INEC provides guides to ensure election observation duties are carried out in accordance with the 2022 Electoral Act, INEC guidelines and international best practices.

iv. Political Economy Analysis (PEA) Brief

In the build-up to the conduct of the February 25 and March 18 general elections, the socio-political and economic temperature in Nigeria took on some shape and colour that impacted the voting exercise and its outcomes.

Political campaigns were infused with unhealthy rhetoric like ethnic and tribal profiling, personality attacks, and even verbal and physical abuse in some cases. On the economic front, the naira scarcity induced by a redesign of the currency impeded citizen liberties in terms of movement and free expression of economic rights. The long-drawn scarcity of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), popularly called petrol, adversely affected travels and intra-city mobility beforehand during the 2023 elections.

The hangover from fractious primaries to elect party candidates lingered on in some cases extending to judicial contests which further fouled the space for harmonious politicking. While cases of rampart insecurity which pervaded many parts of the country appeared to have abated slightly, there were nonetheless security concerns which limited free movement of people and goods across the country.

These political, economic and social factors had one bearing or another not just on politicians, registered voters and the general citizenry but importantly on INEC which has perennially suffered logistics hiccups at elections.

6.   PRE-POLLING PROCESSES

i. Pre-election Activities - Voter Registration & PVC collection

A report released by INEC in October 2022, revealed 93,469,008 as the total number of registered voters in the country; showing an addition of 12,298,944 new voters to the initial 84,004,084 voting population in 2019. This followed the removal of 53,264 ineligible voters that completed the registration process for Permanent Voters Cards (PVC). In terms of collection, INEC announced that a total of 87 million PVCs was collected with Lagos and Kano posting the highest numbers of 6,214,970 and 5,594,193, respectively.

From the INEC data, young persons tilted the scale heavily to record the high number of new registrants for the 2023 elections. While persons between the ages of 18 and 34 recorded a figure of 37,060,399 (39.65%) as registrants, a total of 33,413,591 were captured as middle-aged (35-49 years) in the data by the electoral body. Further disaggregation showed that male registrants accounted for 49,054,162 (52.5%) while females stood at 44,414,846 (47.5%), and PWDs was 85,362.

A breakdown by geo-political zones shows that North-West has the highest number of registrants at a total of **22,255,562** while South-East recorded the lowest at total of **10,907,606**

ii. Election Campaigns and Politicking

Campaigns for the National Assembly Elections commenced on September 28, 2022, following a lift on the ban of campaign activities by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Similarly, electioneering campaigns for the presidential election commenced on 28th September 28, 2022.

OrderPaper research and monitoring of campaigns for the 2023 legislative elections revealed that many of the candidates that ran for the 469 National Assembly seats (especially among aspiring lawmakers) cared very little about releasing an articulated plan of their campaign promises for their would-be constituents.

Additionally, most of the manifestoes and campaign promises of the legislative candidates were heavy on subjects outside the core duty of a legislator seeking federal legislative seats and therefore, did not reflect a clear picture of what they will be doing at the 10th National Assembly if elected into office.

Furthermore, records available from pre-election surveys conducted on the 4,223 National Assembly candidates showed that only 10 (0.23%) out of these candidates had functional and well-articulated manifestoes speaking to these core duties.

The tracking of campaign promises through a special VOTER election portal available at orderpaper.ng, media desk research, candidates' websites and social media handles, and our army of grassroots volunteers across the 360 federal constituencies of the country formed part of **OrderPaper's** preliminary engagement of the elections.

In conclusion, the final outcome of our research revealed that most campaign promises were not available in the public domain (whether by way of debate or town halls or online). Hence, voters had little or no promises to scrutinise in making informed choices, thus creating room for bandwagon voting.

iii.   OrderPaper Preparations & Interventions

a.   Voter Awareness/Sensitisation

The VOTER Project has been heavy on voter education activity, as well as civic education modules. Thus, **OrderPaper** deployed innovative, specially curated legislative-focused communication and media tools and channels to engage citizens.

These include featured radio programmes, jingles, social media campaigns and skits, publications, and other publicity Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials like branded T-shirts, stickers, wrist bands, posters etc.

-      **Radio:** On radio sensitisation, a radio show with the name; **VOTER Diary** was designed to air 27 episodes live on Kiss FM 99.9 Abuja and OrderPaper Facebook Live Stream.

-      VOTER Diary is a 30-minute radio show with a new topic weekly on voter education and mobilisation centred on the National Assembly and State Assembly elections. It features regulars such as the short-takes (news highlights on the forthcoming elections, INEC and the Parliament), as well as guest experts discussing duties of effective representatives, the National and State Assemblies elections and related topics. The **VOTER Fact of the week** (shared on radio and infographics via social media, Trivia questions to engage the audience, sound bites from the **VOTER Street Parliament Series** (a Vox pop on citizens understanding of the legislature and preparedness for the elections) and phone-in segments for listeners to ask questions or make contributions also form a critical part of the show.

-      **Social Media Awareness Campaign:** An intensive 30-day countdown and awareness campaign leading to the 2023 National Assembly Elections was also simulated across Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. This was the highpoint of a loose 360-day countdown timer which ran on the **OrderPaper** website.

Using infographic cards and other audio-visual materials on voter education which includes skits, radio jingles in English, Nigerian Pidgin and the three major languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba), the messages were shared to an estimated 450,000 listening audience of Kiss FM 99.9 as well as a combined followership of over forty-five thousand persons across **OrderPaper's** six social platforms mentioned above.

-      **Recruitment & onboarding of Leg'ACEs**

For close to a year, OrderPaper identified, onboarded, capacitated and continues to work with grassroots volunteer citizens who are adequately informed of the functions and roles of legislators.

The advocacy is for substantially enhanced needed governance reforms and effective delivery of democratic dividends. These active citizens form OrderPaper's constituency champion programme known as Legislative ACEs (Active Citizens Engaging the Legislature) or LEG'ACEs.

These Legislative ACEs are non-partisan Nigerians who have been recruited across the country to push for accountability, transparency, and performance appraisals of members of the National Assembly on legislative service delivery.

Ahead of the 2023 National Assembly Elections, **OrderPaper** onboarded 415 of these active citizens across the country to participate in Election Observation and Monitoring (EOM) of the

legislative elections. They were all adults between the ages of 18-40 years and included just one Person with Disability (PWD). However, only 353 were engaged as observers for the national and state assembly elections, comprising 109 females, 244 males and 1 Person with Disability (PWD).

- OrderPaper EOM Selection, Training and Deployment

As part of its Election Observation and Monitoring (EOM) exercise, **OrderPaper** jointly set up a citizen observatory to focus on the National Assembly elections which were held on February 25, 2023.

Staff of **OrderPaper** and these citizen observers were also trained and empowered to carry out key roles in achieving the project activity and objectives. **OrderPaper** also had several meetings with the ACEs where the issue of EOM was discussed.

Anchored by the **OrderPaper** team with support of **USAID's Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE),** these training sessions covered areas such as the ecosystem and expectations of deployed observers, data collection using technology, guidelines on setting up an EOM Situation Room.

Other aspects of the training include guidelines on EOM, safety measures, communication and hands-on organisation on the day of observation, exit poll to investigate bandwagon effect in voting during the Presidential and National Assembly elections and data interpretation.

Following the conclusion of engagement for those to be deployed to the field on February 25, a final training was conducted with polling targeted at the general citizenry across Nigeria to harvest opinions, positions and expectations of electorates on the legislative elections.

It is important to note that there were safety concerns because the Project sent out volunteers (Leg'ACEs) to observe the National Assembly election. Nonetheless, there was adequate training and re-training on safety and observation before the Elections Observers and Monitors (EOMs) were sent to the field.

As a result, the EOMs could provide meaningful feedback at the end of the exercise unharmed. While they reported some incidence of violence across some polling units, no intimidation or harm was meted on any of the Leg'ACEs deployed.

To ascertain this, security check was done twice on election day. One at the opening of polls and the other, after the close of polls. The results are captured below:

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023
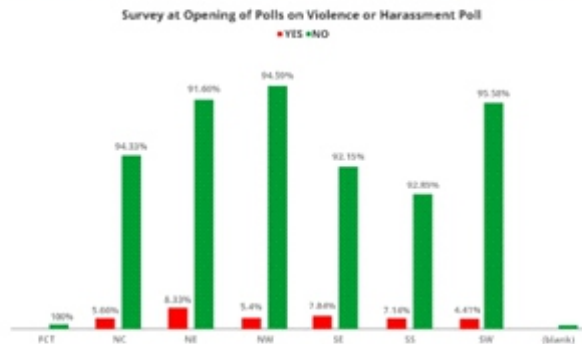
Survey at Opening of Polls on Violence or Harassment Poll

The chart above shows that violence and harassment were nearly absent at the opening of polls throughout the country. While there were no such incidents in the FCT, Abuja, only the north-east geo-political zone showed a slightly higher than the average of minimal disturbances.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023
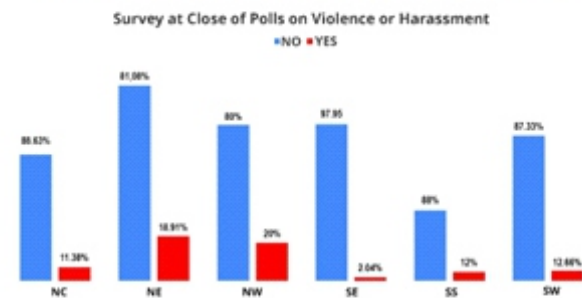
Survey at Close of Polls on Violence or Harassment

As shown above, the same trend of minimal incidents of violence or harassment were recorded across the geo-political zones at the close of polls across the country.

- **Press Briefing at the National Assembly and Outputs**

Ahead of the Presidential and National Assembly elections, **OrderPaper** led by its Executive Director, **Oke Epia** held a media briefing alongside **Temidayo Taiwo-Sidiq,** a Senior Programme Executive at OrderPaper, and Bassey Bassey; Executive Director of Hipcity Innovation Centre on February 23, 2023.

The briefing, which was held at the Media Centre of the House of Representatives chambers, Abuja, focused on the 2023 National Assembly Elections and the preparedness of Nigerians, and the lack or poor quality of manifestoes as released by legislative candidates. The messaging was clear on the fact that several candidates seeking federal legislative seats do not have a clear picture of what they will be doing at the 10th National Assembly, if elected.

The campaign promises, it was explained, formed part of the preliminary assessment tracked by OrderPaper through a special election portal, media desk research, candidates' websites and social media handles, and its army of grassroots volunteers across the 360 federal constituencies of the country.

At the briefing it was also observed that majority of the lawmakers who served between the 4th and 9th National Assemblies emerged through a bandwagon ivoting. A trend, OrderPaper notes, sacrifices merit for party considerations, especially as the National Assembly elections are held simultaneously with the highly anticipated Presidential Elections.

Furthermore, in highlighting projections for the 2023 National Assembly elections, OrderPaper's most recent pre-election survey showed that about 500 (50%) of 1,000 respondents noted that they voted at the 2019 National Assembly Elections. Additionally, while 418 (41.83%) stated that they voted in the 2015 National Assembly Elections, 466 (46.59%) of the respondents said they voted at the 2011 NASS Elections, indicating that participation in National Assembly Elections has improved since 1999.

However, there were concerns that while there appears to be increased awareness among Nigerians about the National Assembly Elections, many eligible voters do not know the candidates by name and barely read or sighted their campaign promises.

Eligible voters were also urged to elect the would-be lawmakers based on merit or performance (in the case of returning lawmakers) while the media was urged to give the 2023 National Assembly Elections robust reportage to enable Nigerians take the issues of parliament more seriously.

The briefing ended with a promise to release a more detailed report containing comprehensive recommendations after the Saturday, **25th February 2023,** National Assembly elections.

-   Situation Room Setup and Testing

To ensure real time monitoring of the deployed observers and collation of their reports, **OrderPaper** set up a Situation Room at Hawthorn Suites Area 11, Garki Abuja between **February 24** and **26, 2023** to transmit live updates, breaking news, poll trend analysis and exclusives on the NASS 2023 elections.

While the main objective of the exercise was to observe, collate data and analyse the effect of bandwagon trend in the National Assembly elections, it also monitored compliance of the election management body - the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) – and other stakeholders with the Electoral Act 2022 and INEC's electoral guidelines.

Similarly, from **March 17 - 18, 2023,** a Situation Room to transmit live updates, breaking news, poll trend analysis and exclusives on the State Assembly elections was set up. Unlike the previous election though, the Situation Room for the state elections was a hybrid pattern with some members of the **OrderPaper** team working from the office and others joined the collaboration via zoom.

7. The National Assembly Election Day Deployment & Reporting

For the National Assembly elections of February 25, 2023, OrderPaper deployed a total of 415 citizen observers. The Active Citizens Engaging the Legislature (Leg'ACEs) were deployed across the 360 federal constituencies. For data collection/collation, a Situation Room was set up in Abuja. The Situation Room had 13 members of Staff at OrderPaper backed by two others on the field (moving across polling units within the FCT), while three more were working remotely as data clerks.

The Leg'ACEs observed and reported in real time, election-day progress as well as results of the legislative elections from 360 Federal Constituencies across the country. However, data was received from 326 polling units across the 360 Federal Constituencies in Nigeria at the end of polls.

Another integral part of the Election Observation and Monitoring was the use of data gathered from the exit poll survey conducted by the Leg'ACEs to ascertain the reasons for the voting choice of citizens at the legislative elections.

Randomly selected voters were interviewed for the exercise conducted by the citizen observers deployed across the 360 Federal Constituencies within the 36 states of the country, as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

Below are summary details of field reports received on election day:

- **Poll opening - In** line with INEC guidelines, the National Assembly polls were expected to open at 8:30 am in the **176,846 Polling Units (PUs**) across the federation. However, from a sample size of 326 Polling Units sampled, 200 (61.34%) opened on time. It was discovered that those who did not open on time had logistics challenges. While some experienced delays picking up their election materials from INEC office, some others had transportation issues.

As filed in by the observers, the late arrival of INEC officials led to late opening of polls in some polling units. This was the case in at least 126 polling units observed.

The South-south and South-west geo-political zones recorded the greatest number of polling units that opened on time as shown in the bar chart below:
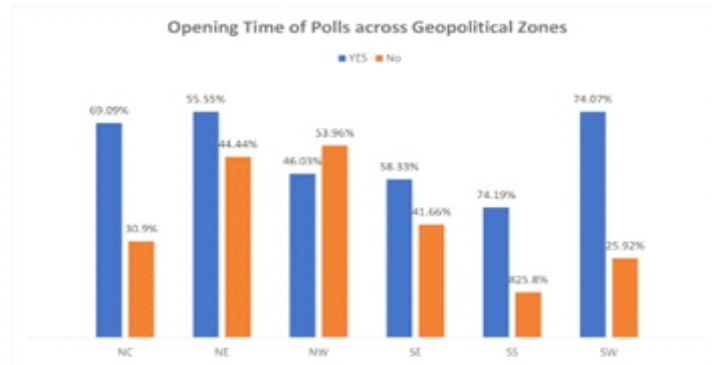
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

Opening Time of Polls across Geopolitical Zones

Presence of officials- INEC, Parties and Security – Observers reported presence of party agents, security personnel, and INEC officials in most of the Polling Units observed across the 36 states and the FCT. A geopolitical spread of the presence is indicated in the illustration below:

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023
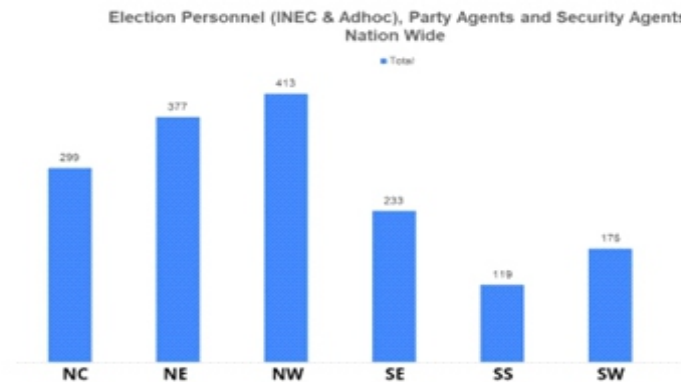
Election Personnel (INEC & Adhoc), Party Agents and Security Agents Nation Wide

Functionality of BVAS – Reports from the field showed that the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) seemed to have functioned effectively in most of the Polling Units sampled nationwide.

Closing of Polls and Counting - Our observation and analysis shows that the majority of the 326 polling units observed **closed polls between 3:45 pm and 6:45pm** across the federation. The analysis revealed that ballots were sorted and properly counted in most of the Polling Units observed. The graphic below gives an overview of balloting sorting across the geopolitical zones of the country.

As previously stated, the late arrival of INEC officials negatively impacted on the timeline for voting; leading to late close of polls, just as the non-functionality of the BVAS led to late accreditation in some polling units and late close of polls. Additionally, in some polling units with many voters, polling time had to be extended to accommodate every accredited voter as stipulated by law.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that ballots were sorted and properly counted in most of the Polling Units observed. The graphic below gives an overview of balloting sorting across the geopolitical zones of the country.
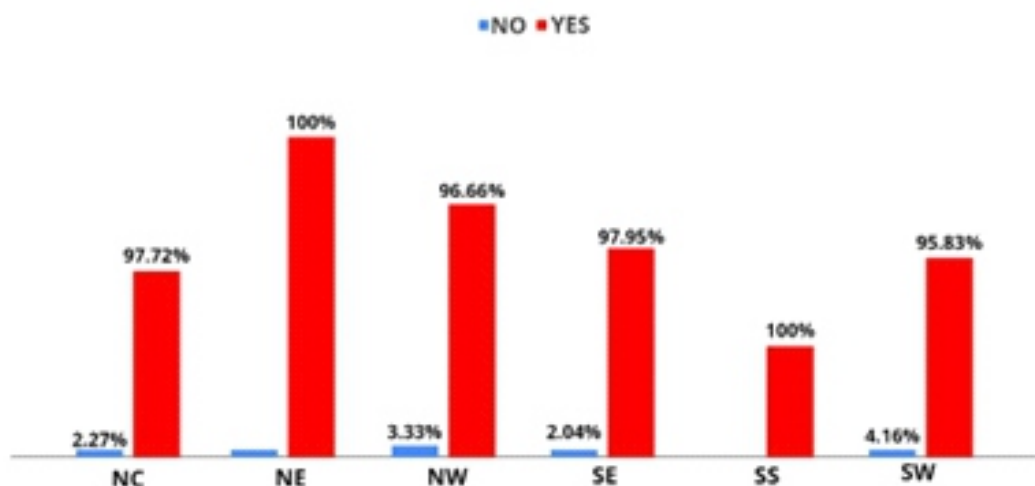
- **The Exit Polls**

Being the crux of the election observation exercise, an exit poll was carried out to ascertain voters' prior knowledge of the legislative candidates as well as the factors which influenced the choice of candidates voted for. For context, 295 respondents were interviewed and 277 (94%) of those polled confirmed that they voted in both the Senate and House of Representatives elections. The illustration below gives a geo-political comparison of voting for legislative candidates in the February 25th elections.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

Voter Turnout Senate and House of Representatives Elections

■ YES ■ NO

NC 90.47% / 9.52%4 — NE 95.16% / 4.83% — NW 100% — SE 89.09% / 10.9% — SS 92.59% / 7.4% — SW 94.64% / 5.35%
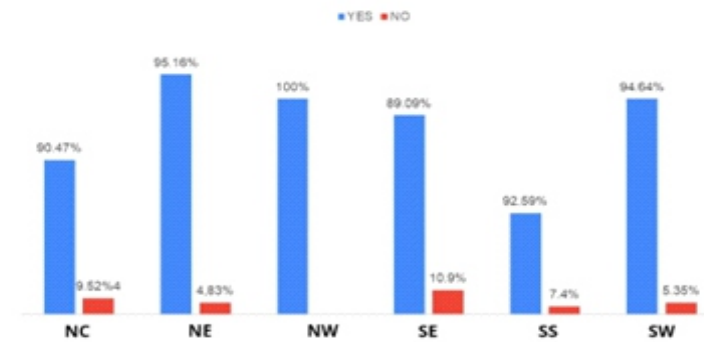
OrderPaper — orderpaper.ng — VOTER
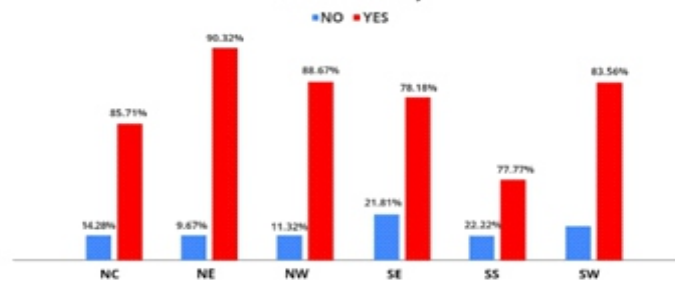
@OrderPaper @OrderPaperToday +234 906 144 4457

With respect to prior knowledge of the legislative candidates, 250 (84%) of the respondents polled affirmed that they had prior knowledge before voting. Figure below gives a geo-political breakdown of voters' knowledge of the candidates before the election.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

Voters Knowledge of National Assembly Election Candidates before Election Day

■ NO ■ YES

NC 14.28% / 85.71% — NE 9.67% / 90.32% — NW 11.32% / 88.67% — SE 21.81% / 78.18% — SS 22.22% / 77.77% — SW 83.56%
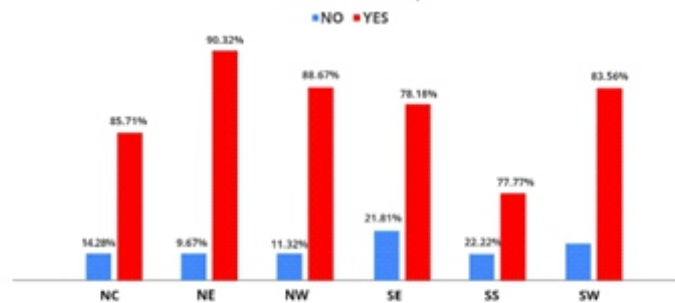
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On the factor of bandwagon voting, the exit poll results indicated that only 88 (32.71%) of the respondents interviewed confirmed that their voting choice was based on the electoral appeal of the candidates. However, 181 (61.35%) said they voted based on factors such as choice of presidential candidate, preferred party and other unnamed random reasons. On the fringe, 26 (5.94%) of the respondents declined responses on their choice of voting. This result, as captured in the illustrations below, clearly confirmed a bandwagon trend in the National Assembly elections.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

Voter Turnout Senate and House of Representatives Elections

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

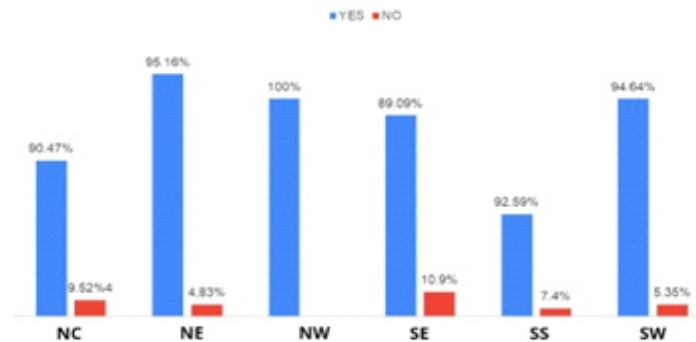Voters Knowledge of National Assembly Election Candidates before Election Day

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

Reasons for Voting Senate & House of Reps Candidates
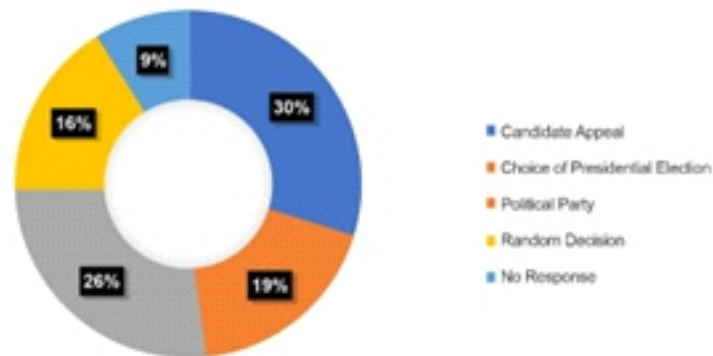
- Candidate Appeal
- Choice of Presidential Election
- Political Party
- Random Decision
- No Response

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This illustration disaggregates reasons provide for respondents on why they voted for legislative candidates.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

Theory of Bandwagon Effect in Choice of Senate and Reps Candidates Nationwide
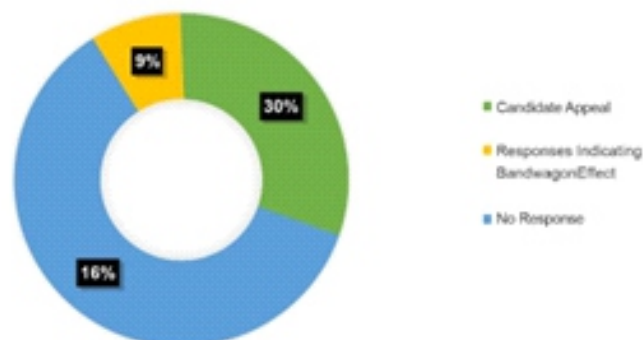
- Candidate Appeal
- Responses Indicating BandwagonEffect
- No Response

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This illustration provides a bird's eye view of the bandwagon effect

- Media Engagement

In the course of the National Assembly election, OrderPaper issued two press statements. The first was a summation of the interim report on accreditation and commencement of voting and was released at about 2.00pm.

The statement conveyed the delay in the commencement of voting in the majority of Polling Units where observers reported from. The statement reported the preliminary finding that in three geopolitical zones, INEC officials arrived late to no less than 60% of polling units observed in the North West (34), North East (32), and South East (20) geopolitical zones; while in the North Central (38) geopolitical zone, electoral officials arrived promptly in more than 50% of the polling units.

The second press statement was released on March 2, 2023 after all field reports had been filed and analysed. The crux of the media release, which was the exit poll deployed immediately at the end of voting at the polling units, showed that only **88 (32.71%)** of respondents who partook in the exercise made their voting choice on the appeal of the candidates while **181 (61.35%)** of the respondents chose their candidates based on the two factors of party affiliation and choice of presidential candidates. 26 (5.94%) persons, however, declined response. See media links in annexure for details of the reportage.

8.   State Assembly Election Day Deployment and Reporting

As was the case with the National Assembly elections, a Situation Room was set up to receive real-time reports from 348 Leg'ACEs deployed to observe elections from no fewer than 280 polling units across various State Constituencies in Nigeria. Unlike the previous election though, the Situation Room for the state elections was a hybrid pattern with some members of the OrderPaper team working from the office and others joined the collaboration via zoom.

The Leg'ACEs observed and reported, in real time, election-day progress as well as results of the legislative elections from various State Constituencies across the country. Data gathered from an exit poll was also used in the State Assembly Election to ascertain the reasons for the voting choice of citizens at the legislative elections. Randomly selected voters were interviewed for the exercise.

Below are summary details of field reports received on election day:

-   Polls Opening:

In line with INEC's guidelines, polls were expected to open at 8:30am across the country. However, from data received from the field, 236 (84.29%) of Polling Units observed opened on time from a sample size of 280 PUs as shown in the bar chart below:

STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

WAS THE POLLING UNIT OPENED ON TIME

No ■ YES

	NC	NE	NW	SE	SS	SW
No	4	7	10	11	7	5
YES	35	31	50	37	27	56

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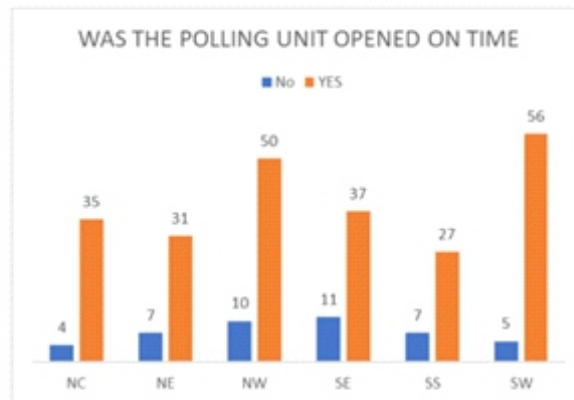
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As seen above, the South-west geo-political zone with **56 (91.8%)** of 61 polling units sampled, had the most polling units that opened on time.

- Presence of Officials – INEC, Parties and Security

Observers reported that majority of Polling Units had significant presence of security personnel across the country. As indicated in the illustration below, sampled Polling Units in all six geo-political zones of the country reported more cases of adequacy of security personnel than inadequacy with the south-west recording the highest compared to others.

STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

WERE THERE ADEQUATE SECURITY PERSONNEL
ON GROUND

NO ■ YES

	NC	NE	NW	SE	SS	SW
NO	10	8	12	18	7	21
YES	29	30	48	30	27	40

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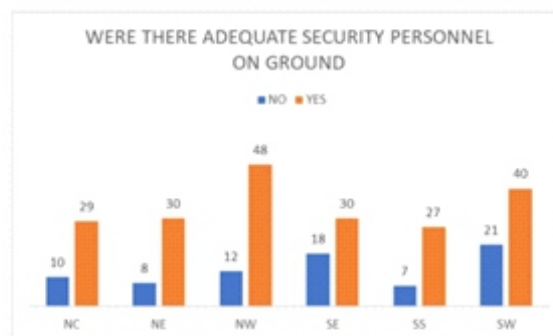
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- Functionality of the BVAS:

Observers reports showed that the BVAS machine were functional in most of the Polling Units sampled nationwide.

- Closing of Polls and Counting

Reports from the field analysed showed that majority of Polling Units sampled closed polls between 2pm to 5:40pm across the country.

-   The Exit Polls
This being the crux of the EOM exercise, the exit polls were carried out to ascertain data from the following:
i.   Voter turnout for the Senate and House of Representatives Elections
ii.   Prior knowledge of the Legislative Candidates
iii.   iii.Factors influencing the choice of candidates (bandwagon versus merit)

i.   Voter turnout for the State Assembly Elections
There was improved participation in the **State Assembly Elections** as **332 (94%)** of the respondents we spoke with voted in both the Senate and House of Representatives Elections.
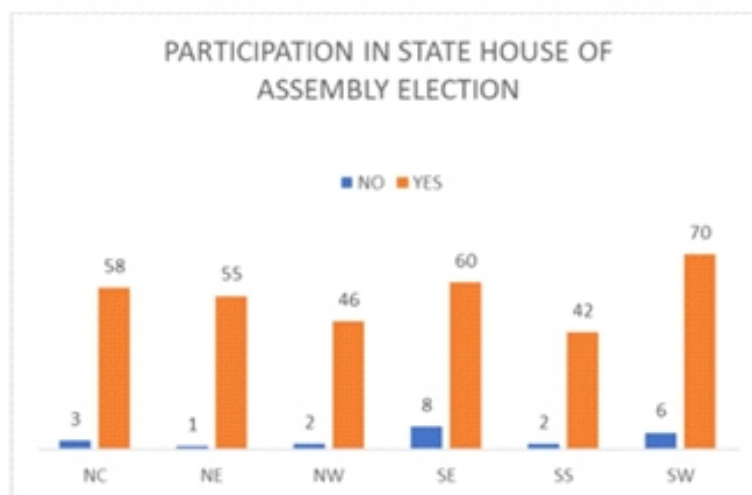
The North-East and North-West geo-political zone recorded the highest participation in the legislative elections; put at **55 (98.21%)** out of **56** respondents and **46 (95.83%)** out of **48** respondents.

ii.   Prior knowledge of the Legislative Candidates
288 (81.58%) of the respondents also noted that they had prior knowledge of the State Assembly Candidates before the voting exercise.

While there was more knowledge of the Candidates prior to the elections in the North-East which recorded **51 (91.07%)** out of **56** respondents, the zone with the least knowledge of National Assembly Candidates seeking to represent the voters was the South-South with **31 (70.45%)** out of **44** respondents having no previous knowledge of the legislative candidates.

STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023
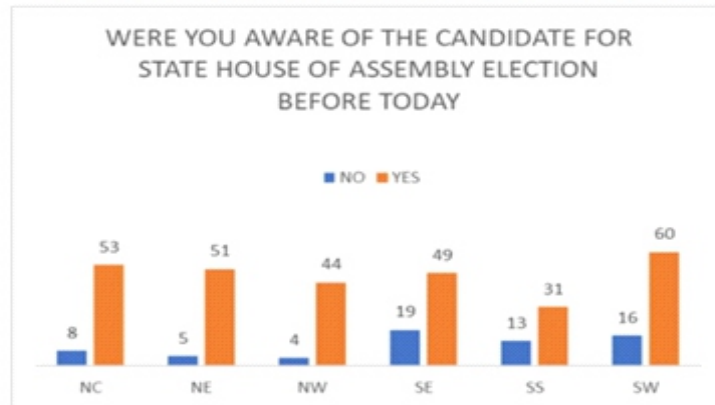
WERE YOU AWARE OF THE CANDIDATE FOR
STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTION
BEFORE TODAY

■ NO   ■ YES

iii.   Factors influencing the choice of candidates (bandwagon versus merit)

Of the 353 respondents interviewed, **132 (37.39%)** noted that their voting choice was based on the appeal of the candidates, while **221 (62.61%)** of the respondents chose their candidates based on other factors such as Presidential candidates - **19 (5.38%),** Governorship Candidate - **14 (3.97%), Party - 121 (34.28%)** and Random choices **- 67 (18.98%)**; indicating a bandwagon trend.

STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023
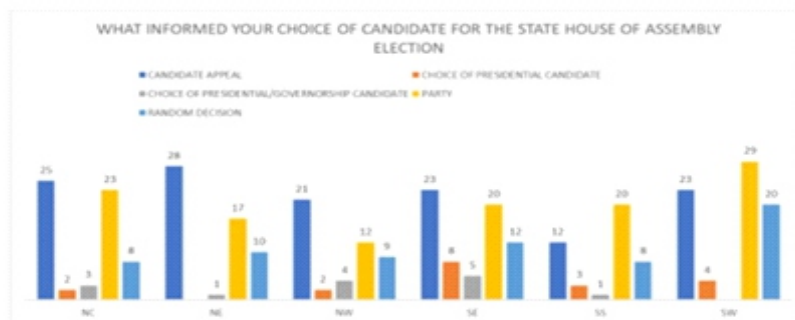
WHAT INFORMED YOUR CHOICE OF CANDIDATE FOR THE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTION

■ CANDIDATE APPEAL   ■ CHOICE OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
■ CHOICE OF PRESIDENTIAL/GOVERNORSHIP CANDIDATE ■ PARTY
■ RANDOM DECISION

This data captures the specific factors influencing choice of candidates and then a cumulation of choices further indicating the effect of bandwagon following as a result of poor knowledge of the Legislature and effective representation, low citizen interest and holding the State Assembly and Governorship elections on the same day.

Media Engagement

To engage the public on the State Assembly elections, OrderPaper issued two press statements. Like the engagement with the federal legislative election, the first media statement, released at about 3.00pm on election day, provided a bird's eye view of the accreditation and polls commencement processes. Unlike the first set of elections, our observers reported a marked improvement in the arrival of INEC officials for the governorship and State Assembly elections at an average time of 9:00 am in many parts of the country. The statement informed of findings of low voter turnout resulting from voter intimidation by thugs, political party agents and voter apathy linked to perceived mismatch of voting and results announced in the February 25 Presidential and National assembly elections. States such as Enugu, Niger, Plateau, Ekiti, Osun, Bayelsa, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Adamawa, Taraba and Jigawa were mentioned as having recorded the lowest voter turnout. Reports of vote buying and selling in states like Cross River, Adamawa, Ogun, Ondo and Imo were highlighted.

The second press statement, released on March 23, focused on the results of the exit poll conducted to determine factors that influenced the choice of voters in casting their ballots. It conveyed summary analyses which showed that no less than 221 (63%) of voters cast their ballot for state legislative candidates based on a bandwagon anchored on political party preferences and the choices made for the governorship positions.

It also stated that while 288 (81.58%) of sampled voters that participated in the State Assembly elections across the country had prior knowledge of the candidates, only 132 (37.39%) of them voted for these candidates based on individual merits. The statement also highlighted that election results were uploaded to INEC's Result Viewing (IREV) portal in 195 (78.63%) of the 248 polling units sampled across the country.

9.   GESI AND OTHER CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

i. Role of the Media & Civil Society Organisations

The media can be judged as largely professional in their reportage of the elections which in many cases were timely. Notably, the issues of voter intimidation and suppression was also widely reported in most sections of the media. There was also evidence of active citizenry on social media as many took to the platforms to inform of and escalate voting processes and procedures. OrderPaper maintains a robust relationship with the media, and this was evident in the coverage and visitation to the Situation Room during the February 25 elections (See appendix).

Some media organisations and personnel also depended solely on OrderPaper for updates on the legislative elections. In the case of the broader civil society, members of the Nigeria Network of Parliamentary Organizations (PMOs) which OrderPaper heads, also interfaced with the situation room, including visitations during the polls. OrderPaper also shared outputs and exchanged information with other SCALE Election Partners. This was despite the fact that there was no formal coordinating mechanism among SCALE election partners throughout the election exercises that could have benefitted new entrants like OrderPaper.

ii. Women & Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

On the involvement of Women and Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) in the EOM exercise, the VOTER Project was mindful of inclusion. Although open access and opportunity was given to all persons in the application process, the final number of female applicants was below expectation. Therefore, from a sample size of 353 volunteers who participated in the EOM exercise for the State House of Assembly elections, 109 of them were female and one PWD. Also, of the 37 Legislative 'ACEs State Coordinators (including the FCT), five are female, while one is a PWD.

The Project took into cognisance the number of females and PWDs involved in the exercise.

Further from our observation, adequate provision was made during the National Assembly elections, for assistive voting for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in **264 (72.92%)** of the **362** PUs sampled. This was mostly the case in **39 (81.13%)** of the **48** PUs observed in the North Central as shown in the bar chart below:

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

Adequate Provision in Assistive Voting for PWDs

■ YES ■ NO
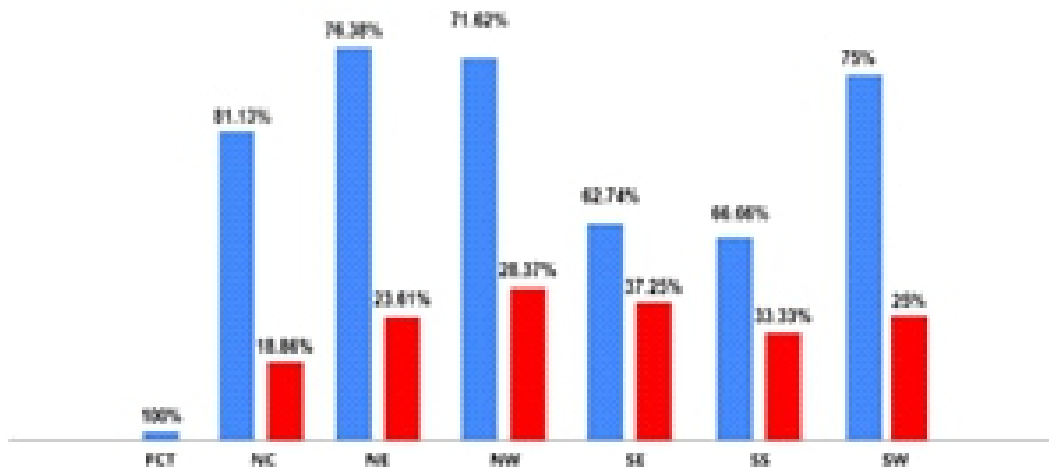
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A similar trend was observed during the governorship/state assembly elections.

iii. Security

From the assessment of observers deployed to the field in the FCT and across the country, a majority of polling units had significant presence of security personnel.

10. CONCLUSION: SUCCESSES, LESSONS LEARNT, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

With the Presidential and National Assembly elections held on February 25, much of the anxiety which heralded the polls subsided. However, controversies over the results following reports of disenfranchisement, voter intimidation and suppression as well as non-usage of the INEC's Result Viewing Portal (IREV) have continued into litigation phases. For the State Assembly Elections held on March 18, very little controversy has arisen from the non-usage of the IREV. However, reports of low voter turnout were rife in states such as Enugu, Niger, Plateau, Ekiti, Osun, Bayelsa, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Adamawa, Taraba and Jigawa. There were also reports of vote buying and selling in states like Cross River, Adamawa, Ogun, Ondo and Imo where some cases of systematic vote buying were recorded. Thuggery and violent intimidation to prevent voters from coming to cast their vote in some areas in Lagos, Oyo, Nassarawa, and Imo, among other states were also recorded. Importantly, INEC was able to do better in the area of early deployment to the polling units. It is important to state that given the numerous upsets that took place in the Presidential and National Assembly elections, some political actors appeared to have changed their strategy towards securing victory at the Governorship and State Assembly elections which seriously impacted the credibility of the elections.

Key Successes

The successful observation of and comprehensive reporting on the 2023 general election as represented in this document is the first of its kind by OrderPaper Advocacy Initiative. This is the most important key success story because the exercise was conducted without prior experience. That we were able to deploy over 400 citizen observers across 360 federal constituencies of Nigeria; coordinate field activities from a central situation room in Abuja; and process data for consumption by the media and the general public both during the elections and its immediate aftermath, is a thing of pride to the OrderPaper team and its country-wide community of Leg'ACEs. Being a massive exercise, a successful delivery of the observation of the legislative elections without any insurmountable challenge is notable in terms of project management. Members of the team displayed great ability to learn on the job while coordinating a set of citizen observers who received training from OrderPaper as well. The goal of providing real-time updates from various polling units across the country was achieved optimally. This was aided by an effective data collection process that employed the most basic, simplest and largely effective form of data collection from the field observers - use of WhatsApp and Google Forms. The accompanying data were also properly analysed by the OrderPaper team which deployed an effective chain of communication for seamless data exchange between the field and the situation room. It is also worth noting that there was no record of any incidence of violence or harassment meted out on our observers or field reporters while the election observation exercise lasted. Another important point is the robust media reportage of OrderPaper's election observation exercise by the national print media, especially. This was in addition to real-time updates published by OrderPaper on its social media handles and website subsequently. Yet another important success story of the project is in the area of training. The capacity building exercise went a long way in preparing our volunteers ahead of time for the task. This cannot be overemphasised as it allowed the citizen observers to properly familiarise with the reporting template ahead of activity.

Success Story Case Studies

OrderPaper would like to highlight some notable feedback from our community of Leg'ACEs on their participation in the 2023 election observation exercise. This centres around how those participating for the first time felt fulfilled to have discharged their civic responsibilities as active citizens. Some spoke of how they were empowered in the capacity-building provided prior to deployment; and how they subsequently benefitted from the empowerment to not also share updates from the field but also provided insights to peers on the need to be active citizens in communities. One of the Leg'ACEs from Plateau State reported that the experience empowered him to participate as an active citizen in the electioneering process for the first time. Another from Lagos State shared his excitement of being invited by a top-rated Abuja-based Think-tank to share his election observations experience. He firmly credited OrderPaper for the opportunity to participate in the election observation exercise. Some of these individual stories are shared as annexures to this report.

Lessons Learnt

The following are key lessons OrderPaper learnt in delivering the election observation exercise:

1. Planning: Early planning should also be considered for subsequent projects with clear objectives for proper implementation stated. Role allocation prior to the eventual exercise should also be encouraged to give each team member a sense of responsibility and ownership.

2. Scope of Project: The scope of the project was largely underestimated. The team unanimously agreed that many factors were tracked at the same time resulting in fast-paced delivery which could have caused exhaustion while tasks were ongoing.

3. Data Collection Tools: Application of appropriate data collection tools is important. The use of technology applications to reduce human error. There should be proper indexing (location) on the questionnaire form in subsequent election observation projects.

4. Data Analysis Training: Data analysis skills played a huge role in the monitoring process. There should be training on data analyses for the team on subsequent occasions for proper data presentation.

5. Partnership with data analysts is also highly recommended with regards to accurately distilling data sets received to reflect all possible areas captured and not just around the framework of the exercise for future referencing.

6. Live Reports: Graphic representation of live reports can be a lot better subsequently.

    More support for the social media team especially in exercises such as reporting live feeds to expand our reach and meet up with spontaneous reports trickling in per time.

7. Movement and Security: Navigating through the numerous security checkpoints was a major challenge during the National Assembly and Presidential elections in the Federal Capital Territory.

8. Exit Polls: The interview revealed that a lot of voters especially in Bauchi and Plateau have no idea of the NASS candidates and a good number of respondents who are previous voters confirmed that they have been electing candidates on the basis of party affiliation. Most respondents advocated for a split of the executive and legislative elections.

Recommendation

OrderPaper's observation of the 2023 legislative elections is an eye-opener to the organization. It has also helped to validate certain assumptions around voter behaviour while offering insights into the election management processes and procedures within the context of the Electoral Act, 2022. Presented below are recommendations for policy makers, the election management body, and citizens participating in future elections in Nigeria.

Policy Makers

As has been stated earlier, a key output of the election observation exercise by OrderPaper is the validation of the bandwagon effect in voting when elections for executive and legislative positions are conducted same day. In other words, the practice of holding elections for legislative and executive positions is most likely to result in choosing lawmakers along the lines of a bandwagon trend instead of adequate knowledge of the capacity, competence and character of those seeking to be legislators. This is as a result of the predominant attention that the presidential candidates, their political parties and the process itself generates from the media, local and international observers, as well as other stakeholders. This trickles down to the voters who are often influenced to switch loyalties in line with the presidential election, hence taking sides with the political party that wins the presidency at the federal level. Consequently, this culture often leads to the emergence of winners who largely did not win on their own personal strengths and merits. Given this scenario, OrderPaper therefore recommends the following to policy makers in the executive, national assembly and the election management body:

> The National Assembly revisits the order and sequence of election in a way that executive and legislative polls hold on separate dates. This can be done by amending the electoral law
>
> The election management body should deploy its administrative leverage to address scheduling to hold elections on separate days for executive and legislative elections.
>
> Public entities, like the National Orientation Agency (NOA), charged with responsibilities for national values and public sensitization, should pay attention to the increasing public awareness and education on the importance and roles of the legislature in a democracy.

The Elections Management Body

With specific regards to the areas of this Observation Report relating to the election management body, OrderPaper makes the following recommendations:

> INEC is requested to sort out logistics issues ahead of time to avert late arrival of officials to Polling Units in subsequent elections. This can be done by making a holistic review of the 2023 elections, identify loopholes and implement solutions in subsequent exercises.
>
> INEC should do well to harness the gains of electronic transmission of results provisioned in the 2022 Electoral Act by averting possible technical glitches in the functioning of the BVAS and IREV
>
> INEC should review its liaison with security agencies to work out mechanisms that guard against voter intimidation, vote-buying and thuggery

INEC should speedily ensure the prosecution of offenders of the electoral law and its election guidelines to serve as deterrent in future elections

Media and Civil Society

While the media and civil society did perform creditably well in the conduct of the 2023 general elections, the following recommendations are however still directed at these third sector actors:

Continuous voter education on the importance of representation and service delivery on legislative mandates.

The media should prioritise reportage of lawmakers' performance and legislative candidates in their programme schedules to enable the legislature to get the deserved attention during electioneering.

Deliberate efforts should be made to circulate and scrutinise the campaign promises of legislative candidates, including the organisation of town halls and debates

Civil society needs to pay vigorous attention to the above advocacies

Appendix

Links to some media reportage of OrderPaper election observation

https://veracitydesk.com.ng/2023/03/04/press-statement-orderpaper-election-observation-confirms-bandwagon-effect-on-the-national-assembly-polls/

https://orderpaper.ng/new/2023/03/23/state-assembly-polls-63-of-nigerians-voted-on-basis-of-bandwagon-trend/

https://orderpaper.ng/new/2023/03/06/only-33-of-nigerians-voted-nass-candidates-on-individual-merit-orderpaper/

https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/03/voting-during-state-assembly-polls-characterized-by-bandwagon-trend-orderpaper/

https://leadership.ng/guber-state-assembly-polls-characterised-by-bandwagon-trend-report/

https://dailytimesng.com/presidential-nass-elections-orderpaper-frowns-at-bandwagon-effect/

https://newsdiaryonline.com/orderpaper-election-observation-confirms-bandwagon-effect-on-national-assembly-polls/

https://www.thecable.ng/61-of-nigerians-voted-based-on-party-platform-in-presidential-polls

Personal Experiences of Leg'ACEs

It was a great experience to be part of the Election Observer and Monitoring (EOM) team of OrderPaper advocacy initiative. This experience has empowered me as a citizen to participate as an active citizen in the electioneering process of the Nation. On the course of the observation duty, it was quite surprising to notice so many citizens not aware of candidates contesting for the National assembly positions. Many citizens are only concerned about the Presidential candidates and put less concern on the National Assembly elections. As a citizen I will recommend for more advocacy and citizen enlightenment on the importance of the national assembly on nation building. Also elections of executive should be done on separate days from that of the legislature. Presidential and governorship same day while National and state assembly same day.

Joseph Rotimi

LegÁCE from Plateau State

Regarding my perception while observing the elections, I would say that the 2023 general elections were good but with more room for adjustments.

Also, the EOM exercise was easy and timely. Another thing that also stood out for me was the cooperation in making sure due process was followed during the election. I also learnt that one can make an impact as an observer from behind the scenes.

Hunokwaipwa Haziel Tonsan,

Leg'ACE, Demsa/Lamurde/Numan Federal Constituency, Adamawa State

In my opinion, the 2023 general elections were free and fair but the transmission of results was not.

This is because I witnessed incidents where political parties collected the account numbers of INEC adhoc staff, though voters stopped the agents from such acts. Furthermore, I would like to encourage OrderPaper to continue the good work they are doing by educating Nigerians to know that their votes are their right and it counts!

Samaila Ayuba Laslimbo

Leg'ACE, Dass/Tafawa-Balewa/Bogoro Federal Constituency, Bauchi State

I would say that the 2023 general elections were free and fair but not credible. Some examples I would cite regarding the lack of credibility is that INEC Officials allowed under-aged children to vote at polling units. Also, the elections were marred with low voter turnout.

With regards to the 10th National Assembly, I would urge that they should make a law that will allow the National Assembly (Senators and House of Reps) elections to be slated for a different date aside the Presidential election to avert the bandwagon effect.

Jonathan Gideon

Leg'ACE, Bogoro/Dass and Tafawa Balewa Federal Constituency, Dass, Bauchi State.

Generally the 2023 elections were free and fair and INEC officials arrived on time at the polling unit I observed. Additionally, I would recommend that the EOM activity should be sustained as it is a way of deepening democracy.

Stephen Peter Okangla

Leg'ACE, Jere Federal Constituency, Borno state'

The 2023 general elections for me was the first time "having eyes on the legislative arm" cut across the grassroots level. This has been a great shift because you find out that most electorates are not aware of who represents them and the importance of the Legislative arm.

Sadly, during the elections, I witnessed party officials trying to hijack the system. But I am hopeful that with more enlightenment, we can attain the accountability that is very much needed in the system.

Obim Stanley

Leg'ACE, Ikom/Boki Federal Constituency, Cross River State.

For me, the 2023 general elections process showed that democracy is still striving in Africa. While there were so many irregularities generally, this was mitigated by the voters who wanted their votes to count.

I observed that these voters were on the lookout for anything that could truncate the will of the people. Also, the EOM exercise was a good step in the right direction being that the data will be drawn nationally. This will be something Nigerians should look out for as it could be a benchmark for reforms to be able to achieve the free and fair terminology as it regards democracy.

However, I observed that while voters came out to exercise their franchise "jealously," they voted based on popular opinions without knowing the candidates and their capabilities.

Finally, I would like to encourage OrderPaper to keep up with the engagement and see how to harness reports from surveys to help electorates make better decisions as to (effective legislative) candidates.

Komomoh Ofem

Abi/Yakurr Federal Constituency, Cross River State

I would say that the 2023 general elections were fair while some aspects were not. This is because the election process was distorted by thugs, but (the situation) was controlled by the Nigeria Police Force.

Also, the use of BVAS machines during the election played a huge role in the elections.

Laitu Sulieman

Leg'ACE, Gombe/Kwami/Funkaye Federal Constituency, Gombe State.

I observed that the 2023 general elections were better than any other election I have ever observed. In my polling unit, the elections were free and fair, in terms of orderliness, voter turnout, guarding of votes, coordination etc.
While carrying out the exit interview, I found out that a lot of people who came out to vote, did so because they had their preferred candidate.

Seeing the high voter turnout and voters guarding their votes really stood out for me and the use of BVAS for the elections was also a new thing I observed.

I would urge OrderPaper to mobilise EOMs as at when due for ease of the exercise.

Tobele Joy O.

Leg'ACE, Sapele/Okpe/Uvwie Federal Constituency, Delta State.

During my observation of the 2023 general elections I witnessed voter apathy, although it was generally peaceful. The voter turnout was very low due to the fact that the masses have lost faith in INEC.

In my polling unit, there was an absence of INEC and security agents on the day of Presidential/National Assembly elections which made them postpone the election to the next day (Sunday February 26, 2023). However, this was not formally communicated and it led to several voters not turning out to vote their choice of candidate.

Going forward, my advice is that the INEC should make adequate preparations before every election and do the right thing by transmitting results in real time.

On the part of OrderPaper I would recommend that every EOM should be provided with adequate identification and mobilisation should also be considered. Thank you.

Chukwunwike Cornelius Odagwe

Leg'ACE, Warri North/Warri South Federal Constituency, Delta State

In my opinion the 2023 general elections were free and fair. What stood out for me was the unity and cordial relationship of voters during the election.

Finally, I would like to appreciate OrderPaper for the opportunity to participate in the election as an observer. I particularly have learnt a lot, God bless OrderPaper for all they do.

Jamila Adamu

Leg'ACE, Gombe North/Balanga/Billiri Federal Constituency, Gombe State.

The 2023 general elections exercise was not measurable to the effort and work done by various civil society organisations and citizens full participation, because I witnessed a process that was not transparent and accountable to Nigerians on expected outcome of the elections.

Although in my polling unit, there was coordination and sanity due to the citizens participation in securing a credible electioneering process free from violence.

Also, the turnout of voters at my polling station was huge and that stood out for me. I think we still have a lot of work to be done in the electioneering process in competency, transparency, accountability, and justice in the system to ensure a free and fair elections in the years to come. Finally, OrderPaper did an excellent job before, during, and after the elections. My gratitude to the Think Tank Organization on the accountability, and transparency in Leadership process, keep up the good work.

Effiong Innocent

Leg'ACE, Bwari Federal Constituency, Abuja

For me, the 2023 general elections were nothing to write home about. The fight between Dino Melaye and INEC was rather interesting as it highlighted this.

Then the EOM experience exposed me to the politics of Nigeria, and that the masses' choice is meaningless in the Nigerian elections.

Lastly, I commended OrderPaper and ask them to keep up the good work, as the organisation has opened the eyes of the masses to engage and hold to account their National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) members.

Alozie Francis Uchenna

Leg'ACE Ohaji-Egbema/Oguta/Oru-West Federal Constituency, Imo State.

Regarding my perception while observing the elections, I would say that the 2023 general elections were free and fair. It was a great opportunity to observe the electoral process, thank you OrderPaper.

Nafisat Aliyu Isah

Leg'ACE, Kaduna North Federal Constituency, Kaduna State.

During the elections, I observed that there was more than one agent per party, intimidations, pressures, vote buying, INEC staff were not well trained, more illiterate party agents.

Also, some of the INEC Adhoc staff at my polling unit worked for a particular political party, allowing them to compromise the electoral process and threaten voters for not voting for a particular party. Furthermore, the BVAS malfunctioned and failed to accredit some voters. One particular party printed another party's agent tag to increase the number of their agents at my polling unit.

I suggest that OrderPaper should organise physical meetings at the states level to capture more of what happened during the election and prepare a document that would be submitted to INEC for adjustment in the next election.

Abubakar Ismail Dturawa

Leg'ACE, Dala Federal Constituency, Kano State.

Personally, the 2023 general elections were conducted peacefully but there were mistakes especially on 25/2/2023 National Assembly elections.

There was a lack of proper and adequate security in most places. However, people cast their votes regardless of the money or any material by party agents.
I really appreciate OrderPaper for the opportunity given to me to work with them and gain experience.

Muhammad Abubakar Liba

Leg'ACE, Maiyama/Koko/Besse Federal Constituency, Kebbi State.

I observed that the elections were free and fair. In my constituency/polling unit, there was no disruption of any sort. Overall, I believe Nigeria has taken a new dimension in the electioneering process as people made sure that their votes were counted. There were no incidents as the

BVAs machines worked efficiently well.

The EOM exercise was awesome and OrderPaper was able to get a vehement result as and when due with the follow up. The reportage was excellent with the release of pictures and videos. I got an experience of being a first hand observer.

Moving forward, OrderPaper should provide means of identification to avoid harassment from security personnel.

Afeez Abdulkareem

Leg'ACE, Kwara Central Ilorin East/Ilorin South Federal Constituency, Kwara State

As an OrderPaper observer I would say the elections were peaceful to some extent, but not without suppression of voters in some polling units. Not letting the will of the individual prevail is the major characteristic feature in my polling unit.

Even with peoples' persistence, election officials were still used to manipulate the elections. There were changes made to the results at the collation centre as a result of the down time of the IREV site (Presidential /National Assembly elections basically).

Electioneering process should not be seen as a do or die affair, more sensitisation and voter education should be carried out. Also, the bandwagon effect is seen to cut across both the Presidential/National Assembly and Gubernatorial election/State House of Assembly elections.

More advocacy should be carried out to ensure that electorates understand the process, know who they are voting into office and possibly set aside different dates for each election.

Sylvester Adjekuko

Leg'ACE, Apapa 1 Federal Constituency, Lagos State.

For the 2023 election, I saw a lot of people who took their time to come out and vote but a large percentage of that audience did not know the competencies or campaign promises of the different candidates outside the Presidential candidates.

What stood out for me during observation was the way and manner that people coordinated themselves at the six polling units that I visited during the elections.

I learnt from the incidence of violence that occurred during the election in the country that the election is not worth your life, because your death wouldn't make any significant change nor will it influence the election results.
Also, the EOM exercise is a good initiative for accountability from OrderPaper, they should keep it up.

Benjamin Adekoya

Leg'ACE, Alimosho Federal Constituency, Lagos state.

During the State House of Assembly election, the Karu Local Government Area Chairman came to my polling unit and was threatening voters saying if they vote for APC or not, the party would win the election. He also told the voters present that they were just wasting their time.

This year's election had mass participation, but the votes did not count, especially in Nasarawa State, particularly my polling unit where the incumbent Governor was forced on the electorate.

The Electoral Act that was signed into law was a scam. I suggest that the EOM result sheets sent by the observers should be published.

Rabo Michael

Leg'ACE, Karu/Gitata Federal Constituency, Nasarawa State.

For me, the 2023 elections were a child's play. The March 18 election was very much unimaginable, the elections started as early as 8am.

I liked the use of Google forms for data collection and the EOM exercise was an awesome experience for me.

I would recommend that OrderPaper should also make their results from the field available to the public for documentation. We need wider coverage!

Akwe Samuel Victor

Doma/Keana/Awe Federal Constituency, Nasarawa State.

I would say that the 2023 elections was a great moment for me, observing, and monitoring it was peaceful, and the process shows more improvements can be made in years to come.

The timing and the accuracy of INEC and their officials stood out for me, they came on time at every unit I monitored, and set up so quickly, the address was also on point. It shows that we are improving as a nation.

For me, the EOM served as a means of learning. It taught me more on the electoral process, and opened my eyes to the voters' rights. Let me say I've never been this involved in an electoral process unlike previous years.

I really appreciate the privilege to work with OrderPaper during the election, but I will advise that for subsequent times, it will be good if valid means of identification can be provided either by the organisation or by the INEC. Thanks.

Oginni Olawale Oluwatosin

Olorunda/Osun Central Federal Constituency, Osun State.
Generally, for me, the perception is that the vote of Nigerians really counted in most areas aside from some cases of rigging in some areas. INEC officials and election materials arrived very late in my Constituency/polling unit.

The EOM exercise was a wonderful experience because I learnt a lot and I'm better equipped and more enlightened about the electoral processes.

I must say that OrderPaper is doing a good job about educating Nigerians on the legislative processes and how to engage the lawmakers to make better laws and represent Nigerians properly.

Victor Adi

Leg'ACE Donga, Takum, Ussa Federal Constituency, Taraba State.

Well, the 2023 elections were successful, but there were issues of vote buying, and there was a higher turnout of women during the elections than the turnout of men. There was an issue of

thuggery during the election but the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) deployed his officers to control the issue.

The lessons I learnt from the EOM exercise was that people actually need more awareness on legislative elections, as people buy trust and not money or any material things. As Leg'ACEs, with the awareness we raised, we made a huge difference.

I really enjoy working with OrderPaper, and wish to continue engaging with the organisation.

Abdullahi Lawali

Leg'ACE Bungudu/Maru Federal Constituency, Zamfara State.

I would like to say that when I observed the 2023 general election under this great organisation, I can say this election has defined credible elections since the inception of democracy in Nigeria.

Major incidents that happened during the elections were; one party agent embarrassed the INEC officials (women) and another polling unit a party agent fought with a security officer.

The lessons I learned in this election are; women are at the top of who will be the winner (any party women are attracted to will win because they are the majority) majority of the men are INEC officials, party officials and security officers. But the majority of the voters who casted their vote were women.

My advice to OrderPaper is:

1. The organisation can try to express our need to the authority that, up till now, some voters are considering the party not the candidate.

2. Some voters don't differentiate the ballot papers for the different elections Presidential/National Assembly and Governorship/State House of Assembly. So, I appeal to the concerned authority to do the needful regarding this.

Abubakar Suleiman Shinkafi
Leg'ACE, Shinkafi/Zurmi Federal Constituency, Zamfara State.

BY
ORDERPAPER ADVOCACY INITIATIVE (OAI)
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