SURVEY ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF INEC
(POST-2015 NIGERIA GENERAL ELECTION)
SURVEY ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF INEC (POST-2015 NIGERIA GENERAL ELECTION)
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The 2015 Nigeria general election was widely acclaimed as successful by observers - national and international. For the first time in its history an opposition political party won an election conducted under an incumbent ruling party. Giving an indication that Nigeria’s politics had now come of age.

The 2015 general election was conducted amidst some worries about INEC’s preparedness especially in the light of huge numbers of uncollected Permanent Voters Cards that was to be used in voting. The incumbent government of President Jonathan had cited uncollected PVCs as grounds for advising INEC to postpone the elections from its initial date of 14th February 2015 for six weeks.

This was in addition to the security situation in the North-East that it advanced as a major threat to the conduct of the election. The leadership of INEC in place during the 2015 general election added to boost its credibility and gave Nigerians the assurance that it could manage the successful conduct of the election.

While there were complaints about the general elections, the consensus nationwide and amongst national and international observers was that the general election attained the international acceptable threshold of “free, fair and credible elections”.

At the close of the 2015 general election however, the number of National Commissioners in
INEC depleted dramatically to the point that the remained only two National Commissioners. This raised concern that the Commission was inadequately set-up to manage the conduct of off-cycle elections including governorship and legislative elections that arose, especially as the Commission had to deal with 157 elections between the period September 2015 and March 2017 including the governorship elections in Kogi, Bayelsa, Edo, Ondo States as well as Legislative Elections in Rivers State and across the country.

There was widespread criticism of INEC because of the vacancies in National Commissioner positions as well as vacancies in Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) positions in several States. Indeed, vacancies in REC positions rose to 33 out of the 36 States at the height of these vacancies. In the light of changes in the INEC leadership, vacancies in National Commissioner and REC positions, as well as what appeared to be a high number of what was described as “inconclusive elections” public perception of INEC came into play.

To gauge what citizens think of INEC especially after the successful conduct of the 2015 general election, the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room decided to commission a public opinion survey of INEC’s performance in the administration of elections and quality of elections post the 2015 general election.

This survey is conducted with a view to understanding what citizens think of its election umpire and to assist the Commission address perception questions that may impinge on its ability to gain citizens support for its work. It will also help observer and civic groups to identify advocacy points as they seek to work in support of an independent and credible election umpire.
The survey was carried out by NOIPolls (on behalf of the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre) between the period of April 3 – April 12, 2017 to make an independent, non-partisan and comparative assessment of the performance of INEC in the conduct of elections in Nigeria.

The target areas for the survey were BAYELSA, EDO, ONDO, KOGI AND RIVERS STATES. The basis for picking the above mentioned States was that INEC had recently conducted “off-cycle” Governorship elections as well as Legislative Re-run elections in those states after the 2015 general elections. Respondents residing in those states would be able to give a better comparative opinion of the conduct and performance of INEC in the two different elections.

A total of 2,539 respondents were interviewed during this survey. Two sets of questionnaires were administered:

1. Questionnaire for the General Public (2,506 respondents); and
2. Questionnaire for Key Informants who have knowledge of election process and have observed elections (33 respondents).

The target population was persons aged 18 and older, residents of the selected States who have their PVCs and participated in both the 2015 general election and the off-cycle election conducted in their states.
Survey State quotas were assigned to each State and it was ensured that every Senatorial district was proportionately represented in the sample.

The Survey was conducted by telephone interviews in the five major Nigerian languages (English, Pidgin English, Yoruba, Hausa & Igbo). Post-stratification gender and senatorial weights were constructed and applied to the data to make it more representative of the population, allow for more accurate population totals of estimates and reduce non-response bias. The weights assigned were in proportion to the 2006 Nigerian population figures.

Prior to the fielding of the opinion poll a pilot poll was conducted of 100 completed interviews across the survey states. Issues identified during this field test were rectified prior to fielding the survey. These interviews were not incorporated into the final data set.

The margin of error for the survey is +/-1.96% at the mid-range with a confidence level of 95%. 

METHODOLOGY
The main objective of the survey is to measure public perception of the Independent National Electoral Commission’s (INEC) performance and quality of elections conducted after the 2015 general election.

The impact indicators evaluated are:

1. The percentage of Nigerians who rate INEC’s management of the electoral process as “good”; and
2. The percentage of Nigerians who believe that the quality of elections have improved since 2015.

The survey is also aimed at:

- Conducting a comprehensive analysis of the electoral process and providing an impartial and informed assessment of elections to strengthen the confidence of voters to participate freely;
- Improving the capacity of citizens groups to address the gaps and advocate for transparency and accountability in the electoral process; and
- Providing a basis for monitoring progress and for assessing results and impact.
KEY FINDINGS FROM GENERAL PUBLIC INTERVIEWS
Voters’ Participation

• The opinion poll revealed that over 75 percent of respondents affirmed that they voted during the 2015 general election and the Governorship elections in their respective states.

• Ondo state recorded the highest voter turnout compared to other states surveyed; 79 percent for 2015 general elections and 76 percent for the governorship election.

• Voters attested to almost a hitch free voting process during the elections as most of the respondents (74 percent) disclosed that they did not encounter any difficulty. However, card reader malfunction (9 percent), Insecurity (4 percent) & election fraud (5 percent) were reported by some voters.

• Adults aged between 36 and 60 years seemed to have the highest level of participation in both elections; especially in turnout and spotting of incidents of election fraud. This may be due to their experience, possibly through participation in previous elections.
Perception on INEC’s Performance

- 35 percent of the respondents across the States surveyed, especially in Edo (62 percent) and Bayelsa (41 percent) reported incidents of vote buying at their respective polling units during the last Governorship election in their States.

- Over 6 in 10 respondents who voted in both the 2015 general election and the Governorship election rated INEC positively in the accreditation/voting process and responsiveness of INEC officials to voters.

- INEC generally received the best performance rating for the conduct of Ondo (4 points) and Kogi (3.8 points) States Governorship elections over other States surveyed.

- 61% of respondents rated INEC’s performance in the surveyed States as good.

- 84% of Nigerians rated INEC’s management of the electoral process as good.

Level of Contact with INEC

- Finally, the results revealed very little contact between the respondents and INEC, as 96 percent confirmed that they have never accessed the Commission’s website.

- However, only 4 percent of respondents affirmed that they had accessed INEC’s website. Interestingly, of the 4 percent, 27 percent accessed the website to be able to get information on INEC activities, while 20 percent were searching for job vacancies. 17 percent those who accessed the website to check election results.

- In addition, most of those who had accessed INEC’s website affirmed that they had a satisfactory experience (65 percent).
RESULTS FROM GENERAL PUBLIC INTERVIEWS
DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION
SURVEY ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF INEC (POST-2015 NIGERIA GENERAL ELECTION)

Weighted Socio - Demographic of Respondents (N=2506)

**GENDER**
- Male: 52%
- Female: 49%

**AGE-GROUP**
- 18-35: 46%
- 36-60: 49%
- 61+: 5%

**SURVEY STATES**
- Rivers: 32
- Edo: 23
- Ondo: 20
- Kogi: 17
- Bayelsa: 8

**OCCUPATION**
- Self-Employed Trader: 16
- Government worker/Civil Servant: 11
- Professional Worker: 10
- Business Man/Woman: 9
- Unemployed Youth/Adult: 8
- Student: 5
- Artisan: 4
- Religious Leader/Missionary: 3
- Farmer/Agric Worker: 2
- Youth Corp Member: 2
- Others: 1
VOTERS’ PARTICIPATION
Findings revealed that 75 percent of the respondents in the surveyed states voted during the 2015 general election with Bayelsa (79 percent) and Ondo (79 percent) states having the highest voter turnout.
Did you vote in the last Governorship election in your State? Disaggregated by (Gender, State and Age-group)

70 percent of the respondents from the surveyed states voted during the Governorship elections in their states. Highest voter turnout were seen in Ondo (76 percent) and Edo (75 percent) states with senior citizens taking the lead when analysis by age is considered.
What difficulty did you face during the last election?

The result showed that while majority of the residents in the states surveyed claimed not to have encountered any difficulty; card reader malfunction (9 percent), Insecurity/violence (5 percent) and election fraud (4 percent) were reported by some voters.
What difficulty did you face during the last election?  
(Disaggregated by Gender)

*Others: Ballot Box theft, Disorderliness, Time was ting by INEC Official

From the Survey, women faced less difficulties/challenges during the last election, with more than 83% of female respondents reporting no difficulty/challenge.
What difficulty did you face during the last election? (Disaggregated by State)

Bayelsa & Rivers states had the highest percentage (18% & 12% respectively) of persons who complained about card reader difficulties. Election fraud was mainly reported in Edo State (13%).
What difficulty did you face during the last election? (Disaggregated by Age-Group)

More persons above the age of 60 (about 10%) complained about Election fraud (Vote Buying) than any other age category.

Others: Ballot Box theft, Disorderliness, Time wasting by INEC Official
What was your main reason for not voting in the last Governorship election in your state?

- I was not around: 29%
- No particular reason: 14%
- Not feeling fine: 10%
- Scared of Violence: 9%
- I was an INEC Official: 7%
- No Credible/Competent Candidate: 5%
- No Polling unit within my Locality: 5%
- Busy: 4%
- Missing PVC: 3%
- Because of the Tension on ground: 3%
- My vote would not count: 3%
- Lack of confidence in INEC: 2%
- Yet to receive/collect PVC: 1%
- I am a Security Personnel: 1%
- Others: 4%

About 3 in 10 (29 percent) of the respondents, who did not vote, reported that they could not vote because they were not at their place of registration when the election took place.
PERCEPTION OF INEC’S PERFORMANCE
How would you rate the general performance of INEC in your area considering the accreditation/voting process and the responsiveness of INEC officials to voters?

*On a scale of 1–5, where 1 = Very poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Fair, 4 = Good, and 5 = Very good, the closer the average score to 5, the better the rating of the general performance of INEC.*

Respondents seemed to have similar perception of INEC for both elections in view; majority gave INEC positive ratings in both the 2015 general elections (64 percent) and the governorship election in their states (61 percent).
In your opinion, how would you rate the general performance of INEC in your area considering the accreditation/ voting process and the responsiveness of INEC officials to voters…?

(Disaggregated by Gender, State and Age-Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Rivers</th>
<th>Edo</th>
<th>Bayelsa</th>
<th>Ondo</th>
<th>Kogi</th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-60</th>
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<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9%</td>
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<td><strong>During the last Governorship election in your State?</strong></td>
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<td>Very good</td>
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*On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = Very poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Fair, 4 = Good, and 5 = Very good, the closer the average score to 5, the better the rating of the general performance of INEC.

INEC received the best performance rating for the conduct of the Governorship elections in Ondo (4 points) and Kogi (3.8 points) states compared with other states surveyed.
Most respondents acknowledged the use of INEC voters’ list (96 percent), while testifying to receiving an explanation of voting procedures from INEC officials during the elections in view.
In your opinion, how would you rate the general performance of INEC in your area considering the accreditation/voting process and the responsiveness of INEC officials to voters…? (Disaggregated by Gender, State and Age-Group)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Did INEC official explain the voting process/procedure to the people before the voting commenced during the 2015 election?</td>
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<td>Do you recall seeing or reading any voting/election related materials from INEC during the last election?</td>
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<td>69%</td>
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</table>

The highest level of timeliness by INEC officials was recorded in Ondo state (95 percent).
Incidents of Vote Buying

Were there incidents of Vote buying at your Polling Unit during the last Gov. Election in your State?

- Yes: 35%
- No: 65%

Were the INEC Officials aware of the Vote buying that occurred at the Polling Unit?*

- Yes: 45%
- No: 55%

*Only persons who responded "Yes" to noticing vote buying at their Polling Units responded to this question.

35 percent of the respondents from the surveyed states reported incidents of vote buying at their respective polling units during the last Governorship election in their states. Also, 55 percent of these respondents claimed that INEC officials were aware of the incidents.
Incidents of Vote Buying

(Disaggregated by Gender, State and Age-group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>AGE - GROUP</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>18 - 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>36 - 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bayelsa</td>
<td>61+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Were there incidents of vote buying in your polling unit during the last Governorship election in your state?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Were INEC officials aware of the vote buying that occurred at the polling unit during the last election?**

*Only persons who responded “Yes” to noticing vote buying at their Polling Units, responded to the second question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incidents of vote buying was mostly recorded in Edo (62 percent) and Bayelsa (41 percent) States.
LEVEL OF CONTACT WITH INEC
Have you ever accessed the INEC website? (Disaggregated by Gender, State and Age-Group)

The result revealed that an overwhelming majority (96 percent) of respondents from the states surveyed had never accessed the INEC website.
What was your purpose of accessing the INEC website?

- To get Information of INEC activities: 27%
- For Job Vacancies: 20%
- To Check for Election results: 17%
- To get Updates on Election Process: 15%
- To know more about INEC: 9%
- To Check registered Voters: 4%
- To Find out about CVR process: 3%
- Cant Remember: 5%

*Out of the 4 percent who have accessed the INEC website, 27 percent (which formed the majority) did so to get information on INEC activities.*
Did you have a satisfactory experience? (Disaggregated by Gender, State and Age-Group)

A larger proportion of respondents who have accessed the INEC website disclosed that their experiences were satisfactory.
Did you call the helpline numbers of INEC Citizens Call Centre during the last election? (Disaggregated by Gender, State and Age-Group)

Findings revealed that almost all the respondents of the surveyed states have never called INEC helpline before.
Was your problem addressed satisfactorily?
(Disaggregated by Gender, State and Age-Group)

Out of the 1 percent (about 250 persons) who called the INEC helpline, 54 percent of them claimed that their problems were not addressed satisfactorily.
KEY FINDINGS FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
The Key informants survey was carried out to show distinction in the findings between the general public and people who have expert knowledge of the electoral process. The target population for the Key Informants survey were the Civil Society Organisations who engage frequently with the Election Management Body and have also observed elections in Nigeria: Although 100 questionnaires were sent out, only 33 people responded.

• Findings from the Key Informant Interviews revealed that all key informants interviewed had participated in election observation for both the 2015 general elections and the Governorship elections in Ondo (28 percent), Edo (26 percent), Kogi (23 percent), Bayelsa (20 percent) and Rivers (3 percent) States.

• 85 percent of the key informants acknowledged INEC for its improvement in performance of the Governorship elections, from the 2015 general elections; especially in terms of INEC’s collaboration with election stakeholders (68 percent) and security agencies (60 percent) during the 2015 general elections.

• Similarly, 85 percent of the key informants reported incidents of vote-buying at their polling units, with 55 percent of this proportion claiming that INEC officials were aware of the incidents.

• In addition, 85 percent admitted to have accessed INEC’s website; mainly to get general information (46 percent) and election timetables & updates (43 percent). However, only 48 percent claimed they had ever called the INEC citizens call centre.
RESULTS FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
Demographic Variable of the Key Informants
(N = 33)
ELECTION OBSERVATION
Did you observe elections during the 2015 general election in your state?

Findings revealed that all the informants surveyed admitted that they observed the 2015 general election in their respective states.
Which of the Governorship elections did you observe between 2015 and 2016 after the general election?

The result showed that the Ondo state governorship election was mostly observed and this was closely followed by the Edo state governorship election, however the Rivers state governorship election was the least observed among all the States.
PERCEPTION OF INEC’S PERFORMANCE
What was the level of collaboration between INEC and Election Stakeholders?

Majority of the Key informants (68 percent) rated the collaboration between INEC and Election Stakeholders positively, as either “good” or “very good”
From your experience of observing elections, did INEC make improvements from the 2015 general elections?

Yes: 85%
No: 6%
Dont Know/Refused: 9%

The larger proportion of the informants acknowledged the improvements of INEC from the 2015 general elections.
In your opinion, how would you rate the general performance of INEC in Polling Units that you observed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>2015 General elections</th>
<th>2019 Governorship elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/Refused</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The poll revealed that the general performance of INEC both in the 2015 general elections (52 percent) and the last Governorship election (73 percent) was rated as “good” by the key informants.
What is your assessment of INEC’s collaboration with security agencies for the purpose of better conduct of elections?

- Very Good: 30%
- Good: 30%
- Fair: 27%
- Poor: 9%
- Very Poor: 4%

60 percent of the informants asserted that INEC’s collaboration with security agencies for the purpose of better conduct of elections was “good”.
What is your assessment of INEC's training of its Staff?

Findings revealed that 44 percent (which formed the majority) of the informants rated INEC's training of its staff as “fair”.

Findings revealed that 44 percent (which formed the majority) of the informants rated INEC’s training of its staff as “fair”.
Were there incidents of vote buying in your polling unit(s) which you observed during the last Governorship election?

The results showed that the vast majority (85% present) of informants disclosed that there were incidents of vote buying at their polling unit during the last Governorship election in their states. Also, 55 percent of this proportion claimed that INEC staff were aware of the incidents.

*DK/RF means “Dont Know / Refused”
LEVEL OF CONTACT WITH INEC
Have you ever accessed the INEC website?

- **YES**: 85%
- **NO**: 15%

85 percent of the informants reported that they have accessed the INEC website.
What was your purpose of accessing the INEC website?

- General Information: 46%
- Election Timetable: 43%
- Election Results: 4%
- Inquires/Others: 7%

Out of the 85 percent that have accessed INEC website, 46 percent say they accessed the website to get general information, while another 43 percent did so to get information on election timetable and other updates.
Almost half (48 percent) of the informants admitted that they have called the INEC citizens call centre during the last election.
Did you have a satisfactory experience?

Half of the informants (50 percent) claimed to have had a satisfactory experience while the renaming half did not.
Was your problem addressed satisfactorily?

Out of the 48 percent who had called the INEC’s call centre, 62 percent stated that they had a satisfactory experience.
Are you familiar with any other mechanisms for reporting challenges with elections on voting day?

67 percent of the informants stated that they have other mechanisms of reporting election challenges on voting day.
Has INEC’s collation process improved since the 2015 general election?

- **YES**: 24%
- **NO**: 52%
- **DK/RF**: 25%

Findings revealed that 52 percent (which formed the majority) of the informants asserted that INEC’s collation process has not improved since the 2015 general election.
PLAC hosts the secretariat of the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room and is a member of its steering committee. The Situation Room provides a co-ordinating platform for civil society engagement on governance issues. It is also a platform for information sharing among civil society groups working on elections and topical national issues. It intervenes in the electoral process by promoting collaboration, proactive advocacy, and rapid response to crisis in the electoral process. The Situation Room provides a forum of advance planning, scenario building, evidence based analysis, constructive engagement with various stakeholders in the electoral process and observation of elections.

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