

ELECTION MONITORING IN NIGERIA USING THE SWIFT COUNT METHOD

Abstract

This work examines the traditional system of monitoring elections in Nigeria and its attendant problem which called for a more acceptable and scientific approach to election monitoring so as to restore voters confidence in elections. This led to the introduction and adoption of a new system known as the parallel vote tabulation {PVT}

The methodology employed is case study of the application of PVT in some countries and in Nigeria and content analysis, of primary and secondary materials. It was discovered that the new scientific method using the short message system is quicker and more effective in the process of monitoring elections. The use of statistics makes the margin of error between its result and those of the electoral body very insignificant and very similar, thus attesting to the accuracy and reliability of the new method. The new approach has revolutionized the process of election monitoring in Nigeria and brought it at par with international standard and practice. Its application in Nigeria has led to the building of integrity and given legitimacy to elections and its outcome.

The objectives of employing the new method were met and because the margin of error between its figures and those on INEC is very minimal, its reports can be used for electoral cases in courts and tribunals.

Observers were able to give accurate assessment in percentage rating, the process of accreditation, voting, counting and incidence and arrival of materials and officials during elections. The level of attack the observers suffered is an indication that many Nigerians are yet to come to terms with their activities and the roles they can play in influencing transformation of election process. On the other hand, they were also harassed because their presence at polling stations posed a hindrance to rigging.

Keywords- Election Monitoring, Parallel Vote Tabulation, Swift Count, Independent National Electoral Commission.