



THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECT OF FREE, FAIR AND CREDIBLE ELECTION IN NIGERIA. A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The study was to assess the challenges and prospect of free, fair and credible election in Nigerian context, last time the country conducted an election for contestants into various elective posts in 2015. The 2011 general elections characterize with violence before, during and after the election. The violence that took place especially after the presidential election was unique in the history of the Nigerian politics. The paper aims to consider the challenges of elections and identified the past mistakes of the electoral body in the previous elections and proffered solutions to avoid the future occurrence. The INEC as the electoral body has major functions to perform so also the party stakeholders as the major political actors in the electoral procedure have important roles to play in assuring violence free elections in Nigeria. The researcher used secondary source of data collection that is using documentaries and INEC annual reports. The study found out that in all the elections organized and conducted in Nigeria it was only 1993 and 2015 presidential election that was a free, fair, credible and acceptable election to some extent in the history of Nigerian politics. The presidential election of 2015 was a race between two powerful political parties themega opposition party, All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP). To explain this study, the researcher used system theory and structural functionalism theory. To overcome the occurrence of future elections violence in Nigeria, the government and party stakeholders must focus on these issues: such as ethnicity, religious attitudes regionalization of the political parties, political thugs and power incumbency that are an obstacle to free, fair and credible election in the Nigerian that are used in heating up the political institution and jeopardize free, fair and credible elections. To resolve these problems, the study suggested that the INEC should have full autonomy to discharge their duties without fear or favor. The paper concluded that if the recommended measures in the study are taken into consideration and implemented effectively, Nigeria can have free, fair and credible in subsequent elections.

Keywords: Free, Fair, Credible, Election, and Challenges.