

## INFLUENCE OF DIMENSIONAL INCENTIVES ON VOTERS' TURNOUT IN 2014 AND 2015 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS IN SOUTHWESTERN, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Incentives in exchange for votes during elections have become a culture in Nigeria. Past studies emphasized on monetary incentives while no known studies have been carried out on the new dimension of incentives to influence voters' turnout adopted in 2014 and 2015 gubernatorial elections in Nigeria. This paper attempts to uncover what is behind people's voting behaviour in gubernatorial elections (2014 and 2015) in Southwestern, Nigeria using questionnaire administered to 1266 respondents and 76 respondents were interviewed. Results showed that parties' candidates distributed customized goods (69.3%), credit cards and branded goods collected in kangaroo ceremonies and social media (58.2%) to entice voters. Financial aids were given to rural women prior and during elections by traditional institutions and security agents. The paper concludes that candidates and collaborators who used any forms of incentives to entice voters or influence the outcome of elections deserve prosecution.

**Key words:** Incentives, Dimensional, Voters' turnout, Gubernatorial elections, Southwestern

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### INTRODUCTION

Liberal democracy is increasingly becoming an institutionalized system across sub-Saharan Africa, with voting behaviour playing a vital role in the democratic process. In this system, people are the source of authority and the majority dictates major policy outcomes and decisions. Held (2006) noted that democracy has become a fundamental standard of political legitimacy in the globalised world. Due to the distinct role of voting and the importance of majority participation as a cardinal feature of democracy, politicians are now doing everything possible to appeal to the electorates during the election periods. Incentives and material gains are given to prospective voters to influence their votes in both campaign and election periods (Adeleke, 2006). The use of incentives and material gains in elections has become a culture in Nigeria and voters had become accustomed to receiving bribes, no matter how small, in exchange for their votes. Many

political gladiators tried to meet the personal needs of voters during campaign rallies and election periods. Voters resulted to extortion of money from candidates as only way to benefit before they are voted into power. The voters had resulted to meeting their immediate needs with the fear that public office holders leave them to their fates after they have elected. Many electorates are poor and little incentives in any form, be it material gains or monetary gifts, have an enormous impacts on their living conditions. In major general elections in Nigeria, money, other items (foodstuffs, drinks, salt, soap, mattresses, plates and cooking pans) go a long way in solving people's immediate needs.

Despite legal implication and regulations that prohibit vote buying or bribery of voters, in various Electoral acts in Nigeria, many still practice these criminal acts during general elections. Beside, these



acts are morally unacceptable generally because the cultures and customs of many tribes in Nigeria are against these acts. Also in democracy, the act negated political development and yet, politicians still involved in this devastated act (Okafor, 2009). Contrarily to many decent sections in Electoral laws, many Nigeria politicians who understand the level of poverty among the rural and urban people entice the voters during elections. After being voted in, some politicians may decide never to return to the voters or even deliver the required social services during their term of office (Okafor, 2009). Like any other country in Africa, Nigeria has some social disparities as a result of a high incidence of poverty. People in rural areas are worse off when compared to the urban centres due to lack of basic services such as electricity, drinking water, roads, health care, education and social insurance. Rural dwellers suffered tremendously from hunger, malnutrition and preventable disease. With little enticements and incentives, many voters easily exchange their votes. Scholars like Aiyede and Aregbeyan (2012) has tagged Nigeria's politics as 'moneybag politics' since the huge amount is needed for both campaigns and entice voters. To them, many aspiring candidates with little money and high mentality are afraid to join active politics because of the huge amounts of money needed. Moneybags and god-fatherism dominates the political arena since middle earned people and civil servants cannot afford the required funds needed to participate effectively in the elections (Aiyede and Aregbeyan, 2012). In this aspect, voters look unto wealthy and moneybag politicians and the issues of ability and competency of people are ignored.

Due to globalization of the system and the widely accepted principles in modernization and developmental models, the political leaders are quite aware of the importance of voters in a democratic system. Different strategies have been applied to sensitize voters to their parties' side and many policies and programmes are packaged in their manifestoes to woo them. Although, the concept of money incentives during the campaign and voting processes was not new in Nigeria's political and democratic era and many studies had centered much on this types of incentive. In this regard, many sections of Electoral Acts forbid money incentive as criminal and unlawful acts during the election period. Based on this awareness by all stakeholders, and the electoral umpires and security agents, the politicians devolved another dimension of incentives. Against this background, this study was intended to examine the influence of new dimensional incentives on

voters' turnout in the gubernatorial elections in Southwestern states, Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Liberal democracy has been entrenched as a system of government across several nations because of its enormous advantages. As a result of the fundamental benefits of democracy, countries that were previously considered undemocratic like as Argentina in 1983, Bolivia, Uruguay in 1984, Brazil in 1985 and Chile in the early 1990s, have now embraced the system. Several African countries have also keyed into this global trend particularly due to its developmental opportunities and current data show that about one hundred and thirty-five countries had entrenched democratic models and principles compared to forty countries in 1972. Scholars like Plattner and Espada (2000), Vincente (2007) and Collier and Rohner, (2008) have argued that if this trend continues with this momentum, liberal democratic system may become the universal standard of governance in human society. In liberal democratic settings, voting in elections remains one of the cardinal principles but in recent times, a steady decline in the established democracies has been recorded (Achyuta and Fenske, 2013). Although, a number of factors have been identified to influence voting behaviours, scholars however, have classified them into short-term or long-term factors (Blaydes, 2006; Besley and Kudamatsu, 2007). In the past studies, there are little empirical evidence related to the use of enticement during general elections. This study, therefore, examines this new dimension of material incentive introduced on voters' turnout in the 2014 and 2015 gubernatorial elections in Southwestern States, Nigeria.

The term 'incentive and material gains' refers to the exchange of goods for political support or in exchange for their votes during elections. Though, similar concept like clientelism, refers to an enduring exchange relationship between patron and client (Hicken, 2002).

Also, the concept of incentive or new dimensional incentive are very similar to old concepts such as vote buying and different scholars such as Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes (2004) define vote-buying as the proffering to voters of cash or (more commonly) minor consumption goods by political parties, in office or in opposition, in exchange for the recipient's vote. Also, Finan and Schechter (2012) provide a logic definition that vote-buying as offered goods to



specific individuals before an election in exchange for their votes while Kramon (2009) defines it as the distribution of particularistic or private material benefits with the expectation of political support. In Nichter's (2008) opinion, he defines vote-buying as opposed to turnout buying and just as exchanging of rewards for vote choices. Out of all these definitions of the concept of vote-buying, this one by Meirowitz and Kenneth (2009) is considered as the closest to the new dimensional incentive in this study and he defines vote-buying as any instance by which cash, liquor, food, clothes or milk/refreshments (are distributed) as enticement to vote or mobilize. Finally, Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno and Brusco (2012) have recently labeled vote-buying as a situation in which political machines try to bribe and persuade people to vote for them. In this paper, dimensional incentives can be defined as a transaction whereby candidates distribute private goods such as cash and gifts in exchange for electoral support or higher turnout. The direct implication of this definition is that vote-shares and turnout would have been lower in the absence of electoral handouts.

In Nigeria's democratic process, the concept of 'sincere voting' as argued by Razim (2003) occurs when a voter supports their most favoured candidate while Myatt's (2012) logic argument lies in the fact that a voter may be concerned not to waste their vote on a candidate with limited viability. In Nigeria, many mushroom political parties are registered and some are with no campaign structures or candidates in an election, some little supporters may decide not to waste their vote, and choose to support someone other than their preferred candidate. A voter considers the tradeoff between her preference for candidates versus the likelihood of influencing the outcome of the election.

Many scholars such as Castanheira (2003), Razin (2003) and Meirowitz and Shotts (2009) considered factors beyond pure policy comparisons of parties and Castanheira (2003) in particular argues that voters care about how their precinct votes in terms of potentially courting favour from the victorious party. For example, relatively few voters receive goods from the party in Stokes (2005) of Argentinean party workers; they were given ten tiny bags of food with which to buy the 40 voters in her neighborhood. Although in developed democratic countries, the receipt of bribes does not guarantee that voters support the party (Brusco *et al.*, 2004). In the same vein, Guterbock (1980) studies found that Chicago residents who received party service were no more likely to vote Democratic than those receiving no

favour. In his further argument, contingent prizes motive individual voters to turnout in support of a party in the hope of winning prizes. In Myerson's (2000) study, parties offer contingent prizes to those identifiable groups of voters that offer the highest level of political support. He argues further that even in large populations, in which voters have little influence on the outcome of elections, they retain significant influence over the distribution of prizes. Political parties in both competitive and non-competitive environments, an incentive to encourage factions so as to manage turnout and achieve the appearance of a mandate whether they are popular or not. Stokes (2005) argued that distributional patterns of those who receive material gifts in Argentina with low incomes are likely to be targeted. Kramon (2009) observed that swing voters and those with low-incomes are more likely to be targeted for mobilization purposes in Kenya. The same opinion is shared with other African countries where people are living below poverty level. Brusco *et al.* (2004) and Nichter (2008) also provide evidence that political parties target low-income individuals.

In Nigeria where people live below the international standard of living and per capita income are too low, many Nigeria's voters may not consider their future welfare but their present economic needs, which determines their happiness. Like indicated in the analysis of Krueger and Stone (2014) that well-being shapes election outcomes. He further argues that country's aggregate level of life satisfaction is able to account for the variance in vote shares in general elections over the past four decades. As a result of poor standard of living in Nigeria where majority lives in abject poverty, the threat of being voted out of office induces politicians to act in voters' interests (Besley, 2006; Okafor, 2009). Though it is evident that economic voting or incentives voting presents politicians with electoral incentives to ensure a healthy economy, but the empirical focus on economic accountability leaves open the possibility that office holders may be left unrestrained in a range of other policy making areas that matter to people. Evidence from the gubernatorial elections in the Southwestern, Nigeria showed that there is a link between happiness (through immediate incentive) and voting over and above parties' policies or the state of the economy.

The theory of social exchange is very useful because it explains social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchange between parties. The exchange paradigm has its fundamental premises that all social life is treated as an exchange of rewards or resources



between actors. The exchange paradigms entertained high aspirations in Sociology because of its fundamental premise that all life can be treated as an exchange of rewards or resources between actors. The interactions that exist between human beings are established on the norm of reciprocity whether positive or negative (Turner, 1998). Social exchange theory posits that all human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives and sterility as a process of negotiated exchange between parties. The voters received money and other gifts from the politicians or political gladiators in exchange for their votes during the election periods.

In furtherance of this theory, the politicians elected by voters into office easily forget about the promise they made during the campaign and plight of the voters. Though, a person may continue to be in a good relationship without adequate satisfaction when there is no set of alternative relationship available. In a situation when there are many alternatives available to an individual, such a person is less dependent on such a relationship and vice versa. Exchange transactions are reciprocal, if reciprocity relationship and mutual concern is not observed such transactions may tend to eventually discontinue. The task of social exchange theory is then to investigate the reciprocal (mainly materials) advantages the individuals draw from their exchange transaction on singular premise that they engaged in. In addition, in further sustaining most social, including non-economic, relations in the rational expectations of such advantages independently of normative or group considerations. This exchange theory provides a clear conception of the material and resources basis of social action as Cook (2000) put it, since the poverty level of voters is high, the first priority is to solve their immediate needs. Social action is an exchange of (tangible or intangible) activities and reward or cost between individual on the ground that people have always explained their conduct by means of it benefits and costs to them (Molm and Takahashi, 1999).

The relevance of this theory to this study lies solely on the fact that voters or citizens embarked on voting exercises on the premises that they voted for their representatives. Not everybody will be in public offices to determine or take decision that affects all but citizens have to delegate their responsibilities to the elected candidates to hold the power for them. This theory, therefore, rests on the norms of reciprocity where one individual obliges another. In the social exchange process, a return is expected though not by bargaining but left to the discretion of

the one who makes it. Thus, on one side, the voters may decide to vote because of the material reward from the political leaders or with great expectation to improve the condition of their living standard or other demands from the government in term of policies and so on. On the other side, the voting behaviour of the masses may emanate as a result of exchange of materials by politicians (Kranton, 1996). In the first place, candidates provided voters with material inducements to increase their chances of winning an election, especially when there is competition or between political parties or political actors. Voters on their part may agree to sell their votes and support for a particular candidate because they value their immediate needs and gains, more than they value their preferred political contender.

Although social exchange theory proposes that social behaviour is the result of an exchange process, the purpose of this exchange is to maximize benefits and minimize costs, therefore, people weigh the potential benefits and risks of social relationships. In this situation when the risks outweigh the rewards, people will terminate or abandon that relationship; therefore, voters who are overwhelmed with poverty do participate in elections due to incentives and material gains from the politicians and may not enjoy the future benefits. Although, scholar such as Blaydes (2006) have argued that people with low incomes are more likely to be targeted for patronage because their 'votes are more easily bought and their reliance on state patronage is higher'. Chibber (1999) argued that voters' turnout to vote because it is their rights to fulfill their civil responsibility and apathy recorded during an election as a result of poor electoral process.

## METHODOLOGY

This addresses the research design for the paper, which is basically a collection and analysis of data. This procedure bridges the gap between the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the paper and covers study area/setting, research design, study population/ sample, sampling procedure, methods and instruments of data collection and data analysis.

**Study Area/Setting:** The six States (Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos) of Southwestern, Nigeria were centered on by the researcher due to homogeneity in their culture and uniqueness historical background. The Southwestern states' records showed voter registration of 12.1, 10.9, 14.3, 14.3 and 13.7 million (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2015) which represented



20.9%, 17.9%, 23.2%, 19.5% and 20.1% to total voters registration in Nigeria in the 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 general elections respectively. Gubernatorial elections were conducted in the same years (1999, 2003 and 2007) in all the southwestern of Nigeria. Discrepancies occurred after the gubernatorial elections conducted in 2007 elections in both Osun and Ekiti states were annulled by court in 2010, and newly elected governors have to spend 4-year term. Based on this, gubernatorial elections could not hold in 2011 since the term of the incumbent governors has not expired and therefore, gubernatorial elections were held in 2014 in Ekiti and Osun states. Other four states (Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Lagos) held their gubernatorial elections in the 2015 general elections. In addition to this, the researcher purposively selected two local government areas in each state and classified into two groups: 'one rural local government area' and 'one urban local government area'. The researcher applied simple random sampling to select one local government area out of the existing rural local government areas in each state.

The 'rural local government areas' selected were as followings: Egbedore local government in Osun State; Ilejemeje local government in Ekiti State; Ori-Ire local government in Oyo State; Oke-Igbo local government in Ondo State; Ibeju-Lekki local government in Lagos State; Imeko-Afon local government in Ogun State. Also, the researcher selected 'one urban local government area' in each state through simple random sampling technique and the following local governments selected in each State. Osogbo local government from Osun State; Ibadan North local government from Oyo State; Ado-Ekiti East local government from Ekiti State; Shagamu local government from Ogun State; Ikeja local government from Lagos State; Akure North local government from Ondo State.

#### **Study Design, Sampling technique and Data Collection:**

The study is a cross-sectional survey adopting both primary and secondary sources of data collection. In primary sources, quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were utilised. The selection of sample size in this study was based on multistage sampling which involved the use of probability and non-probability sampling methods. Non-probability methods involved in this study is only on the use of purposive sampling while probability methods included on the use of simple random sampling and stratified sampling techniques.

**Study Population/ Sample Size:** In both the urban and rural local government areas, 70 respondents

were selected from each local government. The total respondents selected in all the rural local governments in the study were 420 respondents while 420 respondents were selected from the urban local government areas in the study. The respondents were all active voters who voted completely at least four times in any general elections. The researcher applied convenience sampling to arrive at the sample size on active voter in both the rural and urban areas in the selected local governments. The next stage of data collection involved the compilation of names of all the parties' candidates in the two major parties (1) Peoples' Democratic Party and (2) Alliance for Democracy later changed to 'Action Congress of Nigeria' and again transformed to 'All Progressive Congress') that contested general elections from 1999 to 2015 from their parties' records. The researcher traced all the political gladiators to various respective offices and their residential houses among those who joined active voters to form the sample size. The researcher selected 71 respondents who were political gladiators each from the six selected states. The study adopted simple random sampling to select the sample size of 426 respondents. In all, the total numbers of 1266 respondents were selected and issues concerning the use of incentives, material gifts in both campaigns, voting and election processes were focused.

**Data Collection:** A well structured questionnaire was used for data collection and questionnaire was administered to 1266 respondents. In order to complement the findings from the quantitative data, In-depth interviews were also utilized. Respondents were selected from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Parties' leaders in two selected major political parties in Southwestern States, and active voters within the selected rural and urban local governments. A total of 76 respondents were selected, out of this number, *INEC staff were 15, Party Leaders were 13 and 48 Active voters* were interviewed. The in-depth focused on issues relating to the use of incentives and material gifts to entice voters on the election and campaign periods by political gladiators, and political parties. The in-depth interview questions prone further on the level of operation and ways the incentives reached the voters during the campaign and election periods. Data collected from quantitative methods were analyzed using descriptive and statistical percentage and qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis.

On the secondary sources of data collection, this study utilized historical/ archival records to generate



secondary data. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) publications and records, newspapers, magazines, academic journals and other publications that are relevant to the subject matter were sought to complement data generated from primary sources.

**Data Analysis:** Data collected from the quantitative methods were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools (percentage) while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. On the secondary sources of data collection, this study utilized historical/archival records to generate secondary data. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) publications and records, newspapers, magazines, academic journals and other publications

that are relevant to the subject matter were sought to complement data generated from primary sources.

## RESULTS

The results showed that respondents' age was  $52.7 \pm 16.8$  years; 63.4% were males and 36.6% were females. About 64.0% of the respondent's perceived democracy as beneficial, while 72.5% indicated that the system was characterized by many flaws. The result indicated that all the respondents were qualified to vote during the 2014 and 2015 gubernatorial elections in southwestern, Nigeria. It further indicated that many respondents believed that the best form of government is democracy but many identified flaws in the political and electoral processes in Nigeria.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents on strategies adopted to influence voters during the gubernatorial elections**

Responses on strategies	Strongly disagreed		Disagreed		Undecided		Agreed		Strongly agreed		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Money prior to election day	100	7.9	261	20.6	28	2.2	507	40.1	370	29.2	1266	100
Demand on election day	246	19.4	201	15.9	82	6.5	337	26.6	400	31.6	1266	100
Branded goods distribution	290	22.9	208	16.4	56	4.4	424	33.5	288	22.8	1266	100
In kangaroo cooperative	123	9.7	177	14.0	95	7.5	452	35.7	419	33.1	1266	100
Organized funeral ceremony	103	8.1	230	18.2	21	1.7	345	27.2	567	44.8	1266	100

Keys: %=Percentage; Freq. = Frequency

The objective of the paper was to examine the new approach of distribution of incentives to voters in Southwestern States of Nigeria during the 2014 and 2015 gubernatorial elections. The findings showed that 29.2% of the respondents *strongly agreed* and 40.1% *agreed* that money was collected prior to election day during the gubernatorial elections in 2014 and 2015 in southwestern, Nigeria. Only 2.2% of the respondents were *undecided*; 20.6% *disagreed* while 7.9% *strongly disagreed*. The results also showed that 69.3% of the respondents agreed that

political leaders and parties' candidates distributed money a day and a week before the elections. As regards voters demand for money, 31.6% of the respondents *strongly agreed*, while 26.6% *agreed* that voters demand money from politicians on the election days. On the other divide, 19.4% and 15.9% *strongly disagreed* and *disagreed* respectively, while 6.5% were *undecided*. Interestingly, 58.2% of the respondents agreed that they collected money from politicians before going to the polling booth on the election day.



The result further showed that 22.8% of the respondents *strongly agreed*, while 33.5% and 26.5% *agreed and disagreed* respectively, that branded goods were exchanged for votes on the day of elections; as 6.3% *strongly disagreed*. Only 4.4% were *undecided* on whether there was exchange of branded goods for votes. The findings also revealed that 33.1% of the respondents *strongly agreed* that money incentives were given to prospective voters in an organized kangaroo cooperative, while 35.7% *agreed*; but 9.7%, 14.0% and 7.5%, of the respondents *strongly disagreed, disagreed* and *undecided* respectively. The result of the findings also showed that 44.8% of the respondents *strongly agreed*, while 27.2% of the respondents *agreed* that money for political gains were exchanged in funeral ceremonies prior to elections; though 18.2% and 8.1% *disagreed* and *strongly disagreed* respectively; while only 1.7% of the respondents were *undecided*.

One of the rural voters corroborated these findings and stated that:

*"I started voting since the 1999 general elections and I have never seen an election where the candidates did not distribute goods and money prior to the election day or on the election day. Each compound has compiled names with the Baale (compound heads) and village heads, and with which party leaders distribute monies and goods. It is a normal tradition to do so because nobody will leave his or her farm work to vote. I collected vests, ankara clothes, kerosene and rice in this last election and it is a normal practice during an election time (Man/Active Voter/Rural Local Government Area/Osun State/ 2015)."*

In order to buttress the above findings, a respondent said:

*The politicians in our community are wiser nowadays; some formed kangaroo cooperative societies prior to the election time. They organized a unit that borrow them token money and appeal and campaign underneath. Other political parties organized mushroom parties or funeral ceremonies of their party leaders who died 10 years ago to woo voters. In this kangaroo parties, they gave different types of goods including clothes, kerosene, and other customized gifts and items. Others distributed network credit cards in the*

*ceremony. I joined a group in whatApps and I received Etisalat call cards of two hundred naira weekly prior to the election day (Man/Active Voter/ Rural Local Government Area/Osun State/2015).*

In addition to this, a respondent boldly said in an interview that:

*You cannot question me about this incentive; we collect money in this community before going out to vote, I was given branded rice and customized kerosene, and later given five thousand naira on the election day in 2015 presidential elections. The moment the announcement of the winners by the electoral body, you will not see them again. I decided to vote once without any stipend and any form of inducement since the 1999 general elections. People were making jest of me by calling me different names such as 'mama ilu ebo' or 'mama Londoner', which literally means 'a foreign mother' or 'London mother'. Look at my community. Do you see any effect of democracy or dividend of democracy in my village? We see them after four years when the election is drawing nearer again. I see the incentives as a way of collecting my share of the national cake from these greedy politicians (Woman/Active Voter/Urban local government/Ekiti State/2015)."*

Another objective was to examine the perception of respondents on identified lapses in the system and methods the voters received the incentives. The result of the findings showed that 39.6% and 23.7% of the respondents *strongly agreed* and *agreed* respectively, that voters were ignorant of any laws against the collection of bribe or incentives during election. Only 5.7% of the respondents were *undecided*, but 17.2% and 15.8.8% *disagreed* and *strongly disagreed* respectively. The result indicated that majority of the respondent (61.3%) claimed ignorance of any electoral acts or laws against the collection of money in exchange for their votes. On the fact that enticements has become a culture and practice during election periods, 31.6%, 19.4%, 26.6% and 15.9% of the respondents *strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed* and *disagreed* respectively. Only 6.5% of the respondents were *undecided*. This result indicated that 75.5% of the respondents *agreed* that it was the norm to pay for votes since the 1999 general



elections and some traditional institutions in their areas always served as collaborators or middleman in the last 2015 general election periods.

The result further showed that 16.2% of the respondents *strongly agreed* and 31.8% *agreed* that traditional institutions served as collaborators who

distributed goods and incentives to their subordinates during the 2014 and 2015 gubernatorial elections in Southwestern, Nigeria. But 33.6% *disagreed*, while 7.9% *strongly disagreed*. Only 10.6% were *undecided* on whether the traditional institutions were involved in the channeling incentives to their subordinate

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents' perception on identified factors**

Responses on identified hindrance	Strongly disagreed		Disagreed		Undecided		Agreed		Strongly agreed		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Ignorance of electoral laws	200	15.8	218	17.2	72	5.7	300	23.7	476	37.6	1266	100
Enticement is normal practice	184	14.5	101	8.0	25	2.0	455	35.9	501	39.6	1266	100
Traditional institution as collaborators	100	7.9	425	33.6	134	10.6	402	31.8	205	16.2	1266	100
Ignore good policy campaign	202	15.9	230	18.2	32	2.5	368	29.1	434	34.3	1266	100

Keys: %=Percentage; Freq. = Frequency

The result further revealed that 34.3% of the respondents *strongly agreed* as 29.1% *agreed* that voters ignored good policies and campaigns during the 2014 and 2015 gubernatorial elections. But 15.9 and 18.2% of the respondents *strongly disagreed* and *disagreed* respectively, while 2.5% were *undecided*.

In order to corroborate these findings, respondents said that:

*I am not aware of any law against the collection of money before I vote. It is normal in this community and everybody irrespective of their political affiliations collect money a month before the election. But when the election is drawing nearer like a week, the party leaders and political candidates distribute branded material goods to their party stalwarts and followers. Immediately the elections is fast approaching, like a day before the election, the traditional institutions such as the village leaders, compound leaders and party leaders distribute money to prospective voters in the various wards,*

*polling booths and villages. Nobody in my community has ever been arrested and there is no such report from any enforcement or security agents. I am not aware of any law against collection of money during election or campaign periods. After all, it is not distributed on the day of election but in the mid-night of election (Man/ Active Voter/ Rural Local Government Area/Ondo State/2015).*

Also, one of the party leaders lamented that:

*My party campaigned to all the wards and local government areas telling them our programmes and policies of the party and candidates but nobody was ready to listen to us. The only language the voters understand is money and nothing else, no matter how good the programmes are. The few that attended rallies still expected money from us. We organized seminars and informed them about their future being at risk if they failed to vote wisely. We warned them against*



moneybag politics but few of them honour visitations despite public media announcements. The incumbent government shared dollars in all the areas. Branded and customized rice, and kerosene were distributed till the election day and we were defeated with wide margins. Also, traditional institutions in the rural areas colluded with greedy politicians to distribute these materials easily for the rural voters (Man / Party leader / Urban local government Area/Ogun State/2015).

Other objective of the study was to find out the effectiveness of these incentives on voter's turnout during an election. The result revealed that 67.3% of the respondents agreed that no matter the political awareness and enlightenment programmes prior to the elections, voters will not come out to vote unless money has been distributed to them; that the bigger the money distributed in an area, the higher the voters' turnout.

In order to complement this, one of the party leaders of a popular political party said:

*The voters were enticed with cash and goods everywhere, and cajoled into voting according to our instructions and order. The exercise of 2007 to 2015 general elections in particular was more of a show of financial strength than the capturing of the wishes of the people. Right inside the entrance to polling booth, the prospective voters will even ask for cash or foodstuff before going to vote. I covered three wards in my local government area and employed services of party agents and community heads in distributing money a day before the election. There are some voters that cannot be touched but party agents monitored their votes and paid them after elections. We called that one 'see and buy' and payment is made on spot without the attention of the enforcement agents. Voters have been used to this act before they vote (Man/ Party Leader/ Urban local government/Lagos state/ 2015).*

One of the Independent National Electoral Commission officials who were interviewed on the use of new dimensional incentives and money during general elections corroborated this and he said:

*I was transferred from a neighboring State to this place and have been monitoring and*

*conducting elections since the 1999 general elections. Distribution of gifts, money and goods has become a tradition. Prior to the elections, all parties distributed rice, kerosene, palm oil, clothes, and exercise books under the pretence that they alleviated poverty from the midst of people. Even during the election, in the midst of security agents they distributed money to people and I want to make it clear to you that the higher the money or materials distributed by a party, the higher the turnout and votes they received. All parties distributed one thing or the other on the days of election. Look at this last election, dollars and new naira notes were distributed openly during the gubernatorial and presidential elections (Woman/ Independent National Electoral Commission staff/Oyo State/2015).*

## DISCUSSION

It is pertinent to note that voters in the southwestern, Nigeria were influenced by these new dimension incentives due to economic hardship and failure of the politicians to meet up with their promises. These findings agreed with the analysis of Krueger and Stone (2014) that well-being of citizen shapes election outcomes. He further argues that country's aggregate level of life satisfaction is able to account for the variance in vote shares in general elections over the past four decades. Also, the result of the finding tally with the assertion of (Okafor, 2009) that politicians may decide never to return to the voters or even deliver the required social services during their term of office but give incentives required before the voting period. In this finding, majority of the respondents believed that it is morally rights to collect incentive before exercising their voting rights and the notion hold that the higher the incentives collected from one party before the election the higher the votes. The result of the findings further showed that majority respondent agreed that political leaders and parties' candidates distributed money a day and a week before the elections through traditional institutions and powerful agents. Though, government provides the rules and regulation to sustain the social system by establishing various institutions that conduct various elections, yet, political stakeholders assess the process based on their selfishness and criminally acts to win the elections. Based on the objective of the paper to examine the new approach different from money to entice voters, the result of the finding showed that voters were entice during the gubernatorial elections



in the southwestern, Nigeria with goods and material designed to entice the voters.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Voters were enticed with incentives and material goods such as stipend money in 'kangaroo cooperatives and funeral parties', branded goods by both political parties and party candidates during the gubernatorial elections in 2014 in Ekiti and Osun states and 2015 gubernatorial in four other states (Oyo, Ogun, Lagos and Ondo) in the southwestern, Nigeria. Given money and other induced-goods has become a norm and tradition between the political gladiators and voters during the campaign periods and election time. Incentives and these material gifts were channelised to the voters through some traditional institutions and party leaders while credit cards distributed in social media. The result of findings indicated that the higher the money and material goods distributed by a party or candidates, the higher the votes received before such a party or candidate *ceteris paribus*. People were no more interested in party manifestoes and programmes but money and goods received from parties or candidates. Besides, it was found in the study that after elected public office holders by the people they left the voters without given them dividend of democracy or improved their living conditions. Therefore, all campaigns and elections funds should be disclosed and mandated institutions should strengthen civic and voting education. Courts should be established to punish any politician, traditional rulers and political parties that decided to influence the voters with incentives or material gains. Candidates who use money to bribe voters and influence the outcome of elections should disqualify and prosecute accordingly. There is also need for mass awareness by government and non-governmental agencies on the need for good-policy party. Government needs to formulate and alleviate alleviation programmes and policies to reduce poverty level among people so that maximum participation without incentives will be achieved.

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