**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR IN AKWA IBOM STATE: A CASE STUDY OF CARD READER IN UYO METROPOLIS**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT**

**BY**

**ODIONG, ROSE GODWIN**

**UCP/H2014/PA/006**

**TO**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**UYO CITY POLYTECHNIC, UYO**

**AUGUST 2016**

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA (HND) IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**AUGUST 2016**

**CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this research project was carried out and concluded by Odiong, Rose Godwin, with the Registration No: UCP/H2014/PA/006, under the supervision of Dr. Sunday Ibanga. Has been read and approved as meeting the requirement of the Department of Public Administration, Uyo City Polytechnic, Uyo.

Dr. Sunday Ibanga ……………………

(Supervisor) Signature/Date

Mr. Okey Nzekwe ……………………

(Head of Department) Signature/Date

External Supervisor ……………………

Signature/Date

**DEDICATION**

This research work is highly dedicated to God Almighty for his unfailing love, guidance, protection and direction throughout the period of this study.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Experience has shown that it is very cumbersome for one to complete a course authenticated with a certificate. However, I am grateful to Almighty God who made the end of the milestone of scholarly life possible, and being the source of knowledge throughout the period of mental strain, anxiety and sacrifice.

My special gratitude goes to my project supervisor, Dr. Sunday Ibanga, who took time and pains scrutinizing the draft and offering professional counsel, inspite of his huge commitments to bring the work to academic standard. I appreciate the effort of my Head of department (HOD) Mr. Okey Nzekwe and also the effort of my departmental lecturers;, Dr. Dode, Mr. Idongesit Udosen, and Mr. Kufre Akpan for their support towards the completion of my study.

I am obliged to appreciate my parent Mr./Mrs. Godwin Odiong for the foundation they laid on my path of education and their support. My special thanks goes to all my friends and siblings and others too numerous to mention. I say, may the Almighty God bless you all in Jesus name, Amen.

**ABSTRACT**

This study focuses attention on Political Participation and Electoral Behaviour in Akwa Ibom State: A case study of Card Reader in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. It also examined the effect of card reader for achievement of high level of political participation. It also entails the effective used of card readers for the attainment of successful, free, fair and credible election in Akwa Ibom State. The objective of this work were to examine effect of card reader on the election credibility, to ascertain the level of political education for the attainment of election, to examine the level of transparency and credibility of 2015 election, to investigate the problems inhibiting the success of political participation, the hypothesis are there is no significant relationship between card reader and 2015 general election credibility and the extent of political participation of the people in electoral politics is related to their political education. The methodology of this work was survey design with questionnaire as the chief instrument use for collecting data. Out of the total of two hundred and thirty seven (237) samples was drawn and questionnaire administered of which one hundred and twenty five (125) were returned and analysis is based is based on the returned rate. Table and percentage (%) were used for data analysis and chi-square was used as statistical instrument to test hypothesis. The findings revealed that, election in Akwa Ibom State have been characterized with rigging, violence, snatching of ballot boxes and other irregularities. It is recommended that there is urgent need for political education in boy formal and informal to orientate the citizens for active participation in the political system also; independent electoral commission should put machinery in place that should ensure mass participation of electorate during election. By so doing it would increase mass participation of electorate in election. And it would also mobilized for free, fair and credible election in Akwa Ibom State.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The political stability and development of any political system is a function of the awareness and positive involvement of the electorate in civic and political matters. This is the reason why Appadorai (2004) posited that democracy demand from the common man a certain level of ability and character, rational conduct and active participation in the government. In Akwa Ibom State political activities and transition programmes have been marked with turbulence uncertainties and violence. Right from the inception of stable democracy in Nigeria, Akwa Ibom politics is characterized by greed, love of power, violence, assassination, thuggery and election rigging. Violence has become synonymous with Akwa Ibom political system such that virtually all elections held so far in the state are violence – ridden (Ojo, 2014).

Since the emergence of political independent in Nigeria (1999), Akwa Ibom State indigenes have witnessed electoral fraud characterized with violation of voting right and other irregularities. Although the Nigeria general election on which was held in 2011 was relatively peaceful, however, it was also marked with some irregularities. According to Okpi (2011), he posited that even though 2011 gubernatorial was a little bit successful, some cases of malpractices and violence recorded across the country threatened to dim light on democratic progress during the election, there were reported cases of underage voting, distribution of money at polling centers, manipulation of voters’ register, diversion of electoral materials, ballot box snatching, unlawful possession of firearms and other electoral offences. This political scenario engendered lukewarm political attitude and participation among some citizens.

In a political system, the citizen can be involved in the political process and decision making by joining political party, voting during election, participating in electoral campaign, community affairs and other political activities. The level and pattern of political participation of the citizens determine to some extent, the success of political system in Nigeria, politics is seen by a number of people as a dirty game which must be avoided. This is as a result of undemocratic tendencies, deception, violence and uncertainties that characterized the political system.

Commenting on the political apathy displayed by Nigerian citizens during the 2011 general elections; The INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega lamented that the existence of voters’ apathy in Nigeria is no longer contentious. Voters’ turnout in the just concluded general elections had provided a scientific and empirical evidence of the existence of voters’ apathy and disinterestedness of sections of the electorates in elections. This ugly scenario has implication for popular participation and governance (Odebode, 2011).

Furthermore, the 2015 general election appears to be the most keenly contested in the history of election in Nigeria because it was the first time about four political parties came together to form a very strong party, All Progressive Congress (APC) in order to challenge the dominance of the ruling party; Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Amotala (2013). Prior to 2015 general election, a number of technological base reforms were embarked upon by the INEC under the leadership of Attahiru Jega and election management body empowered by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), Piccolino (2015). These technologically base reform done by the INEC in 2011 were further taken to another height in 2015 general election with the use of the Permanent Voter’s Card (PVC) and introduction of smart card reader technology. Card reader was one of the greatest innovations of biometric verification technology and controversial, crucial aspect of 2015 general elections in Nigeria which engendered this study to be examining political participation and electoral behaviour in Akwa Ibom State and also assess the application of smart card reader within Uyo metropolis during 2015 gubernatorial election in Nigeria.

* 1. **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS**

Political participation means the involvement of citizens in selecting or choosing of leaders of their choice through periodical election. But over the years, political participation and voting behaviour in Akwa Ibom State have been characterized with excessive influence of the ruling party on the electorates, turbulence, violence and rigging of gubernatorial elections, distribution of money in the polling centres. Lack of political education and the announcement of election result in favour of unpopular candidate before the time of the election, in which in turn becomes a bane to political participation in Akwa Ibom State. However, this study focuses on the effects of card readers on the election credibility in Akwa Ibom State.

* 1. **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study focus on:

1. To examine the effect of card reader on the election credibility in Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria as a whole.
2. To ascertain the level of political education for the attainment of electoral goal through the use of card reader during 2015 general election.
3. To examine the level of transparency and credibility of 2015 election in Akwa Ibom State through the effective application of Card reader.
4. To investigate the problems inhibiting the success of political participation in Akwa Ibom State.
5. To suggest the possible solutions to the problems affecting electoral success in Akwa Ibom State.
   1. **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions are:

1. What are the effects of card readers on the election credibility in Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria as a whole?
2. What are the levels of political education for the attainment of electoral goal in Akwa Ibom State?
3. How transparency and credible was 2015 general election in Akwa Ibom State through the effective application of card reader?
4. What are the problems inhibiting the success of political participation in Akwa Ibom State?
5. What are the possible solutions to those problems inhibiting political participation in Akwa Ibom State? 
   1. **RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**
6. **Ho:** There is no significant relationship between card readers and 2015 general election credibility in Akwa Ibom State.

**Hi:** There is significant relationship between card readers and 2015 general election credibility in Akwa Ibom State

1. **Ho:** The extent of the political participation of the people in electoral politics is not related to their political education.

**Hi:** The extent of the political participation of the people in electoral politics is related to their political education.

* 1. **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is however significance in the sense that it will be of immense benefit to our political office holders and the general public. The political leaders and the general public will be exposed to the fact that democratic development of the country depends on the nature in which they come into office. The study will help them to realize the office they occupy is a public office as such; policy formulation should be for the public interest. Secondly, the study will enable them to be aware of the fact that democratic development of the country is at the mercy of politics. For the student, the study is considered beneficial in the sense that they will be informed on the indispensable of the political culture for rapid democratic development.

* 1. **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This project work was restricted to Akwa Ibom State on issues concerning the use of card reader with reference to the 2015 general election.

* 1. **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was limited due to non availability of relevant recent data, financial and time constraints. However, due to these constraints, the researcher therefore had to restrict the collection of data from within Uyo metropolis only, especially as a result of financial constraints.

* 1. **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Political Participation:** Political participation is defined as any activity that shapes, affects or involves the political sphere. Political participation encompasses of voting, political rally and campaign.

**Election:** Election is a formal decision making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office.

**Metropolis:** Can be define as a large important city (often the capital city of a country or region). Uyo is the state capital of Akwa Ibom State an oil producing state in Nigeria.

**Voting:** Voting is a method by which voters make a choice between candidates often in an election or on a policy of referendum.

**Electorates:** Electorate is defined as a body of a person entitled to vote in an election. It is also referred to people who eligible to vote in an election. It should be a candidate above 18 years in Nigerian political system.

**Electoral behaviour:** Is defined as a setof personal electoral activities, including participation in electoral campaigns, turnout at polls and choosing for whom to vote (Brattoh 2013).

**INEC Card Reader:** This is a device or a portable electronic voter authentication device, configured to only read the permanent voter cards issued by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

**Permanent Voters Card:** According to INEC, the permanent voters card (PVC) is smart card based voter’s identity with voter’s information such as bio-data, biometric and facial image.