

AN OVERVIEW OF 2018 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN EKITI STATE

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, electioneering periods in Nigeria are often characterized by tension, electoral violence, vote buying and the gross abuse of state power against perceived political opponents. The most populous African country has experienced civil war, several military dictatorships and civil unrest since 1960.

The July 14, 2018 election in Ekiti was the fifth election in the history of the state since Nigeria returned to democracy. This paper focuses on the political events that took place during the gubernatorial election in Ekiti state.

Keywords: Ekiti, Gubernatorial Election, APC, PDP

INTRODUCTION

Ekiti state was carved out from Ondo state in 1996 by the military government of late General Sani Abacha. Located in southwestern Nigeria, Ekiti state is a predominantly Yoruba area that boasts of homogeneous population, cultural affinity and common language. The July 14 2018 gubernatorial election was the fifth in the history of Ekiti state. Previous elections in Ekiti took place in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2014 respectively.

It is important to note that various political parties have held sway in Ekiti state. In 1999, Otunba Gbenga Adebayo of the Action for Democracy (AD) was elected as governor. In 2003, Peter Ayodele Fayose of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) defeated the incumbent. Fayose was governor of Ekiti from 2003 up until 2006. However, corruption allegations were instituted against Fayose.

The corruption charges prompted 24 out of 26 state law makers to impeach Governor Fayose in what looked like a politically motivated move by the civilian administration of erstwhile President Olusegun Obasanjo of PDP (Durotoye, 2014).

In 2007, Engineer Segun Oni of the PDP was sworn in as the elected governor of Ekiti. In 2010, Oni’s election was nullified by the court citing electoral irregularities. The nullification of Oni’s 2007 victory paved the way for Dr. Kayode Fayemi of Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) to emerge as the actual winner of the gubernatorial election in Ekiti. Ayodele Fayose contesting under the platform of PDP defeated the seating governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi in all the 16 local government areas of Ekiti at the June 21, 2014 election (Durotoye, 2014).

It is against this background that this study will make a general overview of the July 14, 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti state.

PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

The electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) lifted the ban on election campaign on April 15, 2018. As shown in Table 1, thirty five political parties registered for the Ekiti gubernatorial election.

CANDIDATES FOR EKITI STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION 2018						
S/N	STATE	NAME OF CANDIDATES	SEX	PARTY	AGE	QUALIFICATION
	EKITI					
1	GOVERNOR	JACOB ABIODUN ALUKO	M	A	69	B.SC, PGD
	DEPUTY	ADEMOLA ADRIAN AYODELE	M	A	53	B.SC, MB. Ch.B
2	GOVERNOR	SHOLA OMOLOLA	M	AA	43	WAEC
	DEPUTY	SHABA ABIMBOLA	F	AA	43	WAEC
3	GOVERNOR	OWOLABI BODE OLOWOPOROKU	M	ACD	72	PHD
	DEPUTY	FAJUYI PATRICK OJO	M	ACD	52	HND
4	GOVERNOR	AGBOOLA OLANIYI BEN	M	AD	49	MBA
	DEPUTY	OMOTOSHO BABATUNDE	M	AD	58	DIPLOMA

		BABAFEMI				
5	GOVERNOR	SEGUN ADEWALE	M	ADP	53	MPA
	DEPUTY	OMONUSI ANTHONIA ALABA	F	ADP	42	HND
6	GOVERNOR	ORUBULOYE DELE LUCAS	M	AGA	62	HND
	DEPUTY	OLONIYO MICHAEL AYODELE	M	AGA	54	B.SC
7	GOVERNOR	ORIBAMISE STEPHEN OJO	M	AGAP	51	B.SC
	DEPUTY	OLUPONMILE OLUSHOLA OLAJIDE	M	AGAP	55	HND
8	GOVERNOR	AFE HENRY BABATUNDE	M	ANRP	48	B.SC
	DEPUTY	SANUSI KAZEEM OLANIPEKUN	M	ANRP	45	B.SC
9	GOVERNOR	SAHEED OLAWALE JIMOH	M	APA	44	B.SC
	DEPUTY	OGUNRINDE KOLADE IDOWU	M	APA	36	PGD
10	GOVERNOR	JOHN OLUKAYODE FAYEMI	M	APC	53	PHD
	DEPUTY	EGBEYEMI ADEBISI ADEGBOYEGA	M	APC	74	LLB, BL
11	GOVERNOR	TEMITOPE ADEBAYO	M	APDA	44	LLB, BL, LLM
	DEPUTY	EJIOYE OLANIKE ESTHER	F	APDA	50	B.ED
12	GOVERNOR	AYODEJI LAWRENCE AYODELE	M	APGA	62	M.SC
	DEPUTY	ADEREMI OLUSEGUN OLUWOLE	M	APGA	45	HND
13	GOVERNOR	ADEGBOYE AJAYI	M	BNPP	53	NCE
	DEPUTY	ISEYEMI MODUPE	F	BNPP	44	HND
14	GOVERNOR	DAVID-ADESUA AYODELE	M	DA	44	B.SC
	DEPUTY	DADA SUNDAY LAWRENCE	M	DA	42	NABTEB
15	GOVERNOR	OLANREWaju OLALEKAN	M	DPC	41	SSCE
	DEPUTY	OKE VICTOR IGBEKELEOLUWA	M	DPC	30	OND
16	GOVERNOR	AKERELE OLUYINKA GBENGA	M	DPP	54	B.ED
	DEPUTY	ADARAMOLA FOLAKE AFUSAT	F	DPP	60	NCE
17	GOVERNOR	SULE OLALEKAN GANIYU	M	FJP	53	B.SC
	DEPUTY	OGUNTOYINBO KAYODE EBENEZER	M	FJP	54	OND
18	GOVERNOR	ADEWALE OLUSHOLA AKINYELE	M	GPN	41	ADV.DIP
	DEPUTY	DHIKRAT FUNMILOLA SALAMI	F	GPN	38	B.SC
19	GOVERNOR	AJIBARE EMMANUEL TOSIN	M	ID	36	SSCE
	DEPUTY	OLOWOYO SIKIRU OLALEKAN	M	ID	35	B.AGRIC
20	GOVERNOR	AMUDA TEMITOPE KAZEEM	M	KOWA	35	SSCE
	DEPUTY	OLUWADARE AJEWOLE FAGBORO	M	KOWA	67	WAEC
21	GOVERNOR	LAWAL SIKIRU TAE	M	LP	59	PHD
	DEPUTY	OMOTOSHO BANJI VICTOR	M	LP	59	HND
22	GOVERNOR	JEGEDE OLABODE GREGORY	M	MMN	35	B.SC
	DEPUTY	ESTHER IDOWU ADETULA	F	MMN	60	NCE
23	GOVERNOR	JEREMIAH ADEBISI OMOYENI	M	MPN	60	MBF (COURT

						ORDER)
	DEPUTY	OLUWAFEMI AHMED ASAOLU	M	MPN	58	HND (COURT ORDER)
24	GOVERNOR	BABATUNDE OLADAPO ALEGBELEYE	M	NDLP	61	DIPLOMA
	DEPUTY	AROWOLO KAYODE WILLIAMS	M	NDLP	41	B.ENG
25	GOVERNOR	OLADOSU OLANIYAN	M	NPC	66	FSLC, GCE
	DEPUTY	OLUFEMI ADEDAYO ADESUYI	M	NPC	40	GCE
26	GOVERNOR	JEREMIAH ADEBISI OMOYENI	M	PANDEL	60	MBF
	DEPUTY	OLUFEMI FALUYI	M	PANDEL	69	HND
27	GOVERNOR	AYOYINKA OLUWASEUN DADA	M	PDC	41	B.SC
	DEPUTY	ADEUYA OLAYEMI OLAKUNLE	M	PDC	36	B.SC
28	GOVERNOR	OLUSOLA KOLAPO OLUBUNMI	M	PDP	49	PHD
	DEPUTY	OGUNSAKIN KAZEEM AYODEJI	M	PDP	39	B.SC
29	GOVERNOR	ANIMASHAUN GOKE	M	PPA	38	HND
	DEPUTY	ANIFOWOSE NURUDEEN	M	PPA	36	NCE
30	GOVERNOR	BEJIDE OLUWADARE PATRICK	M	PPN	58	LLB, BL, LLM
	DEPUTY	ADEKUNLE LUQMAN ADEYEMO	M	PPN	52	B.SC
31	GOVERNOR	AIYEGBUSI AKINLOYE OLADELE	M	SDP	43	B.SC
	DEPUTY	ADETAYO MARY YEMISI	F	SDP	51	MBA, ACIA, ACNA
32	GOVERNOR	ADELEYE JOHN OLUSEGUN	M	UDP	56	BA.ED
	DEPUTY	AYODELE JOHNSON OLUROTIMI	M	UDP	54	HND
33	GOVERNOR	GBOYEGA OLUFEMI JACOB	M	UPN	49	DIPLOMA
	DEPUTY	MICHAEL VERONICA BOSE	F	UPN	48	NCE
34	GOVERNOR	FAKOREDE AYODEJI EBENEZER	M	YDP	37	BA
	DEPUTY	ADELOYE BAMIKOLE SEGUN	M	YDP	34	SSCE
35	GOVERNOR	OMOTAYO TEMITOPE GABRIEL	M	YPP	35	LLB, BL
	DEPUTY	DARAMOLA ESTHER BOSEDE	F	YPP	50	NCE

Source: INEC JUNE 14 2018

From the table 1, it can be deduced that all the thirty five (35) candidates are males making a 100 percent for male representation while female representation for governorship position stood at zero (0) percent. Furthermore, twenty five (25) males were picked as deputy governorship aspirants who accounted for seventy one (71) percent while ten (10) females were selected as deputy governorship aspirants who accounted for twenty nine (29) percent female representation.

Despite the numerous numbers of political parties that registered with INEC for the Ekiti gubernatorial polls, the APC and PDP were considered as serious contenders. The Ekiti election was considered by many keen political analysts as a “clash of titans” due to the fact that Governor Ayodele Fayose has proven to be one of the most outspoken critics of the Buhari presidency. For instance, on January 19, 2015, Ekiti State Governor, Ayodele Fayose sponsored one of the most bizarre newspaper campaign adverts in the front pages of national dailies such as the Sun, Guardian and Punch titled “Nigeria Be Warned”. Images of three former Nigerian Heads of State from the Northwestern states who died tragically in office were placed on the advert, while a question mark was placed on Buhari’s photograph as the next victim (Sahara Reporters, January 19, 2015; Olowojolu, 2015). Additionally, Ekiti state stood out as the only state controlled by an opposition party in Nigeria’s Southwestern geo-political zone. Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo and Osun are predominantly controlled by APC with Ekiti as the only exception.

Fayose, a formidable grassroots politician relied on his massive popularity among the Ekiti people for the victory of his chosen candidate, Prof Olushola Kolapo Eleka, the incumbent deputy governor of Ekiti state. On the other hand, the flag bearer for APC, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, a former Governor of Ekiti state who served as a Minister of Solid Minerals under the current administration of President Buhari enjoyed the full backing of the APC led government at the national level. It must be noted that the Ekiti governorship election was seen by many close observers as a direct contest between Fayose and Fayemi.

ELECTION PROPER

In order to forestall electoral irregularities and the breakdown of law and order, the federal government deployed 30,000 policemen and 10,000 soldiers for the Ekiti gubernatorial election (Thisday, July 15, 2018). Governor Ayodele Fayose and the PDP raised eyebrows over the deployment of heavy security for the elections. The PDP claimed that the heavy security presence was masterminded by the federal government in order to intimidate PDP members and help in facilitating the rigging of the election for Dr. Kayode Fayemi of the APC. Few days to

the election, Governor Fayose claimed to have been physically harassed by unknown security personnel. The perceived harassment of Fayose drew condemnation from sympathizers for PDP while another school of thought was of the view that it was a mere publicity stunt by the governor who wanted majority of the electorate and the larger society to back PDP in the polls.

TABLE 2: EKITI GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION RESULTS RELEASED BY INEC

RESULTS OF EKITI STATE JULY 14 2018 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION				
S/N	NAME OF CANDIDATE	SEX	POLITICAL PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
1	JACOB ABIODUN ALUKO	M	A	250
2	COMRADE SHOLA OMOLOLA	M	AA	41
3	OWOLABI BODE OLOWOPOROKU	M	ACD	1,149
4	AGBOOLA OLANIYI BEN	M	AD	216
5	SEUN ADEWALE	M	ADP	1,082
6	ENGR (PRINCE) ORUBULOYE	M	AGA	107
7	ORIBAMISE STEPHEN OJO	M	AGAP	31
8	AFE HENRY BABATUNDE	M	ANRP	125
9	SAHEED OLAWALE JIMOH	M	APA	1,199
10	JOHN OLUKAYODE FAYEMI	M	APC	197,459
11	TEMITOPE ADEBAYO	M	APDA	464
12	AYODEJI LAWRENCE AYODELE	M	APGA	70
13	ADEGBOYE AJAYI	M	BNPP	14
14	DAVID-ADESUA AYODELE	M	DA	14
15	OLANREWaju OLALEKAN	M	DPC	147
16	AKERELE OLUYINKA GBENGA	M	DPP	181
17	SULE OLALEKAN GANIYU	M	FJP	42
18	ADEWALE OLUSHOLA AKINYELE	M	GPN	20
19	AJIBARE EMMANUEL TOSIN	M	ID	212
20	AMUDA TEMITOPE KAZEEM	M	KOWA	23
21	LAWAL SIKIRU TAE	M	LP	280
22	JEGEDE OLABODE GREGORY	M	MMN	35
23	JEREMIAH ADEBISI OMOYENI	M	MPN	231
24	BABATUNDE OLADAPO ALEGBELEYE	M	NDLP	84
25	OLADOSU OLANIYAN	M	NPC	353
26		M	PANDEL	74

27	AYOYINKA OLUWASEUN DADA	M	PDC	1,242
28	OLUSHOLA KOLAPO OLUBUNMI	M	PDP	178,121
29	ANIMASHAUN GOKE	M	PPA	632
30	BEJIDE OLUWADARE PATRICK	M	PPN	187
31	AIYEGBUSI AKINLOYE OLADELE	M	SDP	367
32	ADELEYE JOHN OLUSEGUN	M	UDP	29
33	GBOYEGA OLUFEMI JACOB	M	UPN	33
34	FAKOREDE AYODEJI EBENEZER	M	YDP	31
35	OMOTAYO TEMITOPE GABRIEL	M	YPP	49

Table 2 gives a comprehensive breakdown of the July 14, 2018 Ekiti governorship election results. On July 15, 2018, Professor Abel Olayinka, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan who served as the Returning Officer for the Ekiti state governorship election declared Dr. John Olukayode Fayemi with 197,459 votes the winner. The PDP candidate, Prof Olushola Kolapo Eleka came second with 178,121 votes. From Table 2, it can be deduced that Dr. Kayode Fayemi of APC had 51.3 percent of total votes cast while Prof Olushola Kolapo Eleks of the PDP got 46.3 percent of total votes cast. The 33 other aspirants during the Ekiti governorship election had just 2.4 percent of the votes. The poor performance of the 33 parties shows that APC and PDP are the strongest political parties in Ekiti state.

FACTORS THAT ENSURED APC’S VICTORY IN EKITI

Under this segment, the study will pinpoint the major factors that contributed towards the re-emergence of Dr. Kayode Fayemi as the governor of Ekiti for the second time in his political career.

VOTE BUYING:

It is a common knowledge that vote buying is a key component of Nigeria’s monetized political system. During the Ekiti gubernatorial election, APC and PDP distributed money in order to win the sympathy of voters across the state.

It was alleged that the PDP paid the sums of between N3, 000 and N5, 000 into the various bank accounts of civil servants (Vanguard, July 16, 2018). On the other hand, APC was alleged to have paid between N5, 000 and N10, 000 in order to neutralize PDP's bargaining power (Vanguard, July 16, 2018). Prior to the election, Ekiti state government owed civil servants 5 months salary, local government workers were owed 8 months salary while pensioners were owed up to 10 months. To many Ekiti state indigenes, Governor Fayose's sudden kind gestures came too late for them to support his political godson.

Some of the accredited election observers such as New Initiative for Social Development (NISD), Centre for Social Justice, Good Health and Community Development (CENSJHOD) and International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) condemned in strong terms the bizarre vote buying that took place during the Ekiti elections (The Nation, July 23, 2018). In a country where over 70 percent of the population live in abject poverty, many wealthy and corrupt politicians take the advantage to manipulate elections by sponsoring thuggery and distributing money and other household items to the poor and uneducated people who are in the majority.

INTRA PARTY CRISIS:

Cracks within the state chapter of the PDP weakened the party before the July 14, 2018 election. Because of Fayose's high handedness in controlling the PDP's party structure, major party stalwarts such as Senator Gbenga Aluko, Senator Ayo Arise, former Minister of Education, Prof. Tunde Adeniran; former chairman of the state chapter of the party, Ropo Adesanya; former PDP spokesman Taiwo Olatunbosun, former Minister of agriculture, Senator Bode Olowoporoku, Ambassador Dare Bejide, former Deputy Governor Bisi Omoyeni, former Speaker Clement Akinyemi, former Speaker Femi Bamisile and most notably Prince Dayo Adeyee, a former National Publicity Secretary of PDP (Vanguard, July 16, 2018). Adeyeye played a critical role in the 2014 victory of Fayose. Adeyeye who many people consider to be a key contender in the election was edged out by Fayose in order to promote the candidacy of Prof Olushola Eleka. Adeyeye felt aggrieved and he decided to pitch his tent with Dr. Kayode Fayemi for the gubernatorial election. Adeyeye's alliance with APC paid huge dividends as he was able to

deliver his local government area, Ise Orun to APC. In Ise Orun local government area, the APC won by 11,908 votes while the PDP got 6,297 votes (Vanguard, July 16, 2018).

On the other hand, APC had a unified front before heading to polls. It is on record that none of the 33 aspirants during the APC governorship primaries left the party (Thisday, July 15, 2018). The unity of purpose among the APC political elites in Ekiti ensured Dr. Kayode Fayemi's victory in 12 out of the 16 local government areas in the July 14, 2018 polls.

NEGATIVE PERCEPTION

The perceptions of the Ekiti electorate as well as generality of Nigerians helped in shaping the outcome of the Ekiti gubernatorial election. The Deputy Governor, Prof Olushola Eleka only came into political limelight in 2014. Prof Eleka, a humble and quiet gentleman was seen by many as more of sound university scholar in Building Technology than as an astute politician. Dr. Fayemi came into prominence during the June 12, 1993 struggle against the military junta of late General Sani Abacha. Fayemi was one of those that did covert operations to run Radio Kudirat and Radio Freedom against Nigeria's military dictatorship. Dr. Kayode Fayemi served as a one term governor of Ekiti state between 2010 and 2014. Going by their track records, majority of Ekiti people voted for the candidate that has better political exposure and experience. Prof Eleka was perceived by many as a stooge of the outgoing governor, Ayodele Fayose who has an overbearing attitude. While the results were being collated across the 16 local government areas, Governor Fayose stormed into the Ekiti broadcasting station to announce to the public that Prof Olushola Eleka of the PDP has emerged the winner of the governorship election (Vanguard, July 21, 2018).

Fayose also made scathing remarks against INEC, the federal government and security agencies. The timely intervention of the National Broadcasting Commission in shutting down the Ekiti state broadcasting house helped in avoiding bloodbath, chaos and anarchy. The perceptions that Prof Olushola Eleka was a political novice and unrepentant political protégé to Fayose counted against him during the gubernatorial election.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This paper has made an attempt to cover the major events that took place during the electioneering period in Ekiti state. As the 2019 general election is around the corner, it is pertinent to make recommendations that will further strengthen Nigeria's evolving democracy.

Firstly, the electoral umpire INEC should improve on the usability of the Card Readers. It was observed by some election observers that the Card Readers were slow and sometimes malfunctioned in some polling units. The issues with the Card Readers affected the voting process in many constituencies on Election Day.

Secondly, the government, security agencies and INEC should come up with strategies that will discourage vote buying. Vote buying should be criminalized in Nigeria. Politicians and voters that are involved in vote buying transactions should be arrested by the security agencies and those arrested should be punishable by law.

Thirdly, Security agencies must give adequate training and re-orientate their security personnel that are deployed to ensure peace and security during elections. All security personnel are expected to be non partisan. Any security personnel that is found to be aiding and abetting electoral malpractices should face the penalty as stipulated by law.

Again, hate speeches and fake news should be criminalized in Nigeria. All offenders who use media platforms to spread malicious information capable of causing mayhem should be made to face the wrath of the law.

Additionally, the role of election observers during electioneering period cannot be overemphasized. It is quite commendable that both local and international election observers had access in doing a full coverage of the gubernatorial election across Ekiti state.

This study advocates for the continuation of this trend in order to help in building the democratic values and political culture of Nigerians.

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