

Date Printed: 04/23/2009

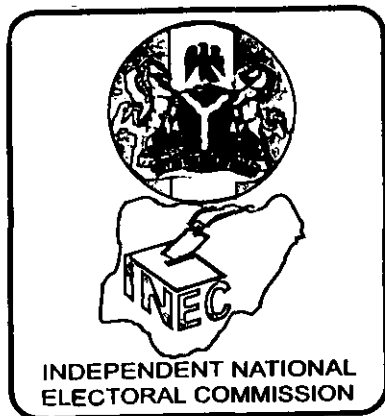
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JTS Box Number: IFES\_68  
Tab Number: 38  
Document Title: Voters Education (1)  
Document Date: 1998  
Document Country: Nigeria  
Document Language: English  
IFES ID: CE01270



\* 7 3 6 4 A 9 5 3 - 2 F F 2 - 4 2 B 1 - 9 C D 9 - C 9 D 3 4 9 E 0 3 0 6 9 \*

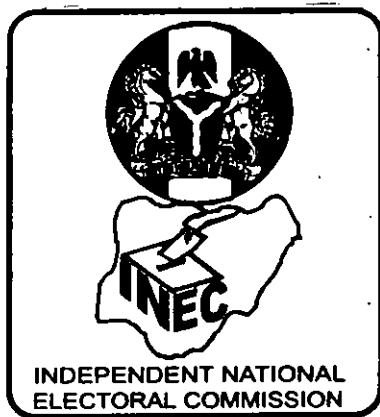
# VOTERS EDUCATION (1)



## VOTERS REGISTER

OCTOBER, 1998

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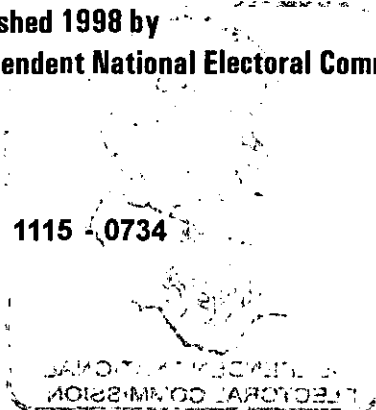


## VOTERS REGISTER

OCTOBER, 1998

Published 1998 by  
Independent National Electoral Commission

ISSN 1115 - 0734



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This Pamphlet is the first in the series of voter education documents to be prepared by INEC. The voter education pamphlet is designed to simplify the laws and materials for electoral events. It is hoped that this edition will meet its goal of educating the citizen in the essence of being a registered voter and also assist INEC to obtain an accurate register.

**Public Affairs Department, INEC  
September, 1998**

## 1. THE VOTERS REGISTER - DEFINITION

The Voters' Register is a comprehensive list of all eligible voters in a Constituency. It contains items of information about the voter such as:-

- i. Name
- ii. Age
- iii. Address
- iv. Occupation
- v. Sex

To obtain the above information for inclusion in a voters' register, people are interviewed by the registration officers.

## 2. THE NEW VOTERS REGISTER

As an indispensable document for conduct of elections, the voters register must consist of only the eligible voters in a Constituency. Such a Voters Register therefore will be one that contains no names of under aged, deceased persons and fictitious or fake names. The register should also consist of names of eligible voters resident in the area where they intend to vote. These are all the features of a credible voters register which is a foundation for free and fair elections.

## 3. FEATURES OF THE VOTERS' REGISTER

In the past people had confused the Voters Register with other issues like:

- (a) Census,
- (b) Registration for party membership etc

It is necessary to distinguish the registration of voters from these other events in order to further highlight the features of a Voters Register.

- (a) While every citizen can be registered during Census, **ONLY THOSE WHO ARE 18 YEARS AND ABOVE** can be included in a Voters Register.
- (b) Voters' registration is expected to include all eligible persons in a Constituency, but party membership involves only those who wish to be members or officers of any of the registered political parties.

It should be noted that the registration of voters is an original, fresh and complete exercise of compiling a list of all eligible persons while the revision of a Voters Register is a process which involves only an update of the existing register.

#### 4. PERSONS WHO CAN REGISTER

The Registration of Voters is not open to every person. To qualify for registration as a voter, a person must:-

- (a) Be a Nigerian citizen
- (b) Not be below the age of 18 years

Consequently, none of the following persons can be registered as a voter:-

- (a) All non-Nigerians
- (b) All Nigerians who are below the age of 18 years
- (c) Any one who does not appear in person at a registration centre.

A registration official must satisfy himself that the person who appears before him for registration has actually attained the stipulated minimum age of 18 years. If he has any doubt, he must **NOT** register the person. The responsibility of providing eligibility for registration is that of the person seeking to be registered.



## **REGISTRATION PROCESS**

### **(a) TIMING**

A fresh register of voters is normally compiled after every National Population Census or before major Elections.

### **(b) VENUE:**

A register of voters is compiled at a registration centre.

Every eligible voter is expected to be registered at a centre nearest to his ordinary place of residence. A voter should seek to be registered in a centre near his residence and not at a centre near his place of work. This is to avoid any difficulty that may be occasioned by any restriction of movement on the voting day.

### **(c) PROCEDURE**

The procedure for registration is as follows:-

- (a)** The citizen presents himself for registration at the registration centre nearest to his place of residence.
- (b)** The officials shall then ask such questions that could assist them to determine the eligibility or otherwise of the person intending to register
- (c)** The officials will record vital information of the citizen such as name, age, sex, address and occupation.
- (d)** The citizen is then issued with a card known as the **VOTER'S CARD** if he is eligible

## **6 DISPLAY OF VOTERS LIST (CLAIMS & OBJECTIONS)**

Immediately after the registration of eligible voters, the list compiled, known as the preliminary list, will be on display for three days, during which voters will check the lists to ensure:

- (1) that their names are not omitted.
- (2) that their names, addresses etc. are correct
- (3) that they make claims and objections as appropriate.

Claims are made in respect of information about the person making the claim for the purpose of correction. On the other hand, Objections are raised only in respect of persons other than the person making the objection, with a view to having them struck out for some reasons.

## **7. IMPORTANCE OF CLAIMS AND OBJECTIONS**

This segment of the exercise helps to make the register very accurate, either through corrections on or deletion of wrong information from the preliminary list.

## **8. COMPILATION OF THE VOTERS REGISTER**

According to the time-table, the actual compilation and production of the voters register will take place between October 26, 1998 and November 25, 1998.

## **9. EVIDENCE OF REGISTRATION**

The mere possession of a Voters Card bearing the holder's name is the only valid evidence that such a citizen has been registered.

## **10. THE VOTERS CARD**

The voter's card is the easiest and quickest means of identifying a registered voter. Every registered voter should therefore protect jealously his voter's card, a loss of it will not be replaced except it can be proved that its loss was due to a major disaster such as fire, flood or accident. A voter's card contains the following information.

- (1) The name of the State
- (2) The name of the local government area
- (3) The name of the ward
- (4) The Registration area
- (5) The Registration Unit/Polling Station
- (6) The voter's number
- (7) The voter's name
- (8) The voter's sex
- (9) The voter's age
- (10) The code number of the ward
- (11) The voter's thumbprint
- (12) Official rubber stamp and signature of the registration officer.

### **9.3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A VOTER'S CARD AND A PARTY CARD**

A voter's card is significantly different from a party membership card. A citizen cannot qualify as a voter simply because he holds the membership card of a political party. He has to be registered as a voter and given a voters card as evidence of his registration. His party card only entitles him to membership of the party from which he obtained the card.

That card is usually valid only for activities within the particular party.

- (a) A voter's card is used by INEC while a party member-

- ship card is issued by a political party.
- (b) An INEC voters card and a party membership card do not have the same format and do not contain the same information.
  - (c) While every eligible voter is required to hold a voters card, it is not every eligible voter that requires a party membership card. It is only those who wish to be members of a political party that are required to hold party membership cards. In other words, a voter who holds an INEC voters card can cast his vote for a party of his choice whether or not he is a member of that party.

Every citizen is therefore advised not to mix one card with the other.

#### 10 **USES OF THE VOTERS REGISTER**

The Voter's Register is used for the conduct of elections. It is the main basis for planning for an election by an electoral body. For example. It is used to determine:-

- (a) the total number of persons eligible to vote in an election.
- (b) the number of voters in one voting centre
- (c) the number of centres for every electoral event.

#### 11. **IMPORTANCE OF THE VOTERS REGISTER**

The voter's register is an indispensable document for the conduct of elections. Infact, our electoral laws state clearly that the inclusion of the name of a person in a voter's register entitles that person to vote in any election organized and conducted by the electoral body. A number of problems could

arise from the absence of inaccuracy of the register. Some of such problems include:-

- (a) Malpractices and confusion at voting centres;
- (b) Incorrect number of voting centres;
- (c) Shortage or excess supply of election materials

## 12. **REGISTRATION OFFICIALS**

During registration of Voter's Exercise, there are certain persons who would normally officiate. It is important for the citizenry to know and co-operate with these officials for a successful exercise. These are;-

- (a) Chief Registration Officer
- (b) Registration Officer
- (c) Supervisory Assistant Registration Officer
- (d) Assistant Registration Officer.

## **METHOD OF SELECTION**

The four sets of officials above listed are selected and appointed after being screened and considered fit by INEC. There are some categories of persons who cannot be appointed as registration officials. They are;-

- (1) A candidate at a public election
- (2) A person who is an official or in the employment of any political party.
- (3) A convicted person i.e for an electoral offence, registration offence, or criminal offence involving dishonesty.
- (4) Any other person who may be specified by the

Commission from time to time.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF OFFICIALS**

Registration officials can be easily identified. Normally, each of them would wear a prominently displayed badge provided by INEC as evidence of his authority to register the names of the voters residing in the registration area. The public must therefore deal with only bonafide registration officials.

## **DUTIES OF REGISTRATION OFFICIALS**

### **(1) Chief Registration Officer:-**

- (a) Organises and supervises all matters pertaining to Registration Exercise in the State.
- (b) Ensures the appointment of all Registration Officials.

### **(2) Registration Officer:-**

- (a) Sets up a Registration Office
- (b) Secures offices for Supervisory Assistant Registration Officers and Assistant Registration Officers.
- (c) Is responsible for making arrangements for the training of the ad hoc staff at the local government level recruited by INEC for the exercise.
- (d) Ensures that supervisory Assistant Registration Officers and the Assistant Registration Officers comply with official instructions
- (e) Is required to organize the collection of all the records and files on completion of the **Registration** exercise.

- (f) Ensures proper storage of forms and materials
- (g) Registers all eligible voters in his constituency.

3. **Supervisory Assistant Registration Officer:-**

- (a) Ensures that reserve stock of forms cards, and other registration materials to meet contingencies
- (b) Examines the work of Assistant Registration Officers in order to resolve any difficulties
- (c) Ensures daily contact with all Assistant Registration Officers.
- (d) Ensures that Assistant Registration Officers are able to render complete and satisfactory accounts of forms received from time to time.
- (e) Should show the Assistant Registration Officers, the boundaries of their respective Registration Units and or polling Districts.

4. **Assistant Registration Officer:-**

- (a) Does the actual Registration of Voters at the registration unit.
- (b) Takes preparatory measures for organizing the registration operation.
- (c) Must ensure that he returns to the Supervisory Assistant Registration Officer all materials issued to him whether used or unused at the end of the registration.

### **13. REGISTRATION AGENTS**

Each of the political parties is entitled to an agent at each registration centre. Although the agents are not employees of INEC and are not appointed by the electoral body. It is necessary for them to be present at each registration centre to help to check any malpractice that could mar the exercise. The agents are appointed by the Political parties to represent them at registration centres. Notice of their appointments are usually brought to the attention of INEC before the date fixed for the exercise. The agents are not expected to interfere with the registration. They are present at each centre to OBSERVE activities and protect the interest of the parties they represent.

### **14. REVISION EXERCISE**

#### **(1) DEFINITION**

The revision of Voters Register is the process whereby the register is updated through the deletion of obsolete facts and inclusion of new relevant materials.

#### **(2) ESSENCE OF THE EXERCISE**

As a result of the ever changing demographic characteristics of the populace, the voters register can easily become obsolete. Therefore, it should be constantly reviewed to make it credible for elections.

### **15. REVISION OF VOTERS REGISTER**

A revision of the Voters Register may be conducted before every election. This timing is to ensure that the duration between the exercise and an election is not too long to adversely affect the accuracy of the register.



## 16. OFFENCES

The following constitute offences in connection with the registration or revision of a voters register.

- (a) For a person below the age of 18 years to present himself for registration.
- (b) To possess more than one registration card with ONE or more names or to get registered more than once at any unit or in more than one unit.
- (c) For a person to knowingly make a false statement or give false information with reference to a registration exercise.
- (d) For any person to hand over a voters card to any person other than an officer appointed and acting in the course of his registration duty.
- (e) For any person, not being appointed as a registration official to receive any voters card from any person.
- (f) For a person without lawful authority to destroy, mutilate, deface, remove or make any alteration in any notice or document required for the registration of the voters register.
- (g) To obstruct or impede a registration exercise
- (h) For any person to conduct himself in any manner or to do any act that causes confusion at the registration unit or to interrupt the registration exercise in any way
- (i) For any person without authority to carry the identity

card of a registration official.

As for officials, stiffer penalties await any of them involved in any registration offence. A Registration officer is not expected to:

- (i) register any person by proxy
- (ii) copy into the Preliminary List of voters any name and particulars of any person from any list made by any person or a political party.
- (iii) Issue to any person more than one registration card.
- (iv) include any person in the Register of voters for more than one Constituency or more than once in the Register of one Constituency.
- (v) fail to perform or discharge the duties of his office.
- (iv) perform any duty assigned to him fraudulently or negligently or recklessly.
- (vii) commit any act or omission in breach of his duty.

It should be pointed out that any person who commits any of the above listed offences could on conviction be imprisoned without an option of fine.

#### 17. **TIME - TABLE**

5th-19th October 1998	Voters Registration Exercise
20th-22nd October 1998	Display of Preliminary list of Voters for claims and objections
26th October 1998	Compilation and production of Voters
25th November 1998	Register

## **COMING EVENTS**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS NOVEMBER 1998-DECEMBER 1998**

- Thursday, 2/11/98 - Release of Guidelines for Local Government Council Elections
- Monday, 9/11/98 - Publication of Notice of Local Government Elections
- Wednesday, 11/11/98- Parties to notify INEC date & venue of Ward and Local Government congress to nominate Chairmanship & Councillorship candidates
- Monday, 16/11/98 - Submission of names of candidates for Local Government Council Elections to INEC
- Tuesday, 17/11/98 - Screening of candidates for Local Government Council Elections by INEC
- Thursday, 19/11/98 -
- Friday, 20/11/98 - Return of list of cleared candidates of Parties
- Monday, 23/11/98 - Collection completion and Return of Nomination Forms
- Wednesday, 25/11/98 - Publication of Notice of Nomination and commencement of Electioneering campaign
- Appeals Against Disqualification (if any)

- Thursday, 26/11/98 - Substitution of Disqualified candidates and screening
- Friday, 27/11/98 - Publication of Notice of poll
- Thursday, 3/12/98 - Submission of Names of Party Agents to Electoral Officers
- Friday, 4/12/98 - End of Electioneering Campaigns
- Saturday, 5/12/98 - Local Government Council Elections
- Saturday, 12/12/98 - Run-off Election if any  
- Petitions for Local Government Elections

**19. EXPLANATORY NOTES**

**(a) SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF VOTERS**

This is a list of voters whose names are not on the voters list. Usually, a supplementary list of voters is prepared after some citizens who after inspecting a voters register on display claim that their names are included.

**(b) PRELIMINARY LIST OF VOTERS**

This is a list of citizens who are eligible to be registered as voters. It is this list that becomes a voters register after it has been properly compiled and necessary corrections made to it. During a registration of voters exercise, a preliminary list is made up of the list prepared during the exercise by the Registration Officer.

- (if any)
- Thursday, 26/11/98 - Substitution of Disqualified candidates and screening
- Friday, 27/11/98 - - Publication of Notice of poll
- Thursday, 3/12/98 - Submission of Names of Party Agents to Electoral Officers
- Friday, 4/12/98 - End of Electioneering Campaigns
- Saturday, 5/12/98 - Local Government Council Elections
- Saturday, 12/12/98 - Run-off Election if any  
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IFES developed/sponsored? NO

Country Nigeria

Year 1998 Language English

Description Voter Ed.