Spatial Assessment of Closest Facilities in an Emergency during Election: A Case Study of Oyo Federal Constituency, Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study used Geospatial technology to assess the closest facilities in an emergency in Oyo Federal Constituency, Oyo State of Nigeria with a view to determine the distances between the potentially violence prone polling units amongst the 551 polling units spread across the study area. Geographic Information System methods were applied. Locations of the Police formations and the hospitals serving as the emergency facilities were acquired directly from the field using a handheld GPS while the other secondary data sets were acquired from statutory bodies especially the geographic coordinates of the polling units from Independent National Electoral Commission, Abuja. The datasets were projected to the same coordinate system. Topology was used in data validation to check for gaps at the road junctions. Network analyst tool in ArcGIS Pro was used to generate the best routes and the closest facilities. Findings showed that 5 hospitals can manage emergencies effectively and efficiently. 5 police divisions are located in the study area with an Area Command Office. Best routes were determined between the polling units and the hospitals with minimum being 1.6Km and maximum gotten to be 10.5Km. The closest hospital is Peamark Hospital and is 1.06Km from Mabolaje polling unit. The study was concluded after best routes to the critical election infrastructures were determined and also closest facilities to the violence prone polling units were established. The study recommends splitting the over-crowded polling units, establishments of more secondary provider public hospitals and more personnel in the police formations.

Keywords: Closest facilities, elections, Oyo Federal constituency, Ground Control Points, Polling Units

INTRODUCTION

The global community prefers democracy to any other form of governance including Nigeria with an uninterrupted democracy that is slightly above 26 years. This is the more reason democracy should be sustained. Democracy according to Lijphart (2022) involves the value of civil freedoms and democratic participation, including both the right to vote and the right to engage in political decision-making. Rhodes (2021) stated that "democracy places high value on the people's right to free and fair elections and the rulers being accountable to the public that elected them and an implication that democracy is more than just choosing leaders but also involves making sure those leaders are receptive to the wishes of the people".

Democracy is possible through elections which was described by Osadebamwen (2024) as "the means through which people can occupy various elective positions at different levels in any democratic society". It was also said to involve issues like acrimony, bitterness, killing, maiming, among others during the pre and post-colonial Nigeria. "A credible election not only confers legitimacy on political leadership but it is also crucial to the sustenance of democratic order. Election provides citizens with the freedom to choose their rulers and to decide

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on public policy" Osadebamwen (2024). "Elections are the litmus test of any democratic governance" Alao (2021).

Uwaifo (2012) stressed the benefits from elections to include fame, power, economic benefit, influence and also a serious business to the political class. Other benefits according to Uwaifo (2012) can also include turning elections into sources of livelihood, rapid means to acquire wealth and power in the society which in turn gave rise to violent scramble among the political gladiators, actors and others for political offices in order to maintain their grips on key strategic positions in government, not for services to the people or for the duties and responsibilities of the office, but for among other things, societal recognition, political relevance, money, and government contracts. Elections take place in polling units. In the words of Akinduro (2015), polling unit is a designated location where registered voters cast their votes on election days. Information about locations of polling units and other attribute information are critical for proper planning, delivery and distribution of election materials, as well as allowing citizens to participate on an election day. Emakoji and Nwoha (2017) also defined a polling unit as a designated location where registered voters cast their votes on election days.

Elections in Oyo Federal Constituency is not an exception in cases involving one form of electoral problems or the other. Researchers like Igbuzor (2009), Lawal (2018), Paul & Pedro (2008), Ojiako et al., (2016); Herbert et al., (2021) and Nwokike et al. (2023) amongst others discussed various problems associated with conduct of elections in Nigeria. The problems range from non-availability of voters' register during election periods, presence of crises, killings during elections. Elections are also characterized by pessimism, uncertainty and fears for the safety of people's lives and properties, ballot snatching, rigging of votes, the problem of the electoral officers not getting to the polling units on time, and the late collation of election results. Ojiako et al., (2016) and Nwokike et al. (2023) were of the opinion that with GIS, improved electoral infrastructure and preparedness, these problems can easily be summounted. The constitution places the responsibility of conduct of elections in Nigeria on Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Elections in the study area are not without emergency situations. Emergency was described by Hornby (2010) and cited in Amusa et al., (2024) as "a sudden serious and dangerous event or situation which needs immediate action to deal with it". Emergency services which are essential in any emergency situation refer to the organizations and personnel responsible for providing immediate assistance and also is a system that provides emergency care. Hornby (2010) added that these services include Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire and Rescue Services, Law Enforcement, Emergency Management Agencies, Search and Rescue, Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Response**,** Public Safety Communication**,** Crisis Counseling and Mental Health Services**.** This study's focus is on the health and security infrastructures during election to save lives and protect properties under threat during election in Oyo Federal Constituency.

The general objective which is the aim of the study threfore is the spatial assessment of closest facilities in an emergency during election in Oyo Federal Constituency while the specific objectives include finding the polling units with the antecedence for violence and determining the distances of such polling units from Police Stations and the Hospitals within the shortest possible time to safe live and properties during the election.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

The study area is Oyo Federal Constituency. It is made up of Afijio, Atiba, Oyo East and Oyo West Local Governments with their respective administrative headquarters at Jobele, Offa Meta, Oyo, and Ojongbodu respectively with 551 polling units. Each local government has 10 political wards. The geographical extent of Oyo Federal Constituency is between longitudes 3° 41' 43.021" and 4° 06' 02.866" East of the Greenwich Meridian; and between latitudes 7° 38' 06.598" and 8° 37' 07.807" North of the Equator (Figure 1). The strategic location of the Federal constituency by nature falls within the deciduous forest zone in the central part of Oyo State with land area of about 3,129 Km^2 and a short distance from the state capital, Ibadan.

The population of the study area as projected from the 2006 population census figure by the National Population Commission (NPC, 2009) for 2024 using the 2.3% population growth over the last 18 years stands at 841,002.

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The old Oyo National Park covers larger part of the study area in the north within Atiba Local Government Area. The area is naturally drained by categories of rivers with many tributaries. They include Rivers Akunlemu, Itosi, Isunwin, Awurintu and others that flow into each other at different points. Erelu dam situated behind Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo drains these rivers. Most of these rivers are seasonal with dry valleys as soon as the rain stops at the end of the rainy season giving way to the dry season and the period of harmattan.

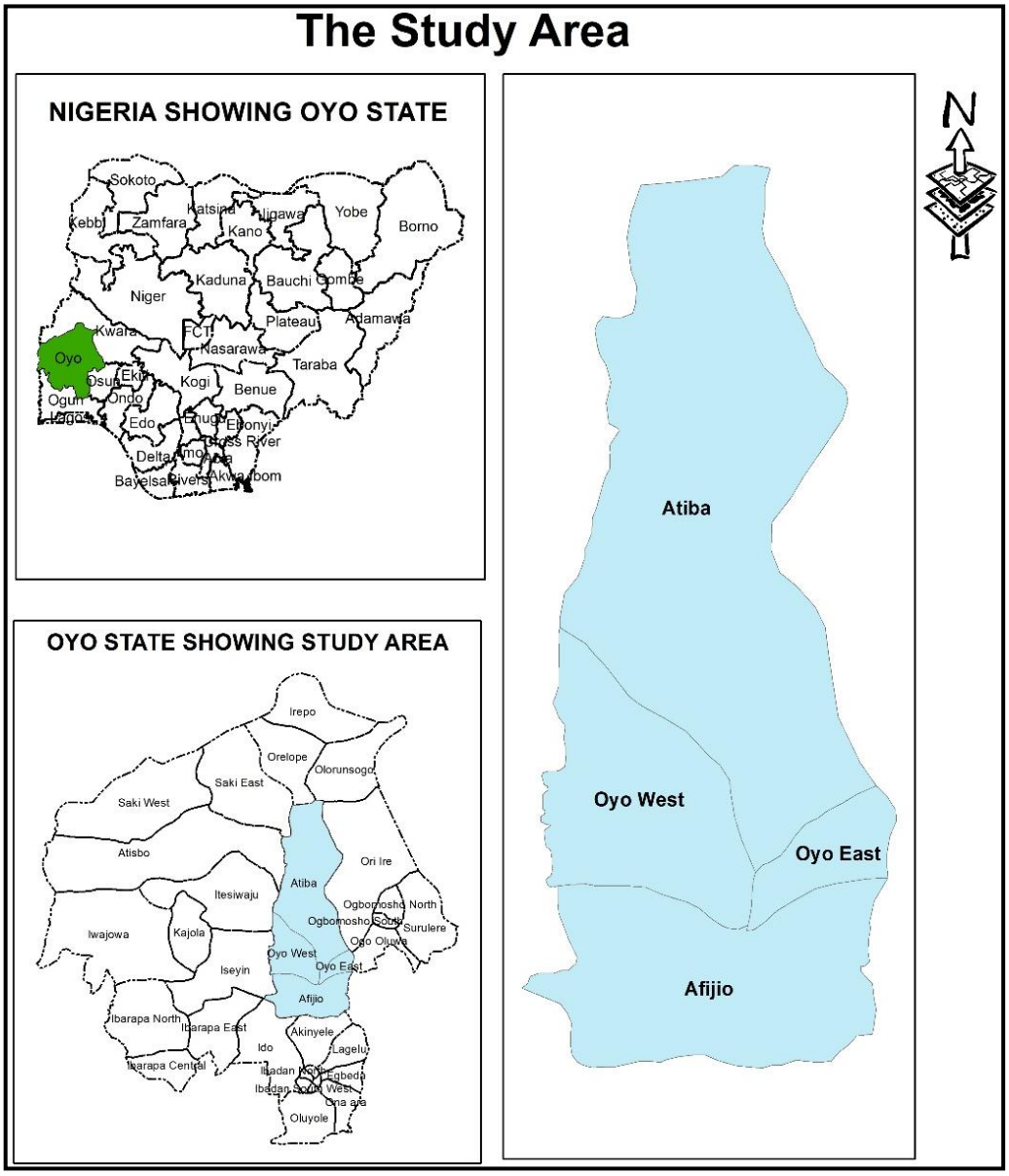

Figure 1. Location of the Study Area

Methods

The study adopted GIS methodologies with the use of remotely sensed data Garba et. al., (2018) and structured questionnaires to generate attribute data of features in the study area. This involved data modelling, database design, database creation and spatial analyses using ArcGIS Pro as the software.

Data Types and Sources

The study used primary and secondary datasets (Table 1). The sources of the datasets are shown in the table. The primary datasets are the geographic coordinates of the Police Stations and Hospitals acquired using a handheld GPS with an accuracy of about 3m. These facilities are key when emergencies occur at the polling units. The secondary datasets are from statutory organisations. These datasets include the polling units' geographic coordinates and other information, the vector map of the study area in analog format, the satellite imagery of the area, additional information concerning elections from the study area using the questionnaires.

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Table 1. Datasets and Sources

S/N	Data Type	Data Class	Source	Equipment	Data Conversion	Justification
1	Administrative Map of Oyo State	Secondary	Town Planning Office, Ibadan	Scanner, Computer system and accessories	Scanning, Georeferencing, digitizing	State and Local Government boundaries
2	Shapefiles: Roads, Rivers, water bodies	Secondary	Google Earth Pro	Scanner, Computer system and accessories	Image downloading, Georeferencing, digitizing and topology	Road Network data
4	Polling units coordinates	Secondary	INEC Headquarter, Abuja	Storage device	Download, process and export to ArcGIS Pro	Geographic coordinates of polling units
5	Police Stations coordinates	Primary	Researchers	Handheld GPS	Data download, processing and export to ArcGIS Pro	Geographic coordinates of Police Stations
6	Hospitals coordinates	Primary	Researchers	Handheld GPS	Data download, processing and export to ArcGIS Pro	Geographic coordinates of Hospitals
7	Population Data	Secondary	NPC Website	Computer system and accessories	Downloaded and projected	Population figure
8	Attribute Data	Primary	Researcher	Questionnaire, Oral interview and Observations	Data extraction	Semantic data of features

Source: Researchers, 2025

Data Processing, data conversion and validation

Geodetic Coordinate System (GCS) using World Geodetic System 84 (WGS 84) as the datum was adopted hence the GPS was configured to acquire the coordinates in Degree Minutes Seconds. All the shapefiles were created using WGS 84 using ArcCatalog in ArcGIS Pro. The administrative map of the state was scanned, georeferenced and the boundaries of the state and those of the local governments were extracted using head-on digitizing method. Imagery from Google Earth Pro was downloaded online, also georeferenced using Ground Control Points (GCPs). Roads and rivers were digitized. The coordinates of the polling units indicating their locations, their numbers and registered voters were from the INEC Headquarters, Abuja in Microsoft Excel Workbook format (see extract in Table 2). This was converted to Text (Tab Delimited) format acceptable by ArcGIS software. The geographic coordinates of the Police Stations and the Hospitals were acquired using handheld GPS. The acquired coordinates on the GPS were downloaded and exported to ArcGIS Pro environment. The information extracted from the questionnaires were used as the attribute data for the features represented with the shapefiles. All these features formed the map layers used for the spatial analyses. Suitable scale were adopted while considering rules guiding the use in Cartography. Topology was used for data validation. This checks for any gap at the roads' nodes which can affect the accuracy of the routing results.

Table 2. Polling units and Registered Voters

Local Government	Polling Units	Total Voters	Percentage
Afijio	95	52,468	18.56
Atiba	168	86,238	30.50
Oyo East	149	71,507	25.29
Oyo West	139	72,506	25.65
Oyo Federal Constituency	**551**	**282,719**	**100**

Source: INEC Portal, 2025

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study used the coordinates of locations of the polling units to create Distribution map of the polling units in the study area (Figure 2). The map showed the polling units and other map layers that include the roads, river channels, the four local government areas in the study area, locations of the INEC offices within the study area and the forest reserve managed by the Old Oyo National Park occupies the northern part of the study area.

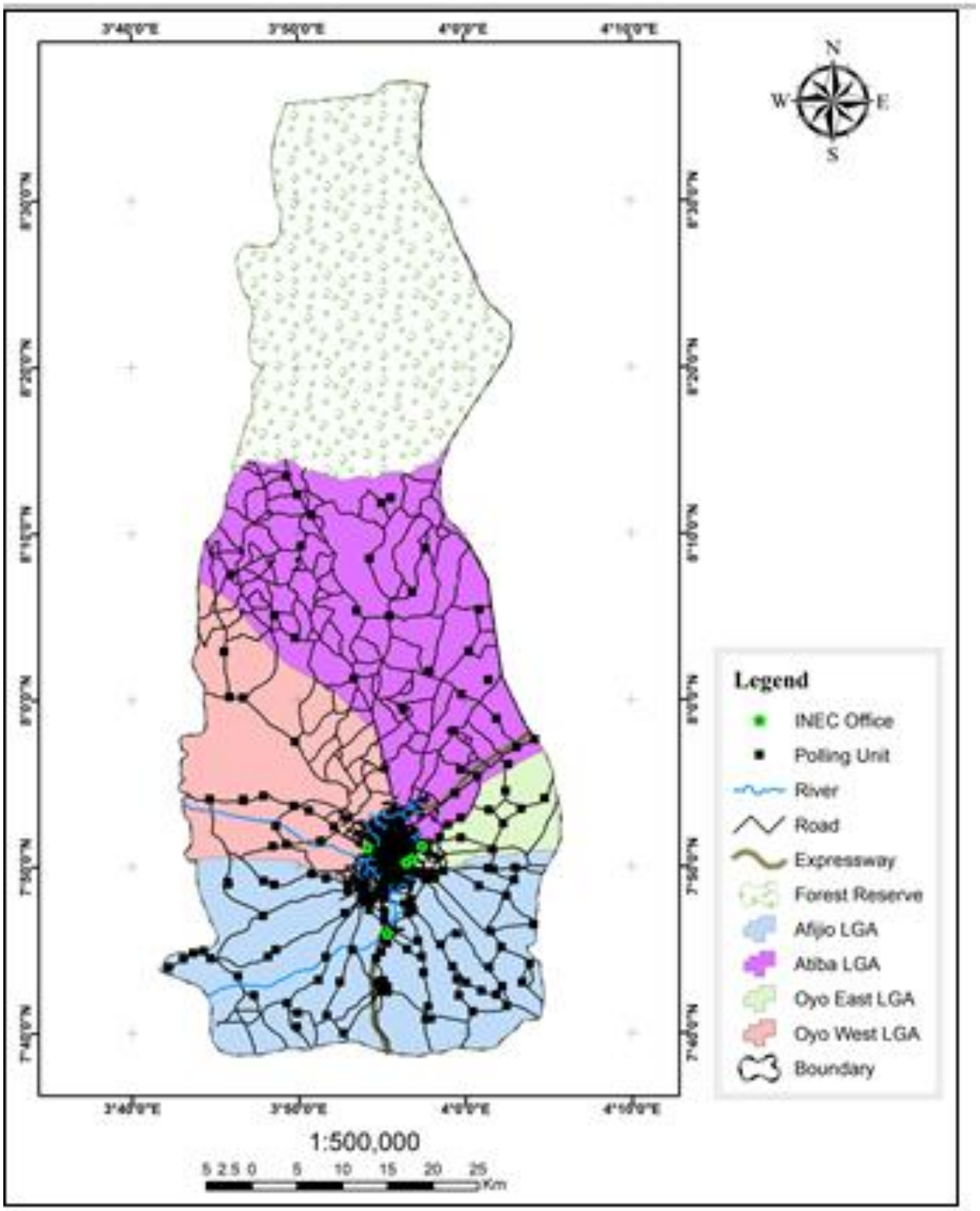

Figure 2. Locations of polling units

Determination and Distribution of Polling Units with tendencies for Violence

Polling units with tendencies for crisis and violence were selected for the purpose of mapping the proximity to the police stations and the hospitals around the study area in case of emergencies during election at the venues. The polling units were selected based on the feedbacks from the distributed questionnaires and oral interviews

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carried out. The reasons for violence during elections include over-population of voters' registers with more than the required 750 voters, proximity of crime hotspots to the locations of the polling units, presence of prominent politicians that are desperate to win their polling units at all cost, clustered pattern exhibited in the distribution of the polling units and closeness of polling units to each other.

The polling units in this category (violence prone) are thirty six made up of 18 in Afijio Local Government, 2 in Atiba Local Government, 9 in Oyo East and 7 in Oyo West (Figure 3). Some of these polling units like AUD in Ilora, Oja Isale Open Space, Eleekara Open Space, Baale Jobele Open Space, Ogbegbe Open Space, Abiodun Atiba Open Space, LA School in Jabata, Durowoju Area Open Space, Gberu Area Open Space, Mabolaje Open Space and Old Oyo National Park/Irepo Market have over 1,000 voters with Mabolaje and Ogbegbe having 1,772 and 1,713 voters respectively. Table 3 shows the categories of the polling units based on the number of registered voters used as one of the criteria for the classification as violence prone.

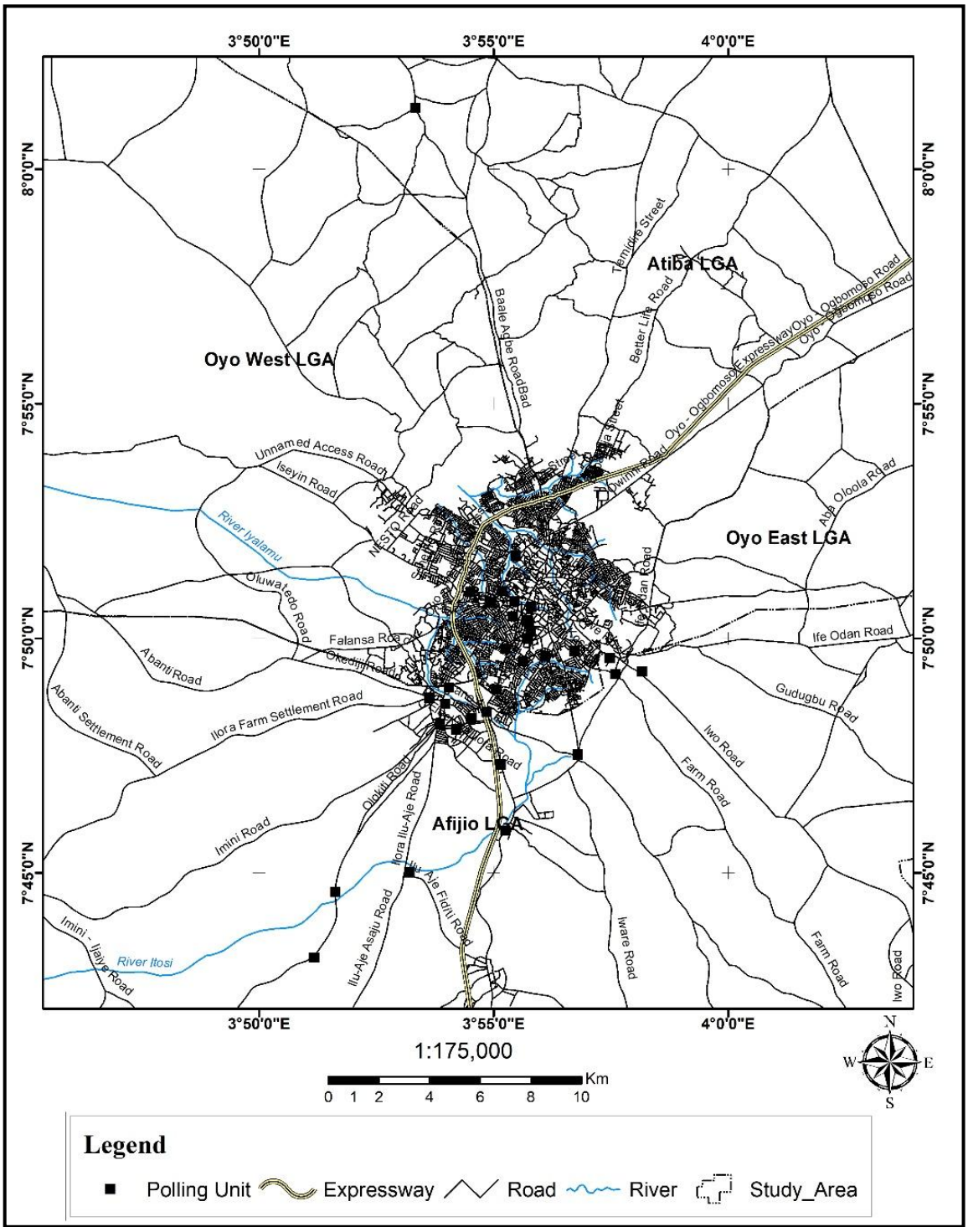

Figure 3. Polling units with tendency for Violence

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Table 3. Classification of Violence Prone Polling Units

S/N	Local Government Area	Polling Units	Voters >1500	Voters between 1500 and 1000	Voters between 1000 and 750
1	Afijio	18	0	4	14
2	Atiba	2	1	0	1
3	Oyo East	9	1	4	4
4	Oyo West	7	0	1	6

Source: Authors, 2025

Determination of Spatial Distribution of Police Divisions

Ayobolu (2025) while discussing the role of security agencies in the conduct of elections in Nigeria since return of democratic rule in 1999, documented that the Nigeria Police Force and the military were deployed to maintain order and prevent electoral violence.

The role of technology was introduced in 2023 general election, with electronic voting systems prompted security agencies to be confronted with new challenges that include cyber threats and the protection of technological infrastructure (Aliyu, 2023). The importance of security outfits and what they have in stock were determined. This was made possible using spatial queries. This is aimed at facilitating rescue missions in response to distress calls during crisis when elections are ongoing or there are violent acts.

Figure 4 shows the locations of the Police Stations in the study area. The study area is made up of four local government areas namely Afijio, Atiba, Oyo East and Oyo West. Each of the Local Government Area has a Divisional Police Office with the exception of Afijio Local Government with two divisions at Ilora and Jobele.

Jobele division has been in existence before the establishment of Ilora division. The Area Command Office is located within the premises of Oyo East Police Division at Durbar, Oyo. The Area Command coordinates the activities of the five police divisions in Oyo Federal Constituency.

Findings by Nwachukwu (2023) indicated that any delay in security responses often trigger tensions in conflict-prone areas. This is the reason why the best (optimal) route to the polling units with conflicts should be taken by the security personnel to avert any possible outbreak of violence.

It was reported by Punch (2023) that delayed response of security agencies to incidents of violence raises significant concerns about their operational readiness and coordination as late arrivals of security forces result in unaddressed conflicts and further escalation.

Figure 4 is the map of the Police Divisions including the Area Command Office at Durbar. The ones at Ilora and Jobele are located in the southern part of the study area while the other three divisions are situated in Oyo urban centre with good road networks at the central part of the study area. They are all equipped with good patrol vans and armory with weapons of various categories.

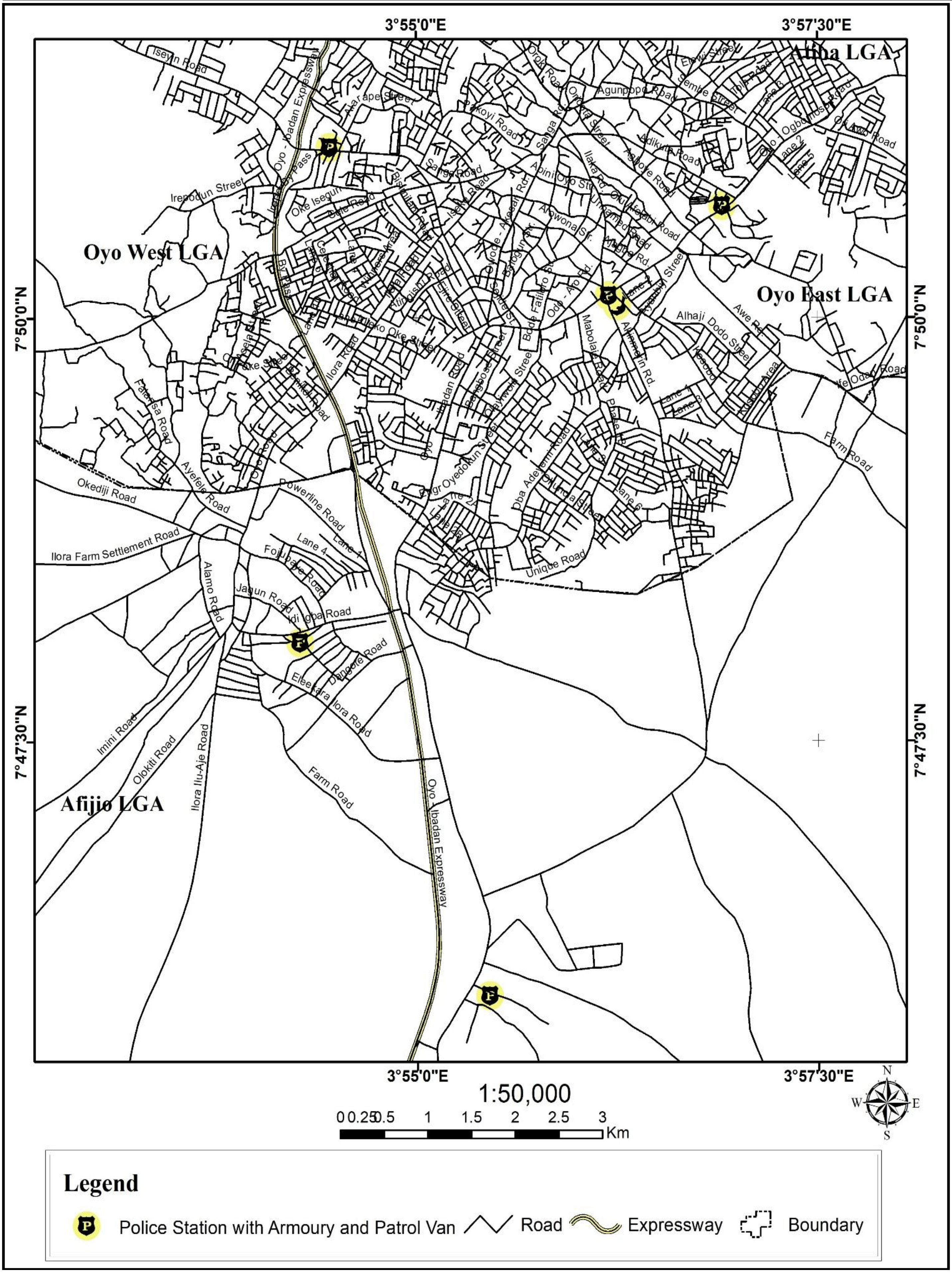

Figure 4. Spatial Distribution of Police Divisions

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Proximity Determination of Police Divisions to the Polling Units in an Emergency

The diagram in Figure 5 indicates the locations of Police Divisions, the polling units with potential violence and the best routes to these polling units linking the Police Divisions and the polling units. The study noted inadequate police protections at the polling units as one of the causes of crisis and attributed same to insufficient number of officers deployed for election duties. The travel distances from the 5 Police Divisions to the identified polling units range between 0.78Km (Ilora Police Division, Oke Gege, Ilora and Oja Oke Open Space II) and maximum of 9.5Km (Afijio Police Division, Jobele and Oke Odofin Open Space, Akinmoorin). The routes between Ilora Police Division and the polling units are represented in Figure 6 while Table 4 is the summary of the distances between the 5 divisions and the polling units with 23 routes for emergency rescue missions. The closest polling units to the respective police divisions in their jurisdictions are Oja Oke Open Space II at 0.78Km; St. John Primary School, Akinmoorin at 4.5Km; LA School, Jabata at 0.96Km; Ogbegbe Open Space at 3.8Km and Iyaji Titun Open Space at 1.5Km.

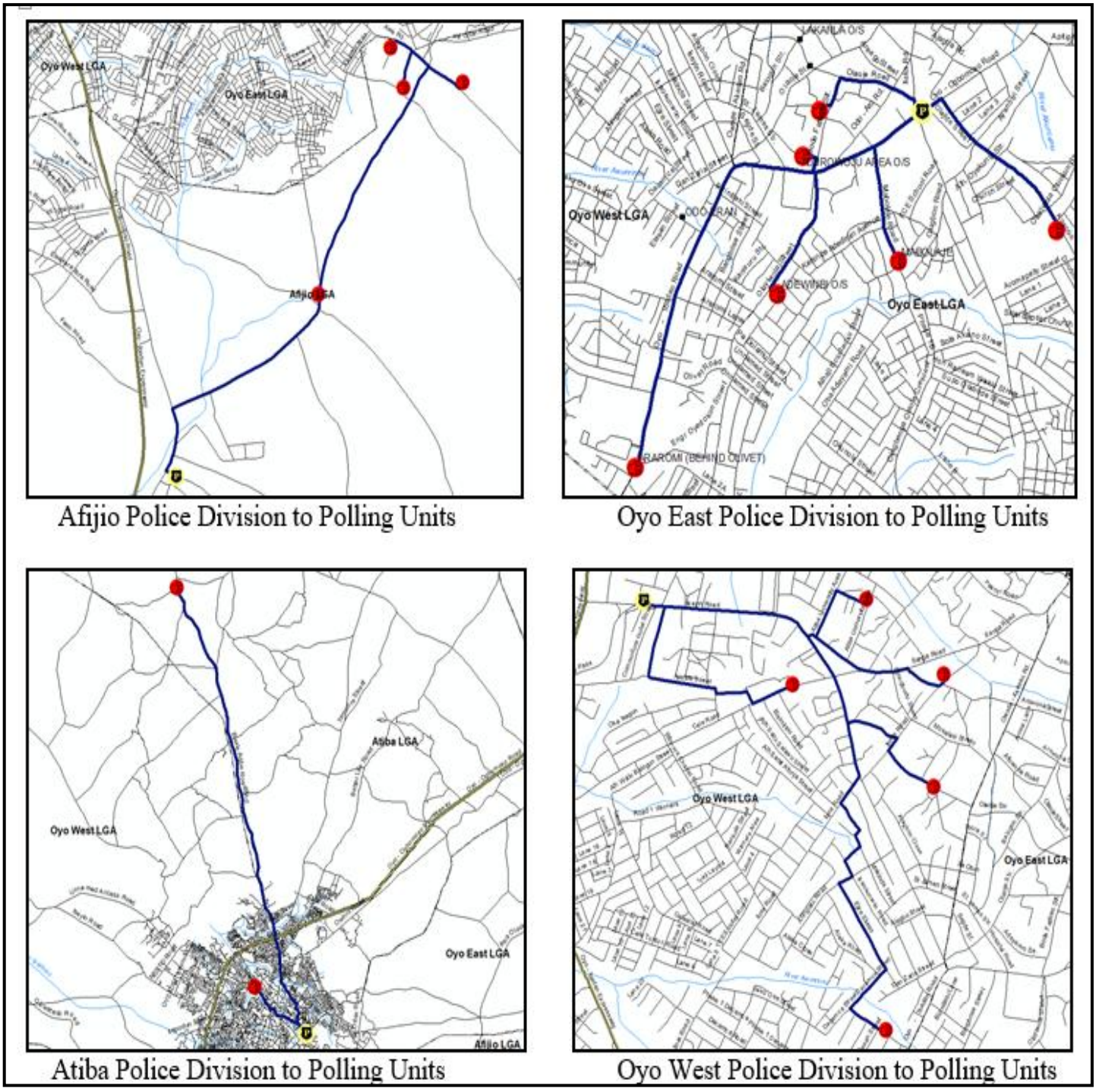

Figure 5. Best routes between Police Divisions and polling units

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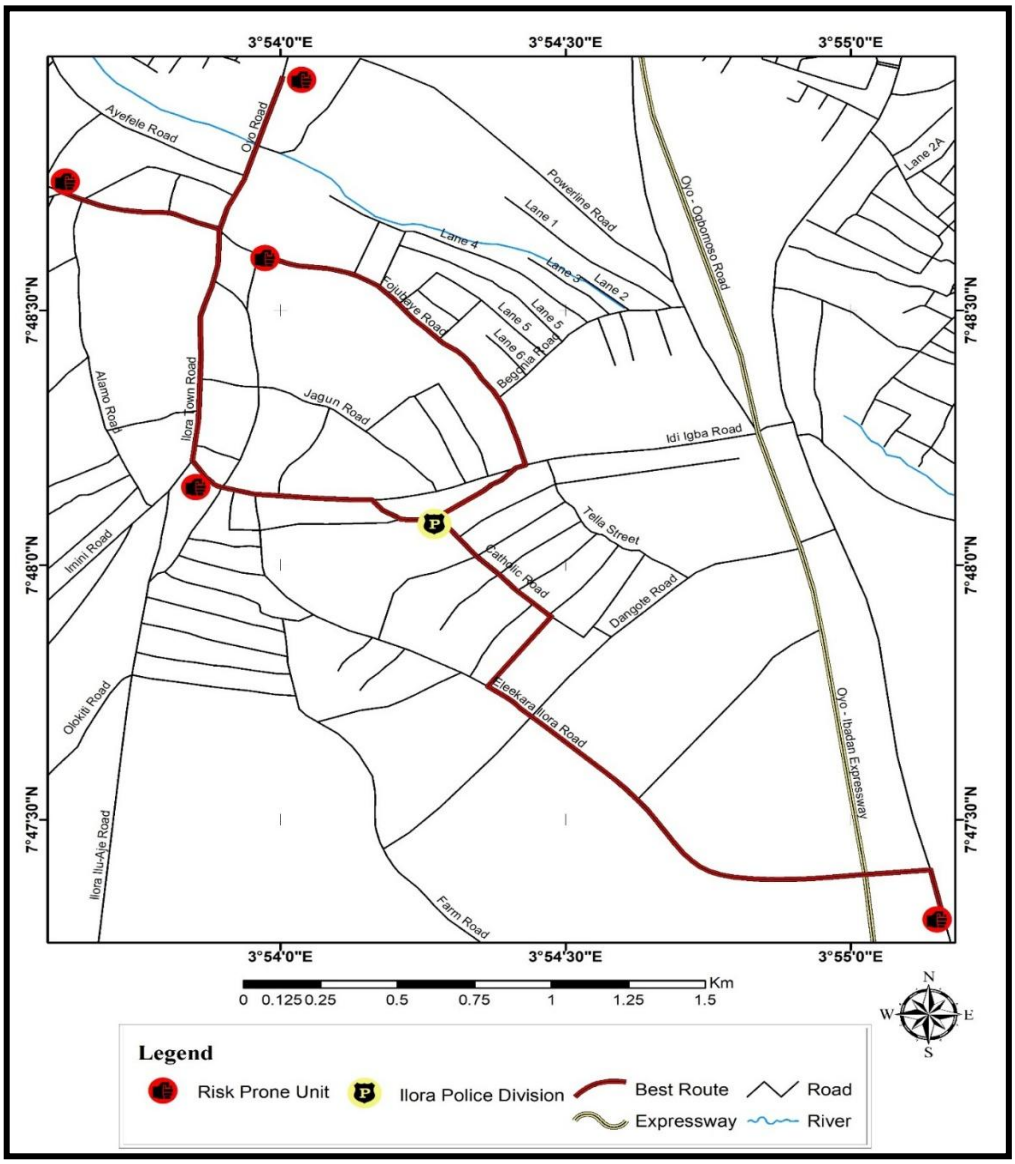

Figure 6. Routes between Ilora Police Division and Polling Units

Table 4. Proximity of Police Stations to Polling Units

S/N	Facility (Police Stations)	Incident (Polling Units)	Travel Distance (Km)
1	Ilora Police Division, Oke Gege, Ilora	Oja Oke Open Space II	0.78
		Oja Isale Open Space	1.6
		Bode Open Space II	2.2
		AUD Primary School	2.3
		Eleekara Market Open Space	2.7
		Baale Jobele Open Space	5.5
2	Afijio Police Division, Jobele	St. John Primary School, Akinmoorin	4.5
		Oke Odofin Open Space	9.5
		Baptist Primary School, Awe	9.1
		Awe High School Open Space	8.2
3	Oyo East Police Division, Durbar, Oyo	LA School, Jabata	0.96
		Durowoju Area Open Space	1.1
		Abiodun Atiba Open Space	1.4
		Mabolaje Open Space	1.2
		Adewinbi Open Space	1.8

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		Araromi Behind Olivet	3.5
4	Atiba Police Division, Offa-Meta	Ogbegbe Open Space	3.8
		Arinkinkin Open Space	22
5	Oyo West Police Division, Ojongbodu, Oyo	Iyaji Titun Open Space	1.5
		LA School, Bola	2.0
		LA School, Awumoro	1.6
		Akeetan Baale Market	2.3
		Odo Eran Open Space	3.7

Source: Authors, 2025

Determination of Proximity of Hospitals to the Polling Units in an Emergency

Figure 7 indicates the distribution of hospitals within the study area from which some were considered based on some sets of criteria. The criteria when choosing hospitals to be used during emergencies include amongst others availability of ambulance services, the ability of such hospital to be able to manage emergencies of any category, and must be at least a secondary health care provider. The hospitals that met these criteria are State Hospital, Oyo (public); Peamark Hospital, Oyo (private); Oroki Hospital, Oyo (private); Momoh Memorial Hospital, Sabo, Oyo (private) and General Hospital, Ilora (public).

One polling unit was considered from each local government to demostrate the routes to be taken by each hospital to the polling units. The polling units are Bode Open Space, Ilora; Mabolaje Open Space, Oyo; Ogbegbe Open Space, Oyo and Irepo Market/Oyo National Park. The hospitals considered are General Hospital, Ilora; State Hospital, Oyo; Peamark Hospital, Oyo; Momoh Memorial Hospital, Sabo, Oyo and Oroki Hospital, Oyo.

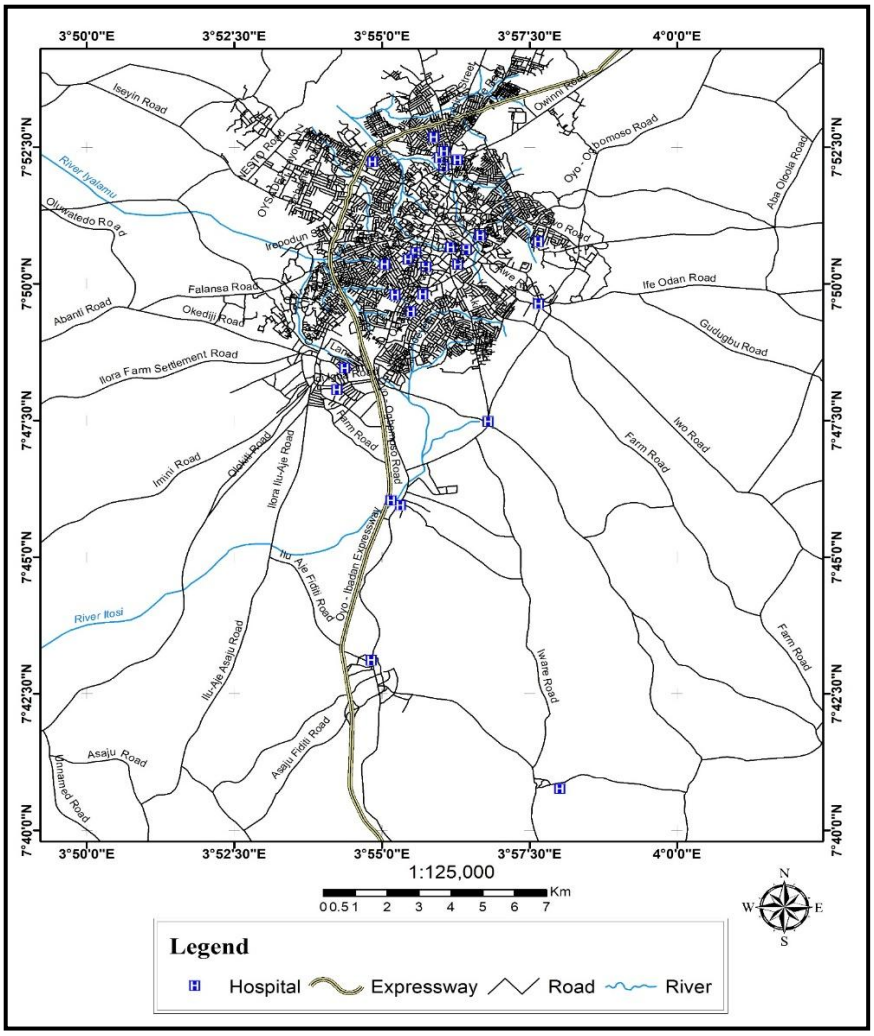

Figure 7. Distribution of Hospitals

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Figure 8 illustrates the different routes from the polling units to these hospitals. The different distances from the polling units to the hospitals or the other way round as the case may be is summarised in Table 5. Figure 9 is a map indicating the best routes linking Bode Open Space indicated as Incident on the map and selected Hospitals indicated as Facility in the study area with the capabilities of handling emergencies. The distances between the polling units range between 1.6Km and 10.4Km leaving the rescuers to decide on the nearest hospital when saving lives. The closest facilities are 1.6Km, 2.1Km, 2.4Km and 3.2Km from the polling units around them.

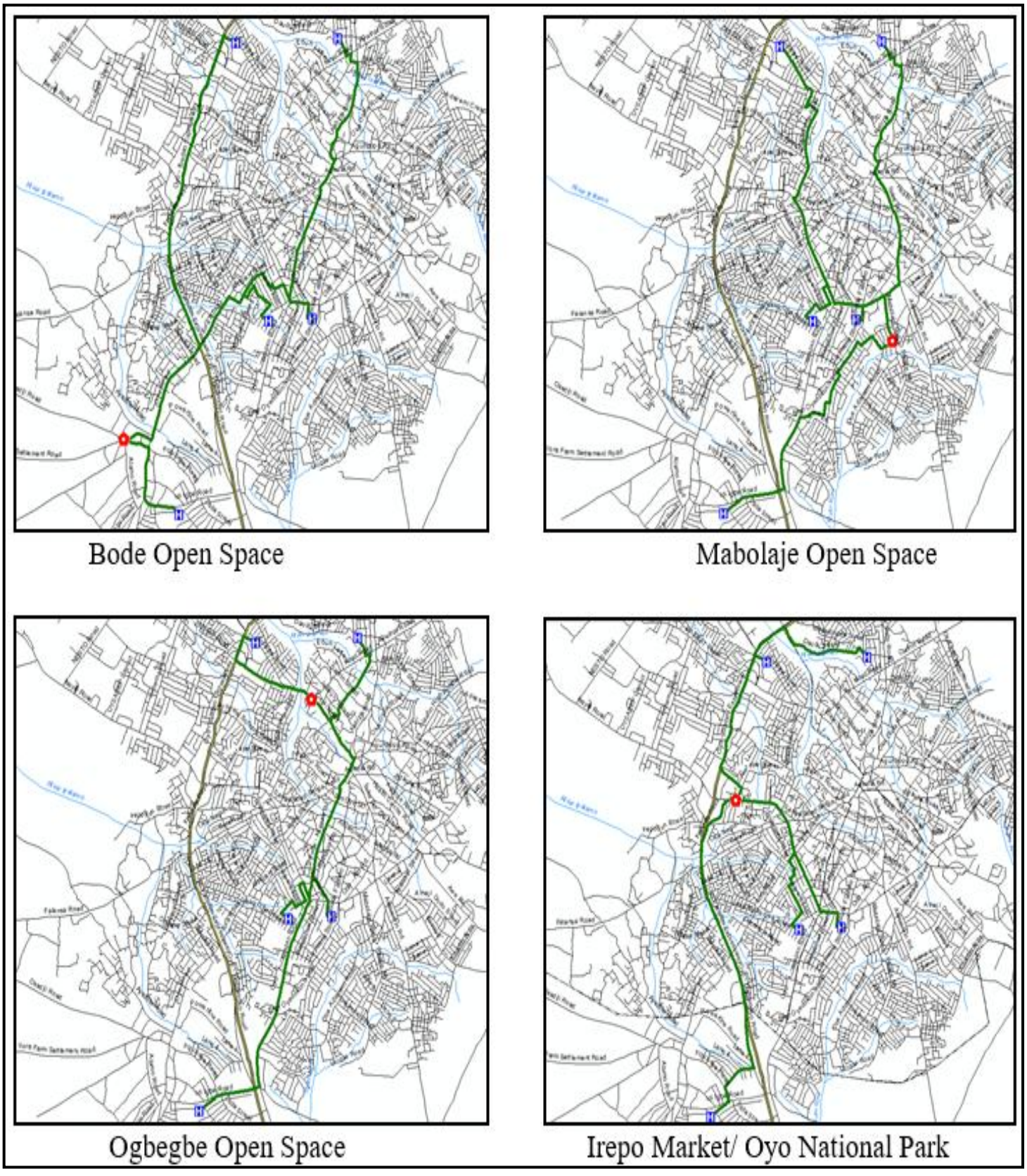

Figure 8. Best routes between Hospitals and the polling units

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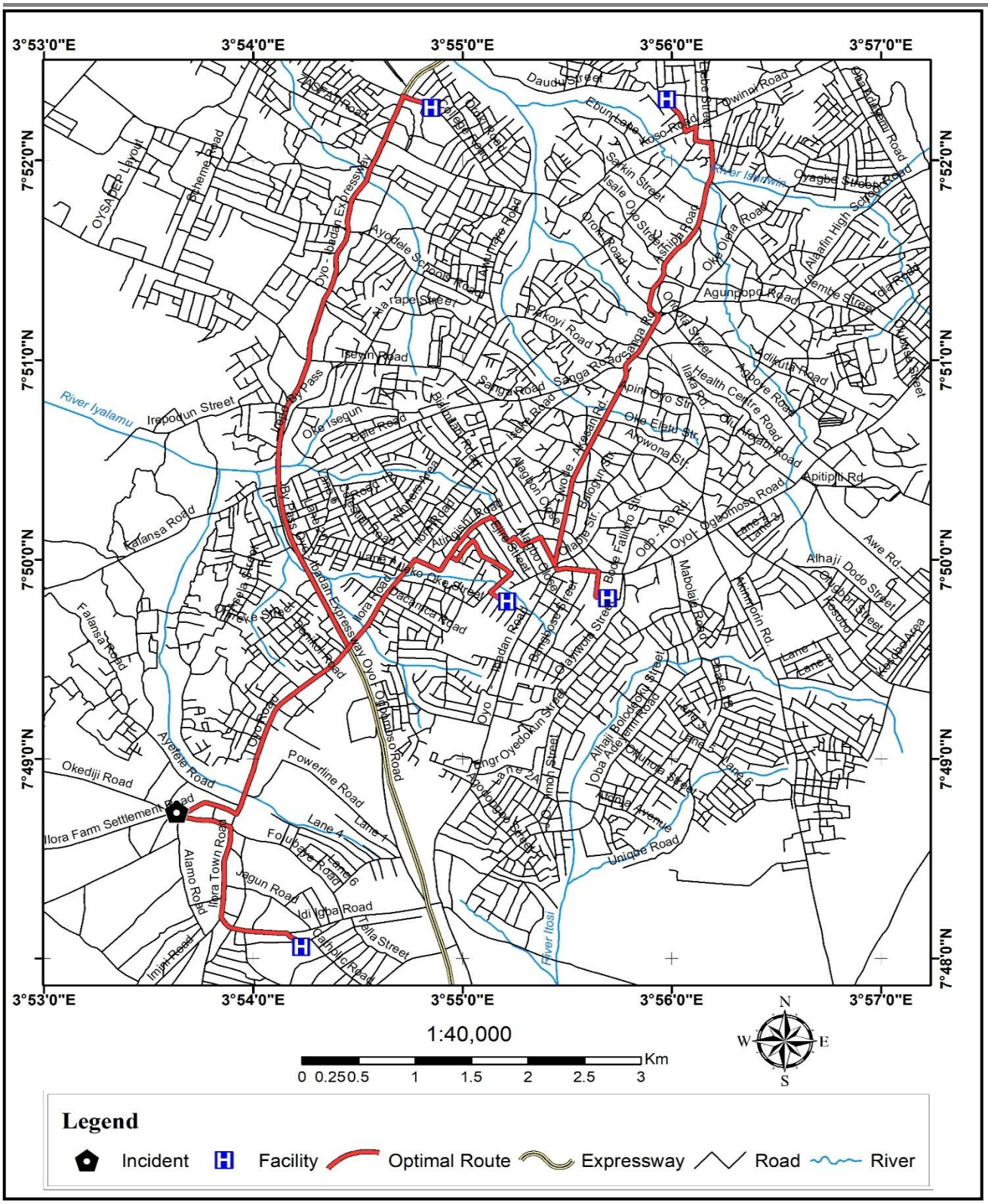

Figure 9. Best routes linking a polling unit and selected Hospitals

Table 5. Proximity of Polling Units to Hospitals during Emergency

S/N	Incident (Polling Unit)	Facility (Hospital)	Travel Distance (Km)
1	Bode Open Space , Ilora	General Hospital, Ilora	2.1
		State Hospital, Oyo	5.1
		Peamark Hospital, Oyo	6.1
		Momoh Memorial Hospital, Sabo, Oyo	8.2
		Oroki Hospital, Oyo	10.4

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2	Mabolaje Open Space	Peamark Hospital, Oyo	1.6
		State Hospital, Oyo	3.4
		General Hospital, Ilora	5.6
		Oroki Hospital, Oyo	5.9
		Momoh Memorial Hospital, Sabo, Oyo	7.0
3	Ogbegbe Open Space	Momoh Memorial Hospital, Sabo, Oyo	2.4
		Oroki Hospital, Oyo	2.5
		Peamark Hospital, Oyo	4.4
		State Hospital, Oyo	5.4
		General Hospital, Ilora	8.6
4	Irepo Market Open Space	Momoh Memorial Hospital, Sabo, Oyo	3.2
		State Hospital, Oyo	3.5
		Peamark Hospital, Oyo	3.6
		Oroki Hospital, Oyo	5.7
		General Hospital, Ilora	6.6

Source: Authors, 2025

CONCLUSION

The use of geospatial technologies cannot be ruled out as far as conduct of elections in Nigeria is concerned. The use of GIS as geospatial technology was shown in this research as a potent tool in the spatial assessment of closest facilities in emergency situations during elections in Oyo Federal Constituency, Oyo State, Nigeria. This study was able to determine the distances that can be taken to the polling units by the security personnel from the police formations in the study area and also optimal routes from the health facilities within the study area to the polling units during emergencies on election day. Since the locations of the polling units and those of the health care providers are known, and the distances between them determined, it is hereby concluded that the aim and objectives of the study were achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study came up with some recommendations based on the findings. They include:

1. One of the causes of violence that leads to emergency is overcrowding of the polling units during election. It is recommended that polling units with more than the prescribed 750 voters be split to decongest over populated polling units.
2. The personnel in the services of the Nigerian Police in the five divisions were discovered to be inadequate for the number of polling units in Oyo Federal Constituency even if all the serving police officers were to be on duty on the day of election. The policy makers should adopt the world's minimum policing standards as rooted in International Human Rights Law (IHRL) as contained in Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documents which dictates that "law enforcement must respect human rights while maintaining public order, preventing crime and providing assistance" which is only possible when their presence is adequate, effective and punctual.
3. There should be more than two public hospitals at the level of secondary providers to serve the study area because there are more private hospitals in the study area which may not be willing to attend to emergencies without police reports. The emergency service units should be available at all time.
4. The best routes taken during emergencies should be devoid of any impedance of any type like potholes, speed breakers, bumps and so on so that the best and shortest routes do not turn out to delay the rescue operations by either the police or the medical personnel from the hospitals.
5. The findings can be made available online through web cartography. This will give the findings and the recommendations from the study local and global access to reduce loss of lives and properties during elections.

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