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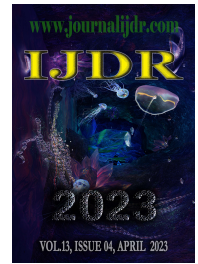
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INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY AND LEADERSHIP SELECTION PROCESS IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, MISCONCEPTIONS AND PROSPECTS (2018-2023)

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ABSTRACT

Party democracy and its concepts represent the existence and application of norms and values that guides a democratic setting, and Nigerian political system is not an exception. It is expected that each political party should, as a matter of obligation, adhere strictly to the rules guiding leadership recruitment processes internally. But, records have shown that the reverse has been the case in Nigeria. This paper examined intra-party democracy and leadership recruitment process in Nigeria. The study is qualitative and descriptive research design was adopted. The method of data collection was documentary review of relevant literature. Content analysis technique was adopted in the interpretation of data. Through the study, it was observed that, elite fragmentation due to selfish ambitions, violation of electoral laws and party constitution are largely responsible for the absence of intra-party democracy in Nigeria. The study concluded that, intra-party democracy can only be achieved if party leaderships respect their party rules, and electoral laws. It recommended that, the electoral body (INEC) should be empowered by legislation to ban politicians found culpable in the violation of electoral laws in the constitution from participating in political activities for twenty years. By doing so, those who find solace in violating democratic norms will be weeded out from the political system. There should be proper monitoring and strict enforcement of sections; 91 (4), and 92 (1-8) of electoral Act 2010 relating to limitation of election expenses by candidates and political parties to forestall 'cash and carry' method during leadership recruitment process.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Intra-party democracy in Nigeria, and its challenges could be traced to the formation and management of foremost political parties after the independence in 1960. The three major political parties: National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (1944) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe from Eastern region; Action Group (1951) led by Obafemi Awolowo from the Western region, and Northern People's Congress (1941) led by Abubakar Tafewa Belew from Northern region. These three regional parties were formed along ethnic and religious lines. The formation and management of the three dominant political parties by the three leaders were oligarchic in nature and style. For instance, the three leaders were so revered in Nigeria to the extent that, the story makers then, at my Village square told us (kids) in the 1970s that, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Abubakar Tafewa Belew, and Obafemi Awolowo used to hold political meetings in the moon, and all of us would start to gaze at the moon to see perhaps, we could sight them seated. It was common knowledge in the Eastern region where the writer come from that, Dr. Nnamdi

Azikiwe could appear and disappear anywhere unnoticed. As a result of the unflinching idolization and support for them in their regions, the culture of undemocratic values surreptitiously became currency in the polity. They virtually had no stiff opposition within their parties (with the exception of Western region) where the "federal might" was brought to bear under Abubakar Tafewa Belew as Prime Minister; and conflict ensued between Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his deputy; Akintola which eventually led to the 1962 declaration of state of emergency in the western region. In each of the political parties then, majority of party members felt it was an abomination to even ask their political leaders questions in terms of; accountability, equity and fairness before and during leadership selection processes. For example, a Parliamentary Leader of NCNC; K.O. Mbadiwe, tried to know NCNC's membership recruitment criteria with Nnamdi Azikiwe before and after the independence, and he was suspended from the party for many years. In other words, the Leaders dictated who should be in a position; Where? When? And, why? The misleading conception by party members then, was that, asking a leader question was an act of rebellion, and that, a rebellion to a party leader, is a rebellion to God. This misleading impression coupled with

many years of dictatorial regimes in Nigeria, led to the entrenchment of an inordinate quest for power, and by extension, undemocratic culture in political parties in Nigeria. And, to make the matter worse, the Civilian administration in 1999 (4th Republic) failed to address the problem via electoral reforms. Furthermore, records have shown that, the protracted intra-party crisis during 2015 and 2019 general elections gave impetus to the worsening state of intra-party democracy in Nigeria. Invariably, the role of Political parties in a democratic setting cannot be overemphasized. They nominate candidates for elective offices, and mobilize their constituencies to bring about shared goals and aspirations of its members during elections. They mobilize the general public as means of socio-political re-engineering of interests; placing citizens' general aspirations in a national context. In another perspective, National Democratic Institute (NDI) posits that, through their effort to control and influence public policy, political parties play an intermediary role, linking the institutions of government to societal groups. They rally support behind important legislation, advocating positions that improve the public welfare and advance citizens' interest (NDI, 2011: 9). A Political party represents more or less organized group of citizens who act together as a political unit, have distinctive aims and opinions on the leading political questions of controversy in the state, and who, by acting together as a political unit, seek to obtain control of the government, Appadorai (1978, as cited in S.T. Akindele, 2010). Observably, leadership recruitment function is fundamental among other duties of political parties in a democracy. It is therefore, expected that, each political party in Nigeria should, as a matter of constitutional responsibility, domesticate these democratic ideals, and carry out the leadership recruitment processes in consonance with electoral laws, and party's constitution; including international covenants relating to economic and political rights of Nigerian citizens. There is no doubt that, the Nigerian political elites have the wherewithal more than the ordinary citizens to influence state policies towards nation building but, the question is; Are they playing those leadership roles in accordance with the electoral laws in Nigerian constitution? Records have shown that the reverse has been the case since the attainment of political independence. The implication is that, party leadership crisis leading to endless litigations have become common denominator in almost all the political parties.

The abdication of the core mandate of nurturing and nominating credible candidates for periodic elections in accordance with extant laws establishing them is common place. To this end, incalculable financial resources that would have been used to fund party's programmes were diverted for pending cases within themselves in courts across the country. Economically, wasted man-hours in courts is not left out, and what we get is what we are witnessing in public offices in which political thugs and social miscreants were imposed on the people to make laws for the entire country. The main objective of the paper is to examine intra-party democracy with reference to political leadership recruitment processes in Nigeria's political system. Bridging the gap in existing literature, we have looked at the two dominant political parties: All progressive congress (APC), and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of Nigeria, as spring boards of analysis to explaining the intervening variables in political parties in Nigeria. The choice of the two dominant parties was based on their wider representation of voters / supporters in Nigeria. Besides, other smaller parties look up to the two mega parties as models.

METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative and descriptive research design was adopted. The method of data collection was documentary review of relevant literature. Content analysis technique was adopted, and data were interpreted and analyzed thematically.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION/ANALYSIS

Democracy; Intra-party democracy; Political parties, and leadership selection process are concepts in this section, and our intension is to

showcase and analyze the diverse views of eminent scholars and arrive at a fairly but, acceptable explanation that provide useful insights into each of them.

First, the history of Democracy could be traced to the Greek City state of Athens in the Middle of 5th Century B.CE; to denote the political system then. It has its origin in the Greek language: *demokratia*, which was coined from *demos* (people), and *kratos* (rule), according to Britannica (2020). It is regarded as one of the universal core values and principles of the United Nations. Interestingly, fundamental human rights and freedom, periodic elections, and inalienable rights of the citizens to participate without inhibitions constitute the core indicators of democratic ideals. It is in recognition of these salient features that, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1948 passed a resolution on the importance of internal democracy in which people participate in an open, transparent free, and fair without intimidation. In article 25 of the international covenants on Civil and Political rights; expressly recognizes citizens' rights to vote and be voted for in a free and fair elections. Nigeria is a signatory to these covenants relating to voting rights, and has ratified these instruments but, unfortunately, chapter IV of the 1999 constitution does not guarantee citizens' voting rights. The 1999 constitution only recognizes the electoral Act in section 77, subsection 12 (1), while, Voters' Act in section 1 (2) deals with eligibility, registration and conditions required for challenging the outcome of an election. The rights to vote and be voted for is conspicuously missing. It supposed to be included as one of the fundamental human rights of citizens in Nigerian constitution just like right to life, human dignity and education (The Punch, 2018).

From the Instrumentalist perspectives, John S. Mill provides useful insights into the importance of democracy thus:

It gives each subject a share of political power, and by extension, forces the decision makers to take into account the rights and interests of a wider range of subjects than are taken into account under aristocracy or monarchy (Mill 1861, chp.31)

Mill's position was corroborated by several contemporary scholars of democracy when they cite robust empirical correlation between well-functioning democratic institutions and the strong protection of core liberal rights such as ; rights to fair trial, bodily integrity, freedom of association and freedom of expression (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2021; Gaus, 2011:chp.22),

On the other hand, most critics of democracy are elitist scholars. They argued that, democracy is problematic when it comes to the issue of equality in policy making, and participation in electoral process for the society. The question according to Schumpeter is; who ought to participate: children, adults or every citizen in the society? It sound very easy but, misleading in practicality. He sees democracy in two perspectives; method of citizens of rule by elite who gain Power through competitive elections, and transformative vision of the democratization of all spheres of life, including the economy, by replacing hierarchical structures (Medearis, 2013).

Furthermore, Schumpeter perceives democracy as a powerful transformative tendency leading towards the establishment of democratic socialism in which the elite have the control of democratic change in the society. However, the contemporary values of democracy such as; equality and freedom, social justice and respect to human dignity were ignored, and these represent a great departure from the perspectives of greater number of the philosopher kings on democracy. Nevertheless, Schumpeter's views on democracy lends credence to Karl Marx's warning about the danger in allowing the (political Bourgeois) owners of means of production take firm grip of the productive sector of the economy as economic determinism affect social consciousness of the working class, politics, law culture and by extension, the entire population in the society.

Contrary to Schumpeter's elitist approach to democracy, Jean Jacques Rousseau (Chief exponent of Social contract theory) argued that,

democracy is incompatible with representatives institution; a position that, renders it all but, irrelevant to nation-state. He believed that, the sovereign power belong to the people who elected political office holders on trust that, they should protect lives and property of the citizens, hence, citizens willed their legitimate rights and authority to the government in power. In point of analysis from the above perspectives, Rousseau favours direct system of democracy that allows for mass participation on the grounds that, the sovereignty of the people cannot be alienated or represented through electoral process, as absolute power belong to the people, and not the few elected representatives in government. Although his definition did not capture the fundamental human rights and freedom as at then, he recognized the importance of people's power and authority over the representatives across the world. The writer is tempted to argue in line with Rousseau's position because; the sovereignty of the people, particularly in the developing countries has been grossly alienated from the people by the representative institutions in Nigeria.

John Dewey, an America philosopher, corroborated Rousseau's stand point when he contends that, democracy is the most desirable form of government because, it provides the kind of freedom necessary for individual self-development and growth; include the freedom to exchange opinions and ideas with others such as; freedom to pursue common goals, and determine one's own conception of good life. . This definition favors a welfarist state where workers fundamental right enable them to participate directly in the control of productive firms in which they are employed; he criticized scholars like Schumpeter and Thomas Hobbes who sees nothing good about the people's natural rights, freedom and capabilities in the society. Karl Marx and his friend, Friedrich Engels, in the "*Communist manifesto document* approached the concept of democracy in a different perspective, when they argued that, the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class to win the battle for democracy, and universal suffrage is the foremost task of the revolution in which the working class have the right to revolt if they were denied political expression through democratic institutions. Marx sees institutions in a State; in which democratic institution is one, as a mere executive branch of the political bourgeois. For instance, in Nigeria ,the National Assembly members in concert with the executive arm, stepped down the debate on electronic transmission of results whereas, it is one the very good ways of curtailing rigging by ballot box stuffing on the way to the INEC headquarters in Nigeria

Arising from the diverse attempts at defining democracy, it is evident that, democracy as a concept is better described than defined. It lacks a universally accepted definition. Nonetheless, Abraham Lincoln's perception of democracy as; "the government of the people; for the people, and by the people' is the most referenced definition of democracy by contemporary scholars and students of political science in the world. On the other hand, Intra- party democracy can be defined as implementation of a minimum set of norms within a political party. This minimum set of norms should provide a bottom-up approach to forming a decision in the party and the internal distribution of power at different levels, bodies, and individuals. The minimum sets of norms are internal rules and procedures that give ordinary members greater influence on issues such as candidate selection, leadership selection and policy platform. The most engaging models of internal party democracy are inclusive, participatory, deliberate, and responsible and include fair distribution of power. Intra- party democracy depicts political party's commitment to upholding democratic governance internally. And, democratic governance entails the decentralization of power within a political party and allow for fair and inclusive participation by their memberships in a bid to hold party officials accountable in the bigger battle to combat abuse, corruption, and misgovernance (Isam et 'al, 2021).

Moreover, political parties are vital political institutions for contemporary democracy. They are essential for the organization of the modern democratic polity and are crucial for the expression and manifestation of political pluralism. Political parties' perform variety

of functions; all of which are to some degree quintessential to modern liberal democracy. Parties perform an important function as a channel for integrating individuals and groups in society into the political system; they mobilize and socialize the general public, particularly at elections, and aggregation of social interest. Furthermore, political parties fulfill an important role in the recruitment of political elites by nominating and selecting candidates for public office; they are essential for the organization of government; and perform an important policy making function by making political decisions and implementing these in political practice (Ingrid van, 2003). Political leadership recruitment as a concept provides useful insights into how we can identify and analyze those who play major roles in a nation's policy making process. Hence, it is the ability to mobilize human and material resources in pursuit of shared goals and aspirations in a political system. In a very clear term, Kenneth, P. (2016: 293) establishes a yard stick for measuring the credibility of a leadership recruitment process in a democracy:

The meaningful participation of the electorate in the selection of public officials is, in much respect, a defining characteristic of democratic politics. It is, of course, not the only characteristic; and it is moreover, a characteristic that is not independent of other special phenomena that shape the process of leadership selection. In particular, social background broadly conceived as including status at birth, and educational or occupational achievements as well as the intervention of a small politically active stratum in the selection process affect the decision as to who gains control of Government (Kenneth, P. 2016: 293).

According to Lester, G. (2017), the recruitment of candidates into elective offices is one fundamental responsibility of political parties in a democracy. The author contends that, a political party that is not capable of carrying out the recruitment process in a free, fair manner is not worth to be called a political party, and stands to lose its essence of being one. The writer is in accord with the author because, political parties in advanced democracies: United states of America, Canada, United Kingdom, and France do not experience the type of intra-party crisis on the African Continent due largely to the existence of functional institutions, well entrenched party ideology, and democratic culture.

REPORT CASES OF ELITE FRAGMENTATION IN ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC), AND PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP), AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The inevitability of conflict in human relations is sacrosanct, and the only option left for mankind is to observe the early- warnings, and make frantic efforts at stemming the preponderance of its escalation to the crisis stage; in which collateral damage could be recorded. In the light of this, elite fragmentation in political parties depicts a situation where the ruling elite quarrel among themselves; and start to expose their dirty deeds within their political parties as a result of either personality clash or selfish ambitions that are diametrically opposed to party's interest, and the nation at large or both. For example, the secret codes in PDP and APC leaderships are in the public domain as we can see below;

On the 18 July, 2018 Godswill Akpabio of the People's Democratic Party before his defection to APC told the audience and party supporters that "Emmanuel Udom was the greatest mistake he made in a hurry, and he asked for forgiveness, and Udom; the incumbent governor of Akwa Ibom state replied him on 16 January, 2019 at Uyo campaign ground this way:

there is deference between projects and monuments. I came to complete live-touching projects. The same people that promised you 31 industries, did they do one? (Premium Times, 16 January 2019).

Consequent upon the power tussle between them, Udom sacked some members nominated by Akpabio such as; Etwkam Umoren and Ekpeyong from Ikot Ekpene who were also PDP members. Although

they might have taken sides in the conflict but, it was expected that both leaders ought to have resolved their differences amicably as party members. For ease of analysis, this has explained how selfish interest and struggle for power within the party leadership can negatively affect leadership recruitment process. This is because; those party members sacked by Udom Emmanuel might have suffered from transferred aggression from the governor, and may not forget their ordeals in a hurry in the party. The implication would be the prevalence of suspicion and lack of mutual trust, love and hate, character assassination, slander, and faction formation in the party. When conflict between governing elites is not nipped in the bud at the latent stage, it will escalate to crisis situation or stalemate. And, if it reaches the crisis stage, communication among party leaders will breakdown, and if party leaders can no longer interact, how can consensus be reached on any issue bordering the party? As at today, Peoples Democratic party is facing serious leadership crisis as seven members of its National Working Committees (NWC) resigned as a result of a long standing conflict they had with the party's former National chairman – Prince Uche Secondus. Some National Working Committee members accused him of lacking the capacity to manage the party. They claimed that:

Since they were elected in 2017, the Deputy National Officers only met three times with Secondus. It is not as if he called us; on those three occasions, we sought audience with him and most annoying part is that, during Christmas and Sallah festivities, the NWC would visit our Governors. They would collect money and other items but, we can tell you that they don't share anything with the deputies. To him, we are just a necessary evil to be tolerated but never to be catered for (Daily Trust, August 4, 2021; p.38).

Two deputy national chairmen; Akinwonmi (West) and Nazif (North) laid claim to party leadership soon after a Degema High Court in River State restrained the PDP national chairman, Uche Secondus from parading himself as National Chairman, pending the determination of the substantive suits in the court. Akinwonmi cited section 35 (3: b) of the PDP constitution that empowers him to take over the affairs of the party in the absence of the national chairman, he quickly announced the postponement of the hitherto National working committee (NWC) meeting but, unknown to him, Nazif and some NWC members went to the party secretariat and held the meeting where Nazif cited section 35 (3:d) of the PDP constitution that empowers him to take over the affairs of the party if the deputy national chairman (West) is absent. Several meetings have been held to resolve the conflict by both PDP governors and other stakeholders in the party but, all to no avail. The chairman was later suspended by his ward, and he dragged PDP to court, and vows to fight on, refuses to withdraw court cases (Daily Independence, 23 September, 2021, P.5)

Taking the foregoing into consideration, it is evident that, what is paramount in the minds of party leaders is to satisfy their selfish interests by all means. As we can deduce here, the quest for money and political power was the cause of intra-party conflict in PDP. And, this challenge is contagious because, it will get to other parties. Infarct, it has played out in All People Grand Alliance (APGA) in Anambra state, following the concluded gubernatorial primaries.

In All Progressive Congress (APC) when Oshiomhole's administration came to an end in 2016, he tacitly supported Godwin obaseki against all odds, and persuaded two prominent APC governorship contenders to step down for Obaseki during the primaries. But, one of them; Odubu who was enjoying the support of the veteran politician in the state went ahead to contest and at the end, Oshiomhole stopped him at the primaries and Obaseki emerged as the APC's candidate (vanguard, 2019). During 2015/2016 Edo Governorship Campaign in Edo State, the former Governor and APC national chairman; Adams Oshiomhole, at the instance of party supporters and the general public eulogized Godwin Obaseki thus:

By special grace of God who reads the heart of men. He knows what we don't know, and sees what we cannot see from the

beginning to the end, knows that, Godwin comes from the large family in Benin Kingdom. He went to University of Ibadan; he finished with flying colours, there were no issues. He went to the United States and did his Masters, and he came back to give me support by giving me what I do not have; he became the chairman of economic team, and used his connectivity to set up businesses, including first and second generation Banks. The building of roads from Uromi to Queen Cinema, Godwin had hands. Many schools were built, and Godwin had hands. Water everywhere, Godwin has hands. He knows the vision and the mission of APC. That's the family tradition. He told me, you just do the thinking, and I will provide the means, and through his network creativity, he did all he promised (Somto Okonkwo, 2020).

And, he publicly expressed his resentment on Ize-Iyamu who was also an APC gubernatorial candidate this way:

I am obliged to report about Ize-Iyamu, and I am liable if I speak anything libelous. I set aside my immunity, and I am ready to fully bear the responsibility before God as I declare as follows: He has a very interesting life style. He went to school, his primary school, he finished but, I have not seen his certificate. He went to university of Benin to read Law but for two years, he was rusticated. Why? Because, he poured an acid to another student and his manhood destroyed and he cannot raise children as at today. Because he couldn't finish, he couldn't go to law school. Although he read Law, he is not a Barrister. It was because he was suffering from identity crisis that, he went and carried the Bible, and said he is born again. It's okay! Carrying Bible does not provide the clue of who you are. It's only God that reads the mind of everyone to know who is good or bad. His first job experience; he was the Chief of Staff to who? And, the people echoed; Igbenediom! And, he was Secretary to State Governor under whose administration? Igbenediom! He was reported in the Newspaper to have said that the failure of Igbenediom's Government, he is not responsible. Meaning that, he agreed the Government in which he served in different capacities failed, and is that the reason why he should be promoted to the office of a Governor? And, the people echoed NO! (Channel TV (2020)

During 2019 gubernatorial campaigns in Edo state, social, electronic and print media were inundated with reports of internal crisis in APC between Adams Oshiomhole and Godwin Obaseki; the incumbent governor of Edo state. Personality clash and power tussle ensued between them in which, information they made public showed how the poor masses were conspired against for too long. There were report cases of: financial impropriety in governance, double speak, inordinate struggle for power, character assassination; acts of libel, slander, black mail, hate and love, envy and jealousy, litigation, and above all, flagrant violation of citizens' civil and political rights in Edo state. When the conflict between them reached the climax Oshiomhole started carrying out a public campaign of calumny against the same Obaseki he had commended so well in 2016; and on the 12 December, 2020, he (Oshiomhole), introduced Ize -Iyamu whom he had in 2016 told party supporters that he (Ize -Iyamu) could not graduate from University of Benin because, he poured acid on another student, and destroyed his manhood as the best APC candidate who has come to cleanse the iniquities Obaseki had committed in Edo government house this way:

APC had a successful rally yesterday, and as I am standing here, I am taller than I was just yesterday. We have harvested back those who were part of APC that negotiated for the merger. Ize-Iyamu was my DG in 2012, and I won all the 18 local government area of the state. I am much more confident now as APC are having a complete full house. I apologize for my poor judgment and mistake in the past. You cannot know what a person can do until he gets money or power. Then, his colour will come out. Let us welcome the in-coming Governor of Edo State. A man of God who has come with the Holy Spirit to cleanse the iniquities Obaseki had committed in government house. Ize-Iyamu understands the challenges in Edo, and has come with solutions (AMT.247 News, 2020).

Taking the foregoing into consideration, can we say that, there is the existence of intra-party democracy in All Progressive Congress in the face of; power tussle, double speak, hate and love speeches, deceit, slander and character assassination within the party?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted two theories; General Systems Theory, and Principled Negotiation Theory. General system theory was propounded by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1901-1972), an Australian biologist. It holds that, a social institution (state) is made up of interacting component parts which must conform to internal and external forces of a complete system. It attempts to explain political phenomenon or society using system construct akin to human physiological setup. The idea is that, society is comprised of different component parts working together to produce a harmonious system. It has such words like stability, harmony, integrated, independence, and equilibrium (Aina, 2016). Although the theory was criticized for its deficit knowledge on natural flexibility in a social system made up human beings. Nigerian state is made up of institutions in which political parties are one. But, not all the time that, various component institutions will conform to internal forces for the stability and survival of the (system) because, they are not 'Matter' Nonetheless, the theory provides useful insights into how political parties as component part of the Nigerian state performs their responsibilities in conformity with other institutions for the survival and advancement of social economic growth. It assumes that, if one component part is dysfunctional, the entire system or 'whole' will automatically be affected negatively.

Looking at the political system in Nigeria, there is every cause to worry about the prevalence of elite fragmentation in PDP and APC and the penchant of party leaderships to institutionalize undemocratic means to perpetuate themselves in power at all cost. There is political tension already in Nigeria as to how politicians will conduct themselves in 2023 General election in the face of intra-party crisis. This has lend credence to the assumption of General system theory in the paper; that, if there is no conformity, solidarity, integration, and harmony from one constituent part of the system, the entire system will be negatively affected. On the other hand, Principled Negotiation Theory propounded in 1991 by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton of the Harvard Negotiation Project Team assumes that, conflict is caused by incompatible positions and a zero-sum view of conflict being adopted by the conflicting parties. The goals of work based on principled negotiation theory are: to assist conflicting parties to separate personality from problems and issues and to be able to negotiate on the basis of their interests rather than fixed positions. Second, to facilitate agreements that offer mutual gains for both all parties (Simon, Fisher et al (2000:8-9). This theory provides credible insights into why the two dominant political parties are crisis ridden all the time.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Elite fragmentation in PDP and APC has led to the disclosure of the hitherto confidential party matters because; the ruling elites in conflict are on the habit of adopting principled negotiation positions, and the peaceful negotiation and dialogue became difficult. The implication therein is that, party consensus remains a big challenge as we see in APC and PDP internal leadership recruitment tussles in the 2023 General election; wherein, the G5 Governors kicked against their PDP chairman by insisting that, he should step down for a Southern candidate in fairness to power balancing stipulate in the party's constitution. Three state governments, Kaduna, Kogi and Zamfara, have sued the federal government at the Supreme Court over the hardship occasioned by the scarcity of the redesigned naira notes.

According to Ameh of Premium Times:

"The three states are in northern Nigeria of which President Muhammadu Buhari's home state, Katsina State, is a part. The governors of the three northern states that filed the suit are also members of the same party, APC, as President Buhari"

As the author is trying to complete this article, the much canvassed intra-party democracy in Nigeria remains elusive in PDP and APC, hence the emergence of the 3rd Force; Labour party. In consonance with the assumptions of General systems theory, the intra-party conflicts in PDP and APC has negatively affected the socio-political stability of the entire country. Record has shown that, political instability begets security issues, and if there is insecurity (as we have already) there is no meaningful development. (Silent lege inter armo). We also discovered that, the incompatibility of party leaders' interests are diametrically opposed to political parties' constitutional responsibilities, and by extension, the institutionalization of intra-party democracy in Nigeria. This is because, when two or more party bigwigs are in conflict, the rest of other party members are bound to take sides, and when sides are taken, political rights and privileges of citizens are violated with ignominy; as it is said that, when two elephants are fighting, the grass suffers; as in APC, Edo and PDP, Akwa-Ibom states. This worrisome state of affairs brings us to the common assumption that, "Politics is a dirty game" which the writer disagrees in totality because; it is the political gladiators that have dirty character towards both democratic and political ideals, and not "Politics" as conceptualized by the Philosopher Kings.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that, intra-party democracy can only be achieved if party leaderships respect party constitution, and electoral laws in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The absence of intra-party democracy was orchestrated by bad leadership in political parties, and by implication, it has remained antithetical to socio-economic and political development in Nigeria. The position of woman leader and Youth leader in the party constitution of APC and PDP is nothing to write home about. Their functions are all about renting halls, canopies and organization of flashy party uniforms as well as organizing party thugs during rallies. This is a mockery of liberal democracy in the 21st century. To this end, Women and Youths are shut out of the political process in Nigeria. The continued absence of intra-party democracy has exacerbated internal crisis in parties, and eroded trust and confidence among the teaming youths and women who are desirous of participating in the political process in Nigeria. Its implication is the exacerbation of political apathy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above findings, the paper recommends the following:

The Independence electoral commission (INEC) should be empowered to ban politicians found culpable in the violation of electoral laws and party constitutions from participating in political activities for a period of twenty years. By doing so, those who find solace in the violation of democratic norms and values with impunity, will be gradually weeded out from the political system in Nigeria.

There should be proper monitoring and strict enforcement of sections; 91 (4), and 92 (1-8) of electoral Act 2010 relating to limitation of election expenses by candidates and political parties to forestall 'cash and carry' method during the leadership recruitment process in Nigeria. The 'NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN' bill that was passed into law by the National Assembly should be implemented with political will to justify the common slogan that the youths are actually the leaders of tomorrow.

The affirmative action on women emancipation should not only be in paper but, in concrete terms. To this end, Mr. President should as a matter of urgency, sponsor an Executive bill to be titled "leadership Inclusivity Bill, 2022; to the Senate and House of Representatives for accelerated hearing; in which Nigerian Women and Men shall have equal share of political positions (50-50) in political parties, state and federal executives. We are in 21st century, so, the office of the president should be rotated between female and male folk. This is because, many advanced countries of the world have had or having women presidents, and the available records show that they are better than men, in governance. Such countries are: Brazil, Denmark,

Iceland, Germany (under Angela Merkel) etcetera. Luckily in Nigeria, we can boast of women of good conscience, and value judgment that can lead the country aright such as; Dr. Okonjo Iweala , Professor Antonia Okoosi Simbine (our own), Aisha Mohammed, Dr. Obi Ezekwesili and host of them.

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