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Presidential Nomination Process for Nigeria's 2023 Election: A Study of PDP and APC

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Abstract

Developing nations of the world including Nigeria have been experiencing series of crises in their democratization processes. It is identified that conducting hitch free elections is one of the major problems encountered by these countries. Political parties in Nigeria, over the years, have faced crisis of nomination of candidates for national and sub-national elections. This has had adverse effect on the credibility of elections. Prelude to the 2023 general election, major political parties in Nigeria have to contend with challenges of nominating their presidential candidates. It is against this backdrop that this study is carried out. Its objective is to examine the processes of nomination of presidential candidates for the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria with particular reference to People Democratic Party, PDP and All Progressives Congress, APC. The study adopts primary and secondary sources of data collection using unstructured interview, textbooks, journals, internet and other relevant materials as instruments. Theory of Political Participation and Rational Choice theory are adopted as theoretical frameworks which serve as foundation upon which the arguments/discussions in the study are based. The study finds that there are rancor and acrimonies in the process of nominating the presidential candidates of the two parties for the 2023 elections. The study identifies ethnicity, religion, region, monetary inducement, and intra-party conflict as the major contentious issues in the process of nominating the Presidential candidates in the two political parties. The study in its conclusion opines that adherence to party constitution, justice, fairness equity among party members would minimize rancorous party primaries in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Democracy has been identified as the best form of government that can actualize the needs and aspirations of people. This is what convinces the countries across the globe to embrace the system. Thus, it shows that democracy has gathered momentum across the world as a result of its immense advantages and by implication because of the negative consequences of bad governance. On this note, a reliable democratic system can be put on the right footing if the principle of free, fair and credible election is entrenched (Adekola, 2018). In this regard, nomination of candidates forms the central nerve of the conduct of election as strong pillar that can make election to be free, fair and credible. This aspect must be handled by reliable political parties with the monitoring of a credible Election Management Body legally responsible to handle such assignment.

In fact, democracies are all founded upon election for it is the process that confers legitimacy upon power. An electoral contest and context in which political parties compete for the votes of citizens at regular intervals have been viewed as the common defining property of democracy (Adigbuo, 2008). In fact, the quality of elections is part of the criteria for assessing the level of consolidation of new democracies. Elections are therefore considered vital and indispensable for determining the democratic nature of a political system. When election is not managed quite satisfactorily, it can pave way for deeper ethnic and regional divisions, loss of legitimacy of elected authorities, protests, contestations, social explosion, and doubt about institutions, violence, and instability or even threat to the entire democratization process (Adekola, 2020).

Election has been identified as key aspect of democratic process. The manner by which election is conducted and managed by the Electoral Management Body, political parties and other stakeholders in electoral processes usually determine the integrity of the results of any election in a democratic society. Thus, electoral processes should be carefully organized, conducted and managed. The process should be free, fair, and just with total adherent to the rule of the game and fundamental human rights. In electoral processes, nomination of candidate is fundamental and key. The process is usually accompanied with rancor and acrimonies most especially since Nigeria's independence till the present Fourth Republic.

Over the years in Nigeria, the choice of presidential candidate is usually rancorous in all political parties. Ethnicity, religion, zone/region have been the basis for the rancor. This unhealthy contest is not a part of democratic principles. This study examines the processes of nominating presidential candidates by the two major political parties in Nigeria: The All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with a view to determining the level of compliance of their process to best global practices.

Election is identified as an acceptable mode of representation that is most likely to offer good governance. However, for election to be credible, acceptable and to serve

as a catalyst for good governance, certain principles must be upheld. Among others, proper nomination of party candidate is of essence.

It is against this backdrop that this study attempts to examine the process of nomination of presidential candidates for the 2023 election with particular reference to the All Progressive Congress, (APC) the ruling party and People Democratic Party, (PDP) the major opposition party.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary source of data collection is information gathered through unstructured interview conducted with some relevant stakeholders in election matter. On secondary source of data collection, textbooks, journals, internet and relevant documents shall be used. The study adopts random techniques in selecting the interview respondents. Six respondents were selected; two each from PDP and APC, remaining two comes from academics. Qualitative technique is adopted in analyzing the data collected for the study, placing discussions in historical perspectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Frame Work

The nature of the study makes the study adopts a theoretical approach as foundation upon which the discussions on is based. The theory of political participation is adopted. According to Mc Closky (1968), the theory of political participation states that citizens of a given society have rights without any restraint to participate directly or indirectly in politics, which involves "those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and, directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy". Ordinary people can participate in politics, and every individual has the right to participate, including people with disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 29 on participation in political and public life, mandates that "States parties shall guarantee to persons with disabilities, political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others".

This theory is believed to be relevant to this study and therefore considered very appropriate. All members of a political party, according to this theory has right to show interest in the party primaries. This study seeks to examine how this played out in the nomination process for the 2023 presidential election in the two political parties under study.

Conceptual clarification

Concept of Election

The concept of election is nebulous to define because of its nature and complexity. Election could be defined in relation to electing representative to

government office. It is also conducted to determine the popular choice of policy or to take a decision about an issue. In this context, the concept of election is in relation to electing representative into the public offices. Ujo (2001) describes election as "a procedure that allows members of an organization or community to choose representatives who will hold positions of authority within it. The critical features of this definition of election are: i) procedure or process, ii) population or people, iii) representatives and iv) positions of authority, whether governmental or non-governmental. These features are important in any discussion of elections. However, in discussing liberal democracy, Schumpeter (1947) believes that election is the opportunity people have " of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them" while Sandbrook (1988) argues that election implies the right of virtually all adult citizens to vote and be guaranteed of a range of familiar political and civil rights in any society. This study aligns with this definition that sees election as the right a man has to choose his leader/representatives under a credible process.

Concept of Candidate

In the context of elections for public offices, a person who has been selected to represent or is endorsed by a political party is said to be the party's nominee or candidate. The process of selection may be based on one or more primary election or by means of a political party convention or caucus according to the rules of the party and any applicable election laws. In some countries, the process is called pre-selection. Public statements of support for a candidate's nomination are known as endorsements or testimonials.

Legal Framework on the Nomination of Presidential Candidates in PDP and APC for the 2023 Nigeria's Elections

The nomination of candidates for election into political office of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is contained in the legal framework. This could be found in the1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended; the Electoral Act 2022; the People's Democratic Party and All Progressive Congress political parties' constitutions. The legal framework serves as a guide in the process of nominating a candidate by a particular political party for an election. For the position of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the law clearly spelt out the qualification of candidate and the procedure to follow as a mechanism to regulate the activities of the stakeholders.

The first legal framework is the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Section 131 states that: "a person shall be qualified for election to the office of the President if:

a. He is a citizen of Nigeria by birth;
b. He has attained the age of forty years;

c. He is a member of a political party and is sponsored by that political party; and

d. He has been educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent"

The above clause of the 1999 Constitution gives strong legal backing to the position of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Section 131 (c) is the most appropriate clause of the Constitution that provides for the nomination of the presidential candidate of the party. It specifically refers to the importance of political party with emphases that any presidential candidate must pass through political party.

The second legal framework as a mechanism put in place to regulate the activities of the stakeholders in the process of nomination of Presidential candidate in Nigeria by respective political parties is contained in the Electoral Act 2022 as amended. Section 84 (1) states that "a political party seeking to nominate candidates for election under this Act shall hold primaries for aspirants to all elective positions which shall be monitored by the Commission". Section 84 (2) states that "the procedure for nomination of candidates by political parties for the various elective positions shall be by direct primaries, indirect primaries or consensus" Furthermore, section 84 (3) clarifies issue of qualifications of aspirants and candidates. The provision states that "a political party shall not impose nomination of qualification or disqualification criteria, measures, or conditions on any aspirant or candidate for any election in its constitution, guidelines, or rules for nomination of candidates for elections, except as prescribed under sections 65, 66, 106, 107, 131, 137, 177 and 187 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and the (Electoral Act, 2022).

With regards to indirect primaries, the Electoral Act 2022 states clearly in Section 84 (5) that "a political party that adopts the system of indirect primaries for the choice of its candidate shall adopt the procedure outlined below":

(a) In the case of nominations to the position of Presidential candidate, the political party shall:

i. hold a Special Presidential Convention at a designated centre in the Federal Capital Territory or any other place within the Federation that is agreed to by the National Executive Committee of the party where delegates shall vote for aspirants of their choice

ii. the aspirant with the highest number of votes cast at the end of voting shall be declared the winner of the presidential primaries of the political party and that aspirant's name shall be forwarded to the Commission as the candidate of the party (Electoral Act, 2022).

The last legal framework that regulates the activities of stakeholders in the process of the nomination of Presidential candidates in Nigeria is contained in the Constitutions of the political parties. This work concentrates on the constitutions of People

Democratic, PDP and All Progressive Congress, APC as the case study. With regards to the nomination of candidates for election into public office, the PDP's Constitution as amended (2017) Chapter 8, Section 50 (1) expressively states that:

> "The National Executive Committee shall, subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), the Electoral Act (as amended) and this Constitution, formulate guidelines and regulations for the nomination of candidates for election into public offices at all levels and shall be the final authority for resolving all disputes relating to the choice of candidates for the party for any election and for conveying to the Independent National Electoral Commission , or any other authority to whom it may concern, confirming the names or list of names of candidates of the party in any elective public offices in the federation" (People Democratic Party, 2017).

Furthermore, Chapter 8, section 50 (2) states that "Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter IV of this Constitution, the National Executive Committee shall regulate the procedure for selecting the candidates for elective offices in the following manner":

(a) in the conduct of primaries for the party's candidate for the post of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the primary shall be held at the National Convention of the party specifically convened for that purpose (PDP, 2017).

In the case of APC, its Constitution also provides mechanism for the regulation of the process of nomination of candidates for public offices. Article 20 (iii) on the conduct of primaries for nomination of candidates states that for:

a. Local Government Council/Area Council Chairman
b. State House of Assembly
c. House of Representatives
d. Senate
e. Governor
f. President

Shall be through direct or indirect primary election to be conducted at the appropriate level (APC, 2014). On the procedure for nomination of candidates, Article 20 (iv) states that:

a. Indirect primaries for the purpose of nominating a candidate shall be done at a designated venue for that purpose, by an Electoral College of delegates democratically elected by members of the party from the various wards contained in the particular constituency at congresses
b. The number of delegates required for each office shall be determined from time to time by National Executive Committee
c. All statutory delegates to the National Convention shall be members of the Electoral College for all elections of which candidates are to be nominated

d. Voting at the Ward Congresses to elect the members of the Electoral College shall be by secret ballot and the contestants with the highest number of votes shall be announced as the winners accordingly (APC, 2014).

From all these elucidation, it is obvious that there is strong legal framework for all processes involved in nomination of candidates for all levels of government offices in Nigeria.

Issues in the Nomination Process for the Presidential Candidates in the PDP and APC for the 2023 Nigeria's Elections

In preparation for the 2023 general elections, all political parties, in line with the timetable for the general elections, conducted primary elections for nomination of their presidential candidates in the last quarter of 2022. In particular, the primary elections of the APC and PDP attracted attention of scholars and commentators.

In this study, the paper dissects the processes in the primaries which produced the flag bearers of the two parties, the ruling, APC and the major opposition party, PDP.

Expression of Interest and Nomination Form

Expression of interest in politics connotes the act of indicating interest in veining for political office on the platform of a political party. It is a formal declaration of interest to contest for a particular political office. Meanwhile, nomination form is the next step after expression of interest which has to do with the collection of form from the political party in preparation for the party primary for a political office.

According to Chukwudi (2022), it was the former governor of Lagos state and the National Leader of the APC, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, who broke the ice in January, 2022. At the close of nomination period not less than 28 members of the party filed nomination papers. However, only 25 of them filled and submitted the form (Felix Morka 2022)

For expression of interest and nomination form, the party charged its willing members, a sum of One hundred million naira only (N100, 000, 000). According to APC National Chairman, Abdullahi, (2022) 'APC raked in the sum of two billion and sixty-three million naira (N2.63bn) from the sale of Presidential form' (Abdullahi, 2022).

This humongous amount of money just for expression of interest to contest in a primary election generated public reactions. According to a respondent:

> *The amount fixed for collection of Presidential form in APC is a means of disenfranchising majority of Nigerians who could hardly afford this amount.The high cost of nomination and expression of interest form is another area of concern. The implication of this high cost of nomination is that political offices become reserved places for 'money bags' that may or may not have the physical, mental and the emotional capacity to occupy such offices. It excludes and tends to*

disenfranchise a good number of party men who have all it takes to occupy public office except money to seek nomination.

The People Democratic Party (PDP) started preparation for 2023 presidential election from Mach, 2022 when it encouraged its members to pick its presidential nomination form. Many aspirants, including Alhaji Atiku Abubakar signified their interest in the presidency. (Dirisu (2022), The Party charged its members N5 million for expression of interest and N35 million. (Agency Report, 2022)

From the above information, it is evident that the huge amount of money fixed for the purchase of presidential expression of interest and nomination form is a tactical way of denying majority of the people political rights. This is severely damaging to the growth and development of democracy. It is an undisputable fact that the humongous fees charged disenfranchised a vast majority of Nigerians, who cannot afford them even if they have the brilliant ideas and potential to deploy if they get a shot at the office. Furthermore, these high fees excluded youths from the electoral process. The trend violates the principle of "Not Too Young to Run" law. It also contrasts the current global trend where youths are being giving opportunity to rule and doing good. For example The Punch Editorial Desk (2022) observes that young men and women now occupies leadership positions and are performing creditably well. For four years, a former Austrian Chancellor, Sebastian Kurz was the world youngest leader after he attained power in 2007 at the age of 31 years. New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern became Prime Minister the same year at the age of 37 year. Emmanuel Macron was first elected French president at the age of 39 years. Finland's Sanna Marin was elected at the age of 34 years in 2019. Gabriel Boric at 36 years and Leo Varadkar of Ireland at 38 years in 2017. The idea of high fee for presidential nomination by both political parties demonstrated Nigeria's marginalization of the poor, including youths who could not have gotten opportunity to raise such amount of money. This is more so where youth's unemployment is alarmingly high. This development has greatly defeated the principle of political participation, which is against the norm of democratization process.

Thirdly, the idea of high fees for expression of interest and nomination form by political parties to fund political parties. This is unethical. Political parties are to be funded by members' donations and regular dues. Nigerian political parties do not rely on their members to fund their activities unlike what obtained in the First and Second Republic. Presently, in developed democracies, political parties charge annual membership fee as the major source of funding party activities. There is no justification for Nigeria's high fees for nomination forms. Graphically, the idea depicts all that is wrong with Nigerian political economy where public office is not for service to humanity but an enterprise because political office goes for the highest bidder.

Screening of Aspirants

In preparation for the 2023 elections the PDP constituted a screening committee for the screening of presidential aspirants headed by Former Senate President, David Mark. (Queen, 2022) 17 aspirants were screened beginning from 29th of April, 2022.

A respondent and member of PDP claimed that:

All the aspirants described the process of the screen as peaceful and sang the song of praise for the committee. They all pledged to run the race without rancor and violence against another contender. It was also claimed that Mr. Dele Momodu was given the traditional "off the hook" treatment by requesting him to take a bow and go after the original copies of his documents were screened. It was also claimed that two out of the seventeen aspirants were not cleared by the committee.

All Progressive Congress, APC also constituted a committee for the screening of its presidential aspirants. The committee was headed by the former Chairman of the party, Chief John Odigie Oyegun. This development was in preparation for the presidential primary scheduled to take place between June 6th and 8th June, 2022. The screening of the presidential aspirants of the party took place at Transcorp Hotel, Abuja after weeks of dilly-dallying (Adedayo, 2022). 23 aspirants were screened. (Adebayo, 2022)

Immediately after the screening exercise, the committee submitted its report to the party Chairman, Senator Abdullahi Adamu. Unlike the PDP, controversies surrounded the outcome of the APC screening. The controversies concerned the disqualification of some aspirants and petition against some contestants who were suspected of some improprieties that can affect the party at the general elections. Bakare (2022)

The data presented above indicates that the two political parties did conduct screening for their presidential aspirants. The objective of conducting the screening is to confirm the authenticity of the aspirants' academic credentials; evaluate their ability and capacity to handle the inherent challenges in the office being contested for; ascertain their possession of the required experience to manage the office and meet all the prescribed conditions by the appropriate bodies and the laws.

According to Queen Esther (2022), 'in PDP, seventeen aspirants obtained nomination form for presidential primary.' During the PDP screening, two aspirants-Cosmas Ndukwe, a former lawmaker, and Nwachukwu Anakwenze, a US-based medical doctor were disqualified by the screening committee headed by Former Senate President, David Mark, while the vice-presidential candidate in the 2019 election, Peter Obi withdrew from the race and later decamped to the Labour party. One of our interviewees, states that Peter Obi was frustrated out of the party because of the failure of PDP to adhere to its zoning arrangement which he strongly believed should be the turn of

southern Nigeria to produce Nigeria's next president after a northern has spent eight years in the office. According to him:

> *some powerful party stalwarts from the North and parts of the South frustrated Obi's presidential ambition in the party. Mr. Obi believes that without the zoning arrangement, he is not likely to earn the presidential ticket of the party. Perhaps this was why he angrily left the party when the party finally jettisoned the zoning arrangement and gave all aspirants, irrespective of the zone they come from the opportunity to vie for the party's ticket.*

During the APC screening, the issue of consensus raised by the committee is very interesting. However, the refusal of one out of the twenty three aspirants to accept consensus arrangement except if he is the choice of the party is a reflection of the weakness of the political party in Nigeria party politics and it is an indication that some individual are bigger than the party. This development is undemocratic and unhealthy for democratic development. Political party is supreme and bigger than individual member. The decision of the party is binding on all members. A respondent has a contrary observation, in his opinion,

> *the proposed consensus raised during the screening was targeted at eliminating particular aspirant from the race. Bola Tinubu being the leading and strong aspirant was the target. He was the only aspirant who opposed the idea of consensus except if the party resolves to pick him as the Presidential candidate. This is a stand to break the evil plan of a cabal on him. This is reflected on the results of the primary where Bola Tinubu had a land slide victory with over whelming votes.*

The statement of the Chairman of the APC screening committee, Chief John Oyegun on the report of the screening exercise where the number of aspirants cleared and not cleared was mentioned has generated a lot of reactions and created unnecessary confusion among the stakeholders and the public. It is evident that the report is controversial and confusing. The committee did not take a definite stand on the aspirants that were advised to withdraw as an attempt to trim down their number. This double standard report is undemocratic where transparency and objectivity are required.

Still on APC Presidential screening, it is reported that Bola Tinubu was petitioned as an attempt to stop his aspiration. The petitioner claimed that Tinubu's educational qualification is questionable and that does not qualify him to contest presidential election. Nigerian politicians are known for placing unnecessary emphasis on untenable issues. This issue has been resolved over the years. This particular candidate had contested two important political positions in the past with these same controversial educational qualifications and cleared of any misdeed by any competent court of law. Therefore, reasonably, this issue should not be coming up again.

Issue of Zoning

Nigeria is a multilingual society with over 250 ethnic groups which is the most fundamental reason for the adoption of federal system of government over the years. In Nigerian politics, the only principle that can take care of the interest of all ethnic nationalities is zoning principle. This principle will allow all nationalities to be adequately represented and also bring about the realization of balance of power which will likely promote unity. It is a known fact that Political parties are critical in a liberal democracy because they promote the stability of the governing process. In other words, political parties are essential components of democratic societies because they bring together people with similar ideologies under one umbrella. In Nigeria, zoning is a practice in which political parties agree to divide political positions among different geopolitical zones in order to ensure that no region of the country is permanently excluded from power. However, the agreement is on moral justification without legal support.

The principle of zoning was introduced in the Second Republic, following the end of Nigerian civil war. The need to reduce inter-ethnic tensions was the driving force behind zoning in Nigerian politics. In the Second Republic, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was the first political party to launch a zoning system to select party officials. This was later extended to political offices like the President, Vice President and leaders of National Assembly. Although zoning is not explicitly stated in either the 1999 Constitution or the Electoral Act, it is one of the practical measures adopted by political parties since the return to democracy in 1999. Despite the fact that the term "zoning" does not appear in the 1999 Constitution, it is consistent with the ideals of Federal Character and the establishment of a Federal Character Commission.

As the country is counting down to the 2023 upcoming elections, it is clear that there are significant considerations being faced by the country's main political parties, which are the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP).In a plural and diverse country like Nigeria, with over 400 ethnic nationalities, it is critical to provide a sense of belonging and participation to all groups in order to promote national unity and loyalty.This principle has been a source of tension and conflict among Nigeria's various ethnic nationalities, regions, and zones since independence, with minority groups protesting their marginalization by majorities.

In preparation for the 2023 elections, the opposition Peoples Democratic Party, PDP constituted a committee headed by Ortom, the governor of Benue state in respect of zoning of presidency. According to Eniola, Friday, Abiodun, Ikenna and Animashahun (2022), the Ortom committee listed about three recommendations which included:

1. Zoning the Presidency to the South

2. Throwing it open for all the zones in the country to contest

3.Zoning the presidency to the North.

However, the National Publicity Secretary of the party, Mr. Debo Ologunagba said that all those who had purchased the presidential forms were free to contest the party's presidential ticket regardless of zones, thus throwing zone over board. He explained further that the constitution gives all qualified Nigerians the right to contest and not be discriminated against(Eniola, el'tal, 2023).

This position of the party generated public mixed reactions. According to a respondent:

> *The Northern politicians were pleased with this party's stand while the Southerners were not happy with that position. The Southerns'argument was based on the fact that since the current President is from the North, under zoning arrangement, it is the turn of the South. In another dimension, the South-Easterners also criticize the South-Southerners and the South-Westerners who obtainedpresidential nomination forms for being unfair to them.*

Eniola, El"tal (2022) observes that Senator Orji Kalu, the former Governor of Abia state strongly criticized the South-South and South-West geo-political zones that it would be hypothetical of those in the South-South and South-Westwho are criticizing the North, especially in the PDP, for not conceding the Presidential ticket to the South, if the same people could not concede the position to the South-East.More so, a member of PDP interviewed reported that:

> *During the campaign of Presidential aspirants for delegates, the present Governor of Bauch state, Bala Muhammed and the former President of the Senate, Bukola Saraki announced that the Northern elders has picked them as the Northern presidential consensus candidates of PDP.*

The above statement according to Tunde and Olufemi (2022), Governor Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto state, Muhammed Ayatu-Deen and other presidential aspirants of PDP distanced themselves from the staged managed consensus arrangement of Bala Muhammed and Bukola Saraki. This is an indication that the PDP has jettisoned the zoning arrangement. It is a known fact that this staged managed consensus arranged is unethical to any democratic system. Those who are associated with this kind of manipulations are people of double and dented character. This kind of trick is undemocratic and unethical to democratization process. A respondent states that:

> *The Chairman of APC, in May, 2022, announced that the preferred candidate of President Muhammed Buhari is the Senate President Ahmed Lawal.These issue created confusion and tension among members of the party. A respondent opines that during the APC screening of the presidential aspirants, the chairman of the screening committee, Chief John Oyegun reported that 22 aspirants out of 23*

agreed on consensus but one of them disagreed except if he is the choice of the party or the party should conduct primary.

Another respondent reports that:

An attempt to counter an underground move by some of the party's stalwarts to retain power in the North, the Governor of Kaduna state, Nasir el-Rufai convened a meeting of the 11 northern APC governors to counter the underground move to retain power in the north. The meeting persuaded Abubakar Badaru, the Governor of Jigawa state to withdraw from the race and decided to meet with President Buhari to nform him that they had resolved that power must shift to the south in the national interest. List of five aspirants from the South were purportedly submitted to the President Muhammadu Buhari to select a consensus candidate among them. The aspirants shortlisted are: Bola Tinubu, Yemi Osinbajo, Kayode Fayemi, Rotimi Ameachi and David Umahi.

According to Henry (2022), sevenaggrieved presidential aspirants of APC dismissed the names of five presidential aspirants purportedly submitted to President Muhammadu Buhari. They described the move as a mere dream and an already failed attempt to sideline other aspirants, particularly those from the South-East geo-political zone. The aggrieved aspirants queried the alleged selection of only one aspirant from South-East which had never produced Nigeria's President in the Forth Republic, picking three from the South-West, a zone that has had sixteen years at the Presidency and inclusion of the one from the South-South, a zone which has also produced a president for six years. A respondent reports that the Chairman of the Party, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu disagreed with the purported five presidential aspirants submitted to the President Muhammadu Buhari. He was of the view that the executive led by him remains the official organ of the party through which decisions taken by stakeholders in the party will be communicated and acted upon, in the absence of that any other move remains null and avoid.

Presidential Aspirants' Campaign

Election Campaign is a process of soliciting for vote in an election. It is a Process of persuading and canvassing for the electorate votes for candidate(s) during election. Political Campaign is an organized effort by a political party or candidate for public office to attract the support of voters in an election. Political campaigns play an important role in the education and mobilization of citizens in most democracies (Adekola, 2018). Political campaign refers to in this study is the process of soliciting for the support of the delegates by aspirants for him or her to emerge as the candidate of the party for a particular political office. In preparation for the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria, aspirants in PDP and APC vying for the office of the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in their respective political parties were struggling to be the candidate of their

party. Thus, they campaigned for the vote of the delegates of their parties in the primary election for them to emerge as the presidential candidate of their parties.

Information from a respondent revealed that all APC and PDP presidential aspirants vigorously campaigned across the nation, targeting the delegates. They met with delegates, Party stalwarts, governors, political office holders and traditional rulers, solicited for their support in the primary election where the candidate of the party will be determined. It is observed that the two parties adopted indirect primary as the method of electing their candidates. The aspirants' campaign was expensive, time consuming and stressful as they have to move from one state to the other, canvasing for the delegates vote. It is also revealed by a respondent is that Mr. Nyesom Wike, a presidential aspirant in PDP was obviously the most aggressive campaigner among the aspirants, shuttling tirelessly across the regions and dropping verbal bombs on his key opponents and other critics at each stop.

From the above, it is evident that Mr. Nyesom Wike did an issue based campaign but targeted on the personality of other contestant. This is not different from the outburst of a presidential aspirant of APC, Mr. Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Abeokuta, Ogun State. At the peak of the campaign, this leading presidential aspirant of APC, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu expressed his frustrations with the alleged lack of strong commitment of some of his party members and those he has assisted politically in the past to his presidential ambition. Tinubu's first outburst in Abeokuta, Ogun State, during which he made the controversial "Emi lokan' meaning "it is my turn" statement, was believed to be borne out of his frustration with the shenanigans in the party traced to some trusted aides of the president. Before he publicly declared interest to vie for the party's ticket, forces that hate his guts in the party had read his body language and were prepared to frustrate his ambition. When the plots against him thickened by some cabals in the presidency and party, few days to the primary, his patience became overstretched in early June 2022 and he made what were considered as disparaging remarks against President Buhari in Abeokuta, Ogun State, where he claimed that he was instrumental to Buhari becoming Nigeria's president. According to the Channel Television of 3rd of June, 2022, the Tinubu's statement when he was addressing the delegates in Yoruba language is as follows:

> *I have been serving you for a long time, bring the Presidency, it is my turn. When Atiku was been flogged out of PDP by Obasanjo, he ran to me for help. The same with Nuhu Ribadu, he came to me and I backed him. It has been over 25years now that I have been serving them. Even Dapo Abiodun, can he say that he became Governor without me? We were together at the stadium, he was being intimidated. I personally handed over the party flag to him. He knows he can't be governor without the help of God and my support. Things are now serious, this is our time,*

the presidency is not only meant for the north. If not for my support Buhari will not have become the president. He failed during the first, second and third tries, he even wept on national T.V, vowed never to contest again. But I met with him in Kaduna a told him to try again, that with my support, he will win. But he must not joke with the Yoruba's and he agreed. Since he became president, I have never got ministerial slot, I never got any contracts, and I have never begged for anything from him. But I say it is the turn of the Yoruba. Even then it is my turn. In critical situations, you take care of yourself first before taking care of someone else, even if it is your child. Enough of protecting other people, I also want to become the President. Dear Delegates, I implore you to support me please, don't make it a 'Kinsman Affair'(Channel TV, 2022).

Public reactions trailed these statements. Some perceived it as an abuse to the president Buhari while some believed that it a courageous voice to break the ranks of the cabals in the presidency who did not want him as successor of President Buhari. According to Babachi (2022), the recent speech of the Presidential aspirant and National Leader of the ruling party, APC Bola Ahmed Tinubu is trending in the North and they are not happy with it. In his words;

This speech is massively trending in the North and being given a negative connotation as you can well imagine. I read it in Adamawa group this morning and the anger is palpable and all around. It is unlike Tinubu to make such a statement, knowing that the party primary election is in a few days

The Party's Chairman, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu also remarks as reported by a respondent that Tinubu's speech on how he assisted President Buhari to become President and how he has contested on many occasions and failed is an insult to President Buhari and the office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria therefore, the party will deal with him.Contrary to the position by some anti-Tinubu that Tinubu's statement is an act of insubordination and an insult to the personality of the president and the office of the president of Nigeria, pro-Tinubu sees the statement from another perspective. In the opinion of one of our respondents, the statement was voiced out of frustrating insinuations by some powerful members of the party who are bent on imposing their preferred candidate on the party. In his view all Tinubu said were the truth about the emergence president Buhari in 2019and other people mentioned in the speech. In fact, some other people opined that it was this statement that made dealt a debilitating blow on attempt of some powerful party men to impose their preferred candidate on the party in the name of consensus. In whatever way one views this

statement, it has an influence on the final decision of the party to conduct indirect primary to nominate the party's flagbearer in the last presidential election.

Presidential Primary Election Day

Primary election is a process of electing candidate of the party to contest general election with the opposition candidates for the purpose of occupying a particular position in the government establishment as representative of the people. An increasing number of political parties are using primary election as the mode of choosing their candidates. In preparation for 2023 general election in Nigeria, all recognised political parties designed different mechanisms to choose their candidates for the elections. As regards presidential candidates, the ruling party, APC and the major opposition party, PDP choose indirect election as the mode of selecting their candidates. The two parties conducted primary elections as a mechanism to choose their presidential candidates for the 2023 general elections.

The major opposition party, PDP conducted its primary election to elect the Presidential candidates for the 2023 presidential election on 28th of May, 2022 at MKO Abiola International Stadium, Abuja. According to Sahara Reporter (2022), the National Convention started around 6pm with the National Anthem, followed by Muslim and Christian prayers and then, an opening remark by the Chairman of National Organizing Committee (NCOC), former Senate President, David Mark. At the official commencement of the convention, PDP's National Director of Publicity, Chinwe Nnorom, announced that phones were not allowed at the voting area. According to the list obtained by Sahara Reporters on Saturday, 773 delegates were confirmed from Local Government Areas but about 810 delegates are expected to decide the fate of the candidate.

The delegates to the convention consisted of one national delegate elected from each of the 774 local government areas of Nigeria and one special delegate per state and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and 1 person from among persons living with disabilities, making 811. All delegates emerged during the LGAs' congress conducted by the party on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. The aspirants who participated in the convention included Atiku Abubakar; former Senate Presidents, Bukola Saraki and Pius Anyim; Bauchi state governor, Bala Mohammed. Others are; River State Governor, Nyesom Wike; Akwa Ibom State Governor, Emmanuel Udom, among others.

Shortly after the commencement of the convention but before voting commenced, one of the aspirants, Governor Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto state surprised all delegates and officials of the convention when he announced his withdrawal from the race and directed his supporters to vote for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. This last minute withdrawal was believed to be a deliberate act to prevent emergence of any southern candidate. This action no doubt contributed to the failure of the party in the 2023 presidential election.

According to Bisi (2022),the primary election produced former Vice President Alhaji Abubakar Atiku as the candidate of the opposition party for the 2023 presidential election. Atiku polled 371 votes from the 767 accredited candidates to edge his closest opponent, Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike, who polled 237 votes. It is observed that the last-minute withdrawal by Sokoto State Governor, Aminu Tambuwal, swung the contest in favour of Atiku as delegates from Mr Tambuwal's North-West stronghold and from other states where delegates had pledged their support to him all turned their votes to Atiku. According to John (2022), the details of the results of the election are shown in the table below:

Table 1

Atiku Abubakar	371
Nyesome Wike	237
Bukola Saraki	70
Udom Emmanuel	38
Bala Muhammed	20
Pius Anyim	14
Sam Ohabunwa	1
Olivia Tariela	1
Void Votes	12
TOTAL	962

Source: Compiled by the Authors

After weeks of political drama and intrigues during which the party held several meetings and tried but failed to get a consensus candidate, the ruling party, APC conducted its presidential primary election on 8th of June, 2022 at Eagle Square, Abuja. According to Sodiq (2022), the race began with 23 aspirants, but nine withdrew shortly before the commencement of voting at the convention. Things started to swing Tinubu's way when aspirants were called to address delegates before voting began. Former Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Godswill Akpabio, was the first aspirant to step up. Rather than solicit votes for himself, he endorsed Tinubu and appealed to delegates to vote for the APC chieftain.

Other aspirants that stepped down for Tinubu include: Mrs Uju Kennedy-Ohnenye, former Gov. Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun, former Speaker Dimeji Bankole, Sen. Ajayi Boroffice, Gov. Muhammad Badaru of Jigawa, Sen. Ken Nnamani and Gov. Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State. The only female in the contest, Uju Ken-Ohanenye, also endorsed the APC chieftain. Meanwhile Nicholas Felix withdrew for Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo.Thereafter, 14 aspirants went into the contest as voting commenced in earnest. They include: Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Vice Presiden, Yemi Osinbajo, Former Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi, President of the Senate, Ahmed Lawan,

Governor of Ebonyi State, David Umahi, and Former Governor of Imo State, Rochas Okorocha, Governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello, Tein Jack-Rich, Emeka Nwajiuba, Ben Ayade, Ikeobasi Mokelu, Ogbonnaya Onu, Tunde Bakare, and Former Governor of Samfara Stae, Sani Yerima (Sadiq, 2022).

With the elimination of statutory delegates and the refusal of the president to sign an amendment bill that would have reinstated the statutory delegates, only elected delegates, as provided in Section 84(8) of the Electoral Act, will pick the candidate. Section 84(8) provides that "a political party that adopts the system of indirect primaries for the choice of its candidate shall clearly outline in its constitution and rule the procedure for the democratic election of delegates to vote at the convention, congress and meeting." According to Bakare (2022), the national delegates were elected three per local government/area. With 768 local governments and 6 area councils, 2,322 delegates accredited to decide who the candidate of the ruling party becomes. This means that the governors who hold the structures of the party in their states will decide to a large extent who will become the candidate.

Voting started after the aspirants have addressed the delegate requesting for their vote and some who withdrew from the race requesting their supporters to vote for a particular aspirants. This followed by sorting and counting of votes. Immediately after this, results of the election announced. According to Solomon (2022), the Returning Officer for the election, Atiku Bagudu declared the results of the election and announce the winner. "In line with the provisions of the constitution of our great party and by the power conferred on me as the Returning Officer of this special convention, I, Atiku Bagudu, do hereby declare Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the presidential candidate of our party in the 2023 presidential election." As reported by Solomon (2022), Tinubu polled a total of 1,271 votes – more than four times the votes scored by his closet rival, Amaechi who had 316 votes. The table below shows the results of the election:

Table 2

1	**Abubakar Badaru**	Withdrew
2	**Ahmad Lawan**	152
3	**Ahmed Yerima**	4
4	**Ajayi Borroffice**	Withdrew
5	**Ben Ayade**	37
6	**Bola Tinubu**	1,271
7	**Dave Umahi**	38
8	**Dimeji Bankole**	Withdrew
9	**Emeka Nwajiuba**	1
10	**Godswill Akpabio**	Withdrew
11	**Rotimi Amaechi**	316

12	**Ibikunle Amosun**	Withdrew
13	**Ikeobasi Mokelu**	0
14	**Kayode Fayemi**	Withdrew
15	**Ken Nnamani**	Withdrew
16	**Nicholas Nwagbo**	0
17	**Ogbonnaya Onu**	1
18	**Rochas Okorocha**	0
19	**Tein Jack Rich**	0
20	**Tunde Bakare**	0
21	**Uju Kennedy**	Withdrew
22	**Yahaya Bello**	47
23	**Yemi Osinbajo**	235
24	**TOTAL**	**2,102**

WINNER--------Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Source: Compiled by the Author

It should be noted that party primaries is one of the most important steps in the electoral process, as it heralds the formal nomination of presidential candidates, culminating in the general elections. Accordingly, where the primaries are flawed, the sanctity of the general election will ultimately be called to question. According to Seun (2022), An Abuja-based rights activist, Deji Adeyanju, has raised the alarm ahead of the presidential primaries of the All Progressives Congress, (APC), and Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP). Adeyanju alleged that some aspirants from APC and PDP intended to indulge in vote-buying during their parties' primaries. The convener of Concerned Nigerian alleged that these aspirants have perfected a scheme where delegates show their votes to representatives before dropping them into the ballot box. He urged the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, to prevent the use of phones around the ballot boxes.

Immediately after the two parties, APC and PDP concluded their Presidential primary elections and candidates emerged, Emmanuel (2022), observes that the just-concluded Presidential Primaries of the People's Democratic Party, (PDP) and the All Progressives ' Congress, (APC) have been adjudged as a show of shame and mockery. The two events were not only show of shame and mockery of democratic tenets, but has made Nigeria a laughing stock among the committee of Nations. lt was glaring that the Presidential primary elections of the two major parties, PDP and APC were heavily monetized and the highest bidders emerged flag bearers of the parties. This is contrary to what is obtainable in advanced democracies, parties' standard bearers at all levels are elected based on competence and capacity to perform in various offices they desire and not on the basis of how deep their pockets are" the statement stressed.

To corroborate the above observation, Adelani (2022) reports that during the PDP presidential primary, Atiku Abubakar, the perennial presidential contestant, did not leave anyone in doubt about his resolve to take the prize, regardless of the price. His camp has yet to deny reports that he doled out about $20,000 to each delegate to beat his closest rival. He subsequently emerged the PDP candidate with 371 votes. Similarly, Wike's camp was said to have packaged $10,000 for each delegate in a desperate bid to clinch the coveted party ticket. On failing to achieve his dream, the governor, who stormed the MKO Abiola stadium with no fewer than 25 buses decorated with his campaign banners, quietly left the venue. A respondent in this study also states that APC presidential primary also monetized by aspirants. Dollars was the major currency used in enticing voters to win their hearts.

The above information on the conduct of presidential primaries elections for the two parties indicates that the process conform with the legal framework, particularly Section 84 (5) of Electoral Act 2022 which states that "a political party that adopts the system of indirect primaries for the choice of its candidate shall adopt the procedure as outline in the section". The section state where the convention should be held and what qualified an aspirant to be declared winner and becomes candidate of the party. It is also evident that there was no bridge of law in the process of nomination of candidates by the two political parties under review.

However, there was a slight bridge of procedure during the PDP convention when Mr. Tambuwa, an aspirant was allowed to address the delegates twice where he stepped down for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. This actually caused uproar among the other aspirants who were not pleased with that action. This indicates that the organs of the party have preference for a particular candidate. It was opined by one of our respondents that the withdrawal of Tambuwa facilitated the victory of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and the comment of the National Chairman of the party, Senator Iyochia Ayu describing Tambuwa as the hero of the convention is a reflection of working for a particular aspirant.

The most disturbing incident on the Election Day presidential primary of the two parties under review is the issue of vote buying. It was reported that the primary elections were monitised. This idea of wining the hearts of delegate is contrary to the tenet of democracy. This will not allow people to vote their conscience with the inducement of money. Moreso, the popular and competent candidate will not emerge but the highest bidder. This is not in consonant with the principle of the will of the people enshrined in the democratic tenet.

CONCLUSION

This work assessed the processes involved in the nomination of presidential candidates by the ruling and major opposition political parties in Nigeria, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) towards the conduct of the 2023 general elections. The findings of the study revealed that the processes substantially complied with the legal framework: the 1999 Constitution, Electoral Act 2022 and the Constitutions of the two political parties. There is no doubt that the process of nomination of party presidential candidates in the just concluded general elections in Nigeria threw up a lot of topical issues. In this work, the paper attempted to identify some of these issues with a view to ascertaining their appropriateness and how they have shaped the final outcome of the elections. There are several revelations from the study. In the first instance, the study discovers that elections in Nigeria are guided by laws. In addition to the constitution, before a candidate is qualified for nomination he has to meet the requirements of the nation's constitution, his party's constitutions as well as that of the electoral law. In the extant case, the study observed that there was substantial compliance with the legal requirements for a candidate to emerge as the party's nominee. Furthermore, the study examines five major issues in the nomination process- expression and nomination form; screening of aspirants, zoning/rotation of political offices; campaign and Election Day.

On the expression of interest and nomination form, the study reveals that the two parties- PDP and APC were crowded with many members unexpectedly obtaining nomination forms. The study similarly deciphers the role of money in the nomination process. The humongous amount of money paid for nomination and expression of interest disenfranchised lots of members of the two parties who would have loved to be nominated but for their inability to raise the huge amount of money demanded by their parties. More so, arriving/agreeing to some unwritten law of the parties caused a lot of brouhaha among members of the two political parties. In particular, the issue of zoning caused a lot of disagreement in the PDP. In APC, it was the issue of adoption of consensus or primary election that was contentious. While some members wanted the consensus option, some others believe indirect primary was more democratic. The APC was able to resolve this amicably unlike the PDP. The campaign by candidates among party members, though devoid of calumny was not issue based and not as elaborate as to assist members in decision making. Similarly, the voting pattern on the day of election has its unique features. The study identifies the role of ethnicity and regionalism in the choice of candidates. In the PDP primary, the 11th hour withdrawal of Governor Aminu Tambuwal and his declaration of support for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar is perceived as a clear demonstration of ethnicity. In similar vein,most of the candidates that withdrew

from the race in the APC were southerners. They all pledged their supports for Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu. This is playing regional and ethnic cards/politics which is not in tandem with democratic ethos. There were also allegations of monetary inducement of delegates by the contestants in the two political parties during elections. The use of money to induce voters at primary and or national elections should be discouraged. It will result in electing misfits into public office and encourage corruption. This is because the priority of people who secure public office through vote buying is to recoup their investment through corrupt practices and poor performance, hence absence of dividend of democracy. The 'emi lokan' saga was a strategic statement that has lasting effect on the final decision of the APC on methods to adopt in the nomination of the party's candidate for the 2023 presidential election. Furthermore ….?

However, some challenges and some undemocratic actions were equally observed. One obvious fact that this study reveals is that Nigeria politicians are the same in terms of their desire to wield political power at all costs and for the wrong reason - personal aggrandisement. The study identifies the following challenges as inhibiting factors to the smooth process of the nomination of the presidential candidates in APC and PDP for the 2023 general election:

1. **Expression of Interest and Nomination Form:** Nomination form was characterised by high fees by the two parties under review. The study similarly deciphers the role of money in the nomination process. It is revealed in the study that APC expression of interest and nomination form fees paid by the aspirants is one hundred thousand naira only (N100, 000) while PDP obtained form with the sum of forty thousand naira only (N40, 000). The humongous amount of money paid for nomination and expression of interest disenfranchised lots of members of the two parties who would have loved to be nominated too but for their inability to raise the huge amount of money demanded by their parties. The two party's primaries was monetized. Money was used to buy votes of delegates. This development is a big challenge and does not comply with the principle of popular participation as entrenched in the democratic doctrine. Secondly, in spite of the huge amount charged for the expression of interest and nomination form, the nomination was crowded in the two parties. For the APC, 28 aspirants obtained form while 17 aspirant obtained form in PDP.
2. **Imposition of Candidate:** the issue of consensus as a mechanism to pick presidential candidates was very controversial, especially in the ruling party, APC. The study revealed that some cabal in the presidency attempted to impose a candidate on the party and rig out a particular popular candidate. This is evident from what transpired during the screening when 22 of the aspirant

agreed on screening while the 23rd aspirant declined, insisted on primary. This idea nearly tear the party apart. The idea of not allowing a level playing ground in electoral contest is undemocratic and it is a strong challenge to the smooth process of selecting candidate by the parties.

3. **The issue of Zoning:** the issue of zoning has been a contentious one. It is about rotation of public offices between the North and the South of Nigeria, among ethnic group and geo-political zones over the years. During the process of nomination of presidential candidates of PDP and APC for the 2023 election, the issue generated rancor and acrimony among the political stakeholders with different arguments and heated debate. The PDP constitution which specifically captures zoning arrangement was eventually abandoned and aspirants from any part of the country were allowed to participate in the contest. This created division in the party as some of the aspirants from the south were not pleased with the decision of the party. For the APC, the moral justification that after the incumbent president Muhammadu Buhari, power should shift to the South was nearly aborted if not for the intervention of the APC Northern Governor that eventually made it categoricalthat the power should shift to the south and advised all northern aspirants to withdraw. Despite this advice, some of them still contested the primary. This issue of zoning is a challenge to the process of nomination of presidential candidate in the two parties for the 2023 general election.
4. **Campaign:** it is evident from the study that during the aspirants' campaign for delegates 'votes, some of the aspirants' utterances were targeted at the personality of other contestants rather than focusing on issues. Governor Wike was an example in PDP. He was identified as not actually addressing his programmes but emphasized onattacking his fellow contestants. This development is undemocratic and does not promote the unity of the country. Similarly, the outburst of an APC presidential aspirant, Ahmed Bola Tinubu in Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State where he categorically stated that the President of Nigeria is his turn. Furthermore, he also mentioned how he assisted president Buhari to be president and he was the one who nominated the Osinbajo as Vice President. This statement was also seen as undemocratic as it was focused in attacking the personality of people. More so, the statement that "emi lokan'' which literarily means, it is my turn is undemocratic as there is no law or legal document that confers such position on any Nigeria. This development is unacceptable in any matured democracy and it is also a challenge to the process of nomination of the presidential candidate for the 2023 elections in the two parties under study.

5. **Election Day:** the bridge of procedure that occurred on Election Day during the PDP presidential primary is a challenge to the process of the nomination of candidate. Aminu Tambuwa, an aspirant sudden withdrawal from the raise has ethnic and regional connotation. The way and manner by which he was granted access to the podium to address the delegate twice is a bridged of procedure. His withdrawal for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar from the same ethnic group from north against a perceived leading aspirant from the south, Governor Nyesom Wike from River State has ethnic and regional connotation which is not healthy for the unity of the country. This is a big challenge to the process of credible nomination of presidential candidate for the party. Similarly, in the ruling party, the withdrawal of majority of South-West presidential aspirants for Tinubu also tore towards the same ethnic and regional bias. This is more of the returned to ethnic and Regional politics. This is another challenge to the process.

Recommendations

From the discussion above, we note that while Nigeria is still an evolving democracy, a lot still need to be done to get to the Promised Land democratically. Democracy thrives on principles and tenets which are obvious lacking the way Nigeria politicians play the game. Against this background, the following measures are recommended as measures to improve on the conduct of party primaries that produces party nominees for national elections. It is a fact that if the path to nomination of candidates by parties is credible, transparent and seamless; it certainly will impact on the general elections and its outcome.

On the expression of interest and nomination form, there is challenge of high charges of fees for expression and nomination of form. The study recommends that political parties should find another means of regulating the number of people obtaining nomination form rather than charging high fees. Political parties should strengthen internal democracy by making their nomination fees affordable to the members. The parties should promote equal opportunity through joint ownership of political parties. A situation where few elite/public officers are the major or sloe financiers of political parties make places them over and above other members. This confers on them the right to dictate tunes in the party.Granted that parties require money to run the offices and campaigns, source of such money should not be exclusive responsibility of few members of the party. Therefore, high charges of the nomination form should be discouraged and promote affordable and moderate fees.

On the imposition of candidate, political parties should be independent of some the group of element cabal who usually dictates to the parties. The party should stop

taking directive from individual or group of individual on the candidature of the party. The prescribed legal procedure should be followed. This will whistle down the power of people or group of people who want to impose candidate on the party. More so, political parties should devoice themselves from the government.

On the issue of zoning, a diverse country like Nigeria needs to create a sense of belonging for all elements in the country. We therefore strongly recommend adoption of rotation of the office of the president of Nigeria among the sections of the country. This can be included in the constitution of the political parties and possible Nigeria constitution. This will assure every section of the country that it will some time provide the president of the country. The top most legislative and executive office should also be rotated and zoned periodically. This will assuage the fear of marginalization of the minority groups.

On Campaign, Nigerian politicians should learn on issue based campaign rather campaign attach on the personality of the people. On this note the study recommend ideological based politics. Ideally, political parties are formed based on ideological belief of members. This is not the case with party politics in Nigeria. The consequence of this on political party is lack of cogent ideology and focus. It will be difficult to arrive at crucial decisions because of diversity of opinions offered by people from different ideological inclination. Therefore, as much as possible, we recommend party politics should be based on identifiable ideological postulate. This will minimise serious disagreement in decision making. More so, it will improve campaign on issue based rather than attach on the personality of individual.

Ethnic and Regional politic should be discontinued and discouraged. Regional and sectional politics displayed at the convention of the two parties discussed in this study is a challenge to the nomination process. Nigeria, though a relatively new democracy, ought to have grown beyond regional and sectional politics. Diversity in Nigeria should be deployed to crating unity among Nigerians. It is when every ethnic and religious groups are united that, together the country can develop. In place of regional consideration, meritocracy should be applied in filling public offices.

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