

## African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and Leadership Recruitment in Nigeria: An Appraisal of People's Democratic Party (PDP), 2010 – 2020

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### Abstract

*A well-developed internal party democracy is one of the factors that make for credible elections. African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), an arm of the African Union is determined to promote and strengthen good governance through the institutionalization of transparency, accountability and participatory democracy throughout Africa. This paper examined the impact of ACDEG on leadership recruitment in Nigeria using the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as its focus of analysis. It aimed to investigate: how the inability to implement the ACDEG guidelines affected internal party democracy of PDP; the relationship between incumbent factors and impositions of candidates of PDP; and the extent to which Nigeria's electoral institutions complied with the ACDEG's guidelines on monitoring of party activities during the period 2010-2020. The study adopted the elite theory as its framework of analysis and the ex-post-facto research design. It found that the inability of PDP to abide by ACDEG's guidelines undermined its internal democracy; that there was relationship between incumbent factor and imposition of candidates in PDP; and that Nigeria's electoral institutions did not comply substantially with the ACDEG's guidelines on monitoring of party activities between 2010 and 2020. We recommended, among other things, the overhauling of Nigeria's electoral laws to bring them in conformity with the ACDEG guidelines.*

**Keywords:** African Charter on democracy, election and good governance, leadership recruitment, peoples' democratic party, internal party democracy.

### Introduction

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), among other things, clearly and distinctly spelt out to member states the process of choosing representatives of different political parties. The ACDEG'S guidelines and principles clearly emphasized the relevance of good governance, participatory democracy and transparent internal party democracy for the respective countries' electoral bodies to ensure credible and transparent elections.

ACDEG was officially adopted at the eight ordinary session of the AU Assembly of the Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and entered into force on 15 February 2012. Since February 2019, 46 member states had signed the document and 31 out of the above-mentioned member states had not only signed but

ratified it. Among the member countries/states that have signed include 12 out of the 15 member states in Western Africa, including Nigeria, 6 in Southern Africa, 8 out of the 13 in Eastern Africa, 2 out of the 9 in Central Africa and finally 3 out of the 7 in Northern Africa. Attesting to the above fact, Maluwa (2012) noted that, "As of February 2019, the ACDEG had been signed by 46 member states and ratified and acceded by 31, being 12 of the 15 member states in Western Africa, six of the ten in Southern Africa, two of the nine in central Africa and three of the seven in Northern African. It has been a slow process, which is not unusual of AU treaties."

Interestingly, ACDEG addresses such issues as democratization, human rights protection, good governance programmes, collective security and international development. The principles and guidelines contain such issues as rule of law and human rights, the culture of democracy and peace, democratic institutions, democratic elections, sanctions in cases of unconstitutional changes of government, and political, economic and social governance.

Article 3 of ACDEG's charter captured the facts quite vividly, namely - that state parties shall implement this charter in accordance with the following principles:

1. Respect for human rights and democratic principles;
2. Access to and exercise of state power in accordance with the constitution of the State Party and the principle of the rule of law;
3. Promotion of a system of government that is representative;
4. Holding of regular, transparent, free and fair elections;
5. Separation of powers;
6. Promotion of gender equality in public and private institutions;
7. Effective participation of citizens in democratic and development processes and in governance of public affairs;
8. Transparency and fairness in the management of public affairs;
9. Condemnation and rejection of acts of corruption, related offenses and impunity;
10. Condemnation and total rejection of unconstitutional changes of government;
11. Strengthening political pluralism and recognising the role, rights and responsibilities of legally constituted political parties, including opposition political parties, which should be given a status under national law.

Fortunately, since 1999 Nigeria returned to uninterrupted democratic dispensation, People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Nigeria controlled the federal executive and legislative arms of the government and most of the 36 states in the country, before the APC took over on a fiercely contested election in 2015. However, despite the fact that APC took over power in 2015 under the Presidency of Muhammadu Buhari, yet PDP constituted a very great opposition to APC in the country controlling fifteen (15) states out of the 36 states in Nigeria namely Akwa Ibom, Abia, Delta State, Rivers, Taraba, Enugu, Cross River, Benue, Oyo, Sokoto, Bauchi, Adamawa, Zamfara, Benue and Edo.

The Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) which was established in 1998, held power in Nigeria from 1999 till 2015 (a period of 16 years). These 16 years were characterized with allegations of recruitment impunity orchestrated by stakeholders' interference and incumbency manipulations. Primary elections were said to be mere formalities as choice candidates were always selected in mini caucuses or in the government houses. These selections were allegedly ratified in party congresses by sycophantic and overzealous governors' or president's men. Generally, it is believed that these impositions led to the defeat of the PDP by APC at the polls in 2015.

The essence of leadership recruitments, especially among political parties or other public organizations is to make sure that leaders that have majority support among the masses emerge. In other words, the candidates that will credibly represent the masses and ensure good governance, either at the federal, state or the local government levels are desired. This means that if the process of recruitment either in the political parties or other public organizations is transparent and people-oriented, candidates with merit will emerge, but if otherwise the likelihood of unpopular candidates emerging becomes quite obvious because the peoples participation have been denied and this will automatically lead to bad governance. Therefore, the underlying factor for credible leadership recruitment either in political party or public organizations depends on the process of recruitment.

Internal party democracy processes are clearly and distinctly spelt out in the Nigeria Electoral Act 2010 (as amended). Specifically, section 87, gives a comprehensive procedure for nomination of candidates by political parties. Most worrisome is the fact that the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) created the conducive atmosphere for political

elites, godfathers and power brokers to manipulate the internal party democracy through selection of candidates devoid of input from the masses, thereby reducing INEC to mere observer.

It is in this light that this paper, among other things, carried out an appraisal of African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and leadership recruitment in Nigeria focusing on PDP from 2010 to 2020

### **Theoretical Perspective**

This paper is guided by the theoretical assumptions of the elite theory. The leading scholars of the elite theory include: Wilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michaels and C. Wright Mills among others. According to Patrick Dunleavy and Brendan O'Leary (1987) the term 'elite' originally meant, and in many contexts still means, the best, the excellent, the noble or the *crème de la crème*. The concept was adopted by Italian theorists Gaetano Mosca and Wilfred Pareto. According to Mosca (1939, p.50), in all societies two classes of people appear – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. To Pareto, the elites are those individuals that have the highest indices of excellence in any particular activity. He subdivided them into governing elites who are leaders that play parts in ruling a society directly, and non-governing elites who make up the remainder of the elites.

Elite is generally applied to functional groups that have high status in a society, in the contemporary social sciences. Sometimes elite is used only as a synonym for leaders. Sometimes the concept has connotations for exploitative leadership (Dunleavy & Brendan 1966, p.249). Pareto placed particular emphasis on psychological characteristics as the basis of elite rule because according to him members of the governing elite owe their positions primarily to their personal qualities. These elites are very few in number and consist of those successful persons who excel in their various occupations and strata in the society such as lawyers, businessmen, traditional and religious leaders, Pareto says that people are always governed by elites. For him, history of men is the history of the continuous replacement of certain elites; as one ascends; another declines, such is the real phenomenon, though to us it may appear under another form. Mosca (1939) emphasized the sociological and personal characteristics of elites. He

said elites are organized minority and that the masses are an unorganized majority. The ruling class is composed of the ruling elites and sub-elites.

According to Mills (1956) “power elite” are those that occupy the dominant positions in the dominant institutions (military, economic and political) of a dominant country and their decisions (or lack of decision) have enormous consequences. Mills further emphasized that the power elite are the key people on the three major institutions of the modern society: 1. Economy 2. Government 3. Military. The bureaucracies of state corporations, and the military have become enlarged and centralized and are means of power never before in human history. The elites occupy the leadership positions within the bureaucracies that now dominate modern societies. Mills continued to posit that, the ‘power of the elite are rooted on authority.’

Roberto Michel was a great German theorist who coined the phrase- “the iron law of oligarchy” He believed that, “it is organization that gives birth to the dominations of the elected over the electors; of the mandatories over the mandators; of the delegates over the delegators. This means that no matter how democratic an organization is it will definitely succumb to elite influence and become controlled by few men and women.

From the stand point of the elite theory, one will understand few characteristics that make the elites dominate their societies. The elites are an organized minority – emphasis on organized. The masses are an unorganized majority. The elites, as earlier indicated, are rich and influential. They belong to the dominant economic, political, military and other prominent social strata of the society. They are ruthless and committed to their goals.

Ikelegbe (1996) corroborated the above statement by arguing that the elites are few in society but they wield power and influence, allocate values and governance. There are the military elites, business elite, bureaucratic elites, political or governing elites, religious and traditional elites. Many of the elites do not hold formal or legal authoritative power, but are rather behind the scene, teleguiding and manipulating overt political and policy actions. In other words, the elite make the policies, which are carried out by the administrators. They may go to the extent of using brutal force to crush every opposition. They often put in everything to perpetuate their undemocratic decisions.

Furthermore, Joseph's (1987) analysis of Nigerian politics, especially during the second republic, was characterized by prebendalism. The elites through ethnically based patron-client networks captured the state and decentralized the sharing of the national cake. Worst still, public resources were plundered for sectional and personal gains. This prebendalistic configuration was radically altered after 1990, giving way to more centralized predation under Babangida dictatorship (1985-1993). Lewis (1996) noted that the repression and killing of opposition figures were pervasive albeit disguised.

### **Application of the theory**

Within the elites is noticeable unity of purpose among the small group. The elite uses laudable energies to get whatever they set out to achieve. Because of the enormous wealth in their disposal, the elites are able to build strong goodwill with the policy makers and government agencies. This places them in positions to take or dictate who takes political positions in their environment. In Nigeria, this small group is holding sway in the corridors of power and will do everything possible to maintain their positions, to the dissatisfaction of the hapless, helpless majority that constitute the "counter-elite" who are readily co-opted by the elites as merit and reason demands. The elites undermine democracy through their powerful maneuverability in the corridors of power where they impose their candidates on the electorate in Nigeria. The candidates so recruited become a huge minus to politics due to lack of achievement and ingenuity. In fact, the structures of most of the political parties in Nigeria have been hijacked by godfathers who are only interested in their own interests and not in the interest of the masses.

The obvious implication of the selection of unpopular candidates by few political elites will undoubtedly lead those handpicked candidates to strive to satisfy the interest of their masters thereby neglecting the socio-economic development of Nigeria. That accounts for why there are conspicuous lack of socioeconomic developments in virtually most of the PDP controlled states and local governments in Nigeria. The elite theory appropriately addresses the issue of internal party democracy and the problem of leadership recruitment with particular reference to PDP in Nigeria from 2010-2020, and

apparently exposes its compliance or lack of it, with the ACDEG'S guidelines on participative democracy and monitoring of elections by designated electoral institutions.

### **ACDEG Electoral Guidelines and Leadership Recruitment of PDP in Nigeria, 2010 – 2020**

The core values of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) include; Effective participation of citizens in democratic process; transparency and fairness; condemnation and rejections of acts of corruption and impunity; respect of human rights and democratic principles and holding of regular, transparent, free and fair elections.

By the African charter adopted by the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30 January 2007, the objectives of this charter included to:

1. Promote adherence, by each State party, to the universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human right;
2. Promote and enhance adherence to the principle of the rule of law premised upon the respect for, and the supremacy of, the constitution and constitutional order in the political arrangements of the State parties;
3. Promote the holding of regular free and fair elections to institutionalize legitimate authority of representative government as well as democratic change of governments;
4. Prohibit, reject and condemn unconstitutional change of government in any member state as a serious threat to stability, peace, security and development;
5. Promote and protect the independence of the judiciary;
6. Nurture, support and consolidate good governance by promoting democratic culture and practice, building and strengthening governance institutions and inculcating political pluralism and tolerance;
7. Encourage effective coordination and harmonization of governance policies amongst state parties with the aim of promoting regional and continental integration.
8. Promote state parties sustainable development and human security;

9. Promote the fight against corruption in conformity with the provisions of the AU convention on preventing and combating corruption adopted in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003;
10. Promote the establishment of the necessary conditions to foster citizen participation, transparency, access to information, freedom of the press and accountability in the management of public affairs.
11. Promote gender balance and equality in the governance and development processes;
12. Enhance cooperation between the Union, Regional Economic Communities and the international community on democracy, elections and governance; and
13. Promote best practices in the management of elections for purposes of political stability and good governance.

There are principles which are meant to guide State parties in the implementation of the Charter. The principles include:

1. Respect for human right and democratic principles;
2. Access to and exercise of state power in accordance with the constitution of the state party and the principle of the rule of law.
3. Promotion of a system of government that is representative.
4. Holding of regular, transparent, free and fair elections.
5. Separation of powers.
6. Promotion of gender equality in public and private institutions.
7. Effective participation of citizens in democratic and development processes and in governance of public affairs.
8. Transparency and fairness in the management of public affairs,
9. Condemnation and rejection of acts of corruption, related offenses and impunity,
10. Condemnation and total rejection of unconstitutional changes of government.
11. Strengthening political pluralism and recognizing the role, right and responsibilities of legally constituted political parties, including opposition political parties, which should be given a status under national law.

Chapter 4 of the Charter dwells on Democracy, Rule of law and Human rights. Article 4 of chapter 4, subsection 1 and 2 state as follows:



1. State parties shall commit themselves to promote democracy, the principle of the rule of law and human rights.
2. State parties shall recognize popular participation through universal suffrage as the inalienable right of the people.

Other chapters that are worthy to be mentioned because of their relevance for our theme are: chapter 7; article 17 which states that;

State parties re-affirm their commitment to regularly holding transparent, free and fair elections in accordance with the union's Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic elections in Africa.

To this end, State parties shall:

1. Establish and strengthen independent and impartial national electoral bodies responsible for the management of elections.
2. Establish and strengthen national mechanisms that redress election related disputes in a timely manner.
3. Ensure fair and equitable access by contesting parties and candidates to state controlled media during elections.
4. Ensure that there is a binding code of conduct governing legally recognized political stakeholders, government and other political actors prior, during and after elections, the code shall include a commitment by political stakeholders to accept the results of the elections or challenge them through exclusively legal channels.

Article 53 of chapter 11 emphatically declared that none of the provision of the present Charter shall affect more favourable provisions relating to democracy, elections and governance contained in the national legislation of State parties or in any other regional, continental, international conventions or agreements applicable in these State Parties.

Many African states are signatories to this charter, including Nigeria. Below is a table of some of the countries that have completed the ratification process- chronologically as of 2013.

**Table 1 Countries that have completed ratification as at 2013**

S/N	COUNTRY	SIGNATURE	RATIFICATION	DEPOSIT
1.	Mauritania	29/01/2008	07/07/2008	28/07/2008
2.	Ethiopia	28/12/2007	05/12/2008	06/01/2009
3.	Sierra Leone	17/06/2008	17/02/2009	08/12/2009
4.	Burkina Faso	02/08/2007	26/05/2010	06/07/2010
5.	Rwanda	29/06/2007	09/07/2010	14/07/2010
6.	Lesotho	17/03/2010	30/06/2010	09/07/2010
7.	Ghana	15/01/2008	06/09/2010	19/10/2010
8.	South Africa	01/02/2010	24/12/2010	24/01/2011
9.	Zambia	31/01/2010	31/05/2011	08/07/2011
10.	Niger	17/06/2008	04/10/2011	08/11/2011
11.	Chad	22/01/2009	11/07/2011	13/10/2011
12.	Guinea	09/05/2007	17/06/2011	11/07/2011
13.	Cameroun	16/01/2012	24/08/2011	16/01/2012
14.	Togo	30/10/2007	24/01/2012	20/03/2012
15.	Guinea – Bissau	17/06/2008	23/12/2011	04/01/2012
16.	Nigeria	02/07/2007	01/12/2011	09/01/2012
17.	Benin	16/07/2007	28/06/2012	11/07/2012

**Source:** Insights into Advocacy on the African continent, 2013

As at end of 2019, 46 AU member states have signed the charter out of which 34 have ratified and 34 have deposited. Below is the ACDEG charter ratification update.

**Table 2: Dates of signature, ratification/accession, and deposit as at 2019**

S/N	Country	Date of Signature	Date of Ratification	Date of deposit
1.	Algeria	14/07/2021	20/11/2017	10/01/217
2.	Angola	27/01/2021	-	-
3.	Benin	16/07/2007	28/06/2012	11/07/2012
4.	Botswana	-	-	-
5.	Burkina Faso	02/08/2007	26/05/2010	06/07/2010
6.	Burundi	20/06/2007	-	-
7.	Cameroon	-	24/08/2011	16/01/2012
8.	Central Africa republic	28/06/2008	24/04/2017	06/03/2019
9.	Cape Verde	27/01/2012	-	-
10.	Chad	22/01/2009	11/07/2011	13/10/2011
11.	Cote d’ Ivoire	11/06/2009	16/10/2013	28/11/2013
12.	Cameroun	02/02/2010	30/11/2016	06/01/2017
13.	Congo	18/06/2007	-	-
14.	Djibouti	15/06/2007	2/12/2012	22/01/2013
15.	Congo	29/06/2008	-	-
16.	Egypt	-	-	-
17.	Equatorial Guinea	30/01/2011	-	-
18.	Eritrea	-	-	-
19.	Ethiopia	28/12/2007	05/12/2008	06/01/2009
20.	Gabon	02/02/2010	-	-
21.	Gambia	29/01/2008	11/06/2018	04/02/2019
22.	Ghana	15/01/2008	06/09/2010	19/10/2010
23.	Guinea Bissau	17/06/2008	23/12/2011	04/01/2012
24.	Guinea	09/05/2007	17/06/2011	11/07/2011
25.	Kenya	28/06/2008	-	-

26.	Libya	-	-	-
27.	Lesotho	17/03/2010	30/06/2010	09/07/2010
28.	Liberia	18/06/2008	23/02/2014	07/03/2017
29.	Madagascar	31/01/2014	23/02/2017	13/04/2017
30.	Mali	29/06/2007	13/08/2013	02/09/2013
31.	Malawi	-	11/10/2012	24/10/2012
32.	Morocco	-	-	-
33.	Mozambique	27/05/2010	24/04/2018	09/05/2018
34.	Mauritania	29/01/2008	07/07/2008	28/07/2008
35.	Mauritius	14/12/2007	-	30/08/2016
36.	Namibia	10/05/2007	23/08/2016	09/09/2012
37.	Nigeria	02/07/2007	01/12/2011	08/11/2011
38.	Niger	17/06/2008	4/10/2011	8/11/2011
39.	Rwanda	29/06/2007	09/07/2010	14/07/2010
40.	South Africa	01/02/2010	24/12/2010	24/01/2011
41.	Sahrawi Arab	25/07/2010	27/01/2013	27/01/2013
42.	Democratic republic	25/07/2010	27/01/2013	27/01/2013
43.	Senegal	15/12/2008	-	-
44.	Seychelles	-	12/08/2016	28/09/2016
45.	Sierra Leone	17/06/2008	17/02/2009	08/12/2009
46.	South Sudan	24/01/2013	26/01/2014	13/04/2015
47.	Sao tome & Principe	01/02/2010	18/04/2019	27/06/2019
48.	Sudan	30/06/2008	19/06/2013	16/09/2013
49.	Eswatini	29/01/2008	-	-
50.	Tanzania	-	-	-
51.	Togo	30/10/2007	24/01/2012	20/03/2021
52.	Tunisia	27/01/2013	-	-
53.	Uganda	16/12/2008	-	-
54.	Zambia	31/01/2010	31/05/2011	8/07/2011
55.	Zimbabwe	21/03/2018	-	-

**Source:** The Wikipedia. Accessed via: [en.m.wikipedia.org/w](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/w)

One of the available evidences to show the inability to implement the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance by PDP in Nigeria from 2010 to 2020, was attested to by Obayi (2015) who reported the same pattern of breaching PDP internal democracy between 2006 and 2015. According to him, “---if the statutory instruments: the party constitution, the electoral laws and the National Constitution of 1999 were upheld within the party’s internal electoral processes, it would have minimized the rate of squabbles within its ranks regarding the highhandedness, if not outright dictatorship in the nomination of candidates for public offices”. He noted further that, former President Obasanjo’s outright rejection of his Vice-President Alhaji Abubakar’s presidential candidacy in 2007 pushed the latter into Action Congress of Nigeria. That competition was very ferocious, because Atiku’s decampment from PDP was a major turning point in the general elections of that year. Atiku could not participate in the PDP

presidential primary elections because the outgoing President simply did not want him to run on the platform of their party.

Furthermore, Obayi noted that PDP's inability to implement its constitution and the ACDEG's guidelines on internal party democracy made them to lose most of the national and state elections. He further demonstrated that rather than allow this simple, straight, further constitutional formality to take place, the President's political hatchet men prevailed on him to use this opportunity to get rid of some party executive members, like the Deputy National Chairman, the National Secretary and others, who in their calculations might not be supportive of the President's Second term ambition. Characteristically, the party hawks on a hatchet man's brief from the Presidency decided to "outlandishly" and with impunity, exclude the names of some serving National working committee members from this validation voting". In ex- President Jonathan's bid for a second term, he was believed to have deployed, all manners of executive power, influence and privilege in frustrating the ambition of potential candidates for the presidential ticket. Obayi concluded that, in Bauchi State, this autocratic action forced Alhaji Isa Yuguda to dump the PDP and ran to the ANPP, on the platform of which he won the subsequent gubernatorial election.

Similarly, the former Vice Chairman of Southeast zone of the PDP, Metuh noted that:

*Internal party wrangling denied our great party the governorship seat in the February 6 governorship election in Anambra State. The Anambra election is a litmus test to the party and we will not tolerate such development in any of the remaining States in the southeast zone. We are going to put all the machinery in place to ensure that PDP wins the remaining States in the zone come 2011 (Metuh, 2010,p.13)*

Furthermore, the firm grip of PDP by the state governor who wanted to select every candidate for political representation devoid of the internal party democracy and the ACDEG'S guidelines, pitched the governor against the State House of Assembly. Attesting to the above view, Alli 2010 noted that,

*Perhaps, that is why Ogun State House of Assembly is presently comatose if not at the level of abysmal collapse. In an attempt by the Governor to have an upper hand in the State Assembly affairs, the Assembly was fractionalized into two groups—G.9 and G.15, while G.9 is in support of the governor, G.15 is against his method of administration. Suffice it to say that the firm grip of governors on party structures occasioned the move by the National Assembly to amend the Electoral Act 2010. The*

*amendment is to pave the way for legislators to become automatic members of the National Executive Committees (NECs) of their parties. (Alli 2010, p.2).*

Adekeye (2017) addressed the implication of PDP not abiding by the guidelines of ACDEG, which is in consonance with its internal party democracy, that resulted to the loss of most of the major stakeholders of the party to the opposition. According to him:

*Between 1999 and 2013, over 13 Senators and 35 members of the House of Representatives were said to have switched to the opposition. The most remarkable case of defection was witnessed prior to the 2015 elections when five PDP governors (Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers; Rabiw Kwankwaso of Kano; Aliyu Magatakada Wammako of Sokoto; Abdulfatah Ahmed of Kwara and ex- Governor Murtala Nyako of Adamawa) defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC) (Adekeye, 2017, p. 33).*

Eze (2016) on his own part stressed the outcome of PDP lack of internal democracy due to inability to implement the African Charter on Democracy and Governance guidelines. According to him, “PDP was enmeshed in an endless leadership tussle as a result of unabated supremacy battle between the two factions led by Senators Ali Modu Sheriff and Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi which severely dealt a fatal blow on the once acclaimed biggest ruling party in Africa. This led to various conflicting court judgments for and or against the two personalities. It is not yet *uhuru* for the party until its house is put in order since a house divided against itself cannot stand”

All the sections in the ACDEG charter were breached by the People’s Democratic Party. Candidates were recruited without due process and recourse to the rule of law. Party stakeholders have field day imposing their cronies, friends and relations bypassing the party leadership. Unqualified candidates were nominated against the will of the people. Money was used to install bad governance.

### **Imposition of Candidates in Primary Elections of PDP in Nigeria, 2010 – 2020**

One of the available evidences that shows how the incumbent factor affected the imposition of candidates in PDP was attested to by Omenma et al., (2014) who revealed how PDP candidates were nominated, and the nature of the nomination for local council elections in 2011, 2013, 2017 and 2020 which clearly showed how the incumbent Governors imposed all the candidates of the whole Local Government areas in Enugu State. According to him, a Governor selected the candidates for almost all the elective positions in his state including the local council elections and instructs the party executives to rectify them at the party congresses and at the party headquarters as

“consensus” or “automatic ticket” candidates for onward submission to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

All elected Governors from Enugu State, since the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic followed the same pattern of leadership recruitment where they assume extra-ordinary powers as shown in the table below. And the situation was the same in all PDP controlled states. The incumbent Governors and federal legislators dictate who becomes what. Below is the Rivers State PDP nominated candidates for council elections 2019. All the PDP council chairmen and their deputies were imposed on the party and the people by Governor Wike.

The PDP took all the 16 local governments of Taraba state in the PDP controlled (SIEC) elections of 2017 using the power of incumbency. All the elected candidates were nominated without due process but through executive impositions or by godfathers’ recommendation or through stakeholder’s influence. Similarly, in Akwa Ibom State, PDP fielded 21 local government area chairmanship candidates and their deputies in 2020 through questionable processes and went ahead to return them all in the AKISIEC conducted local government election of the state. All their 329 councillorship seats were equally returned for PDP. In Sokoto State local government elections, all the 23 council chairmen and their deputies were nominated without transparency. Like in all other states where PDP is in control, they were equally, all, returned without free and fair contest. All 244 councillorship wards were also taken by PDP.

The noticed illegality in PDP affected the 2019 elections as there was low turnout of voters in the general elections. This was succinctly captured by ActionAid (2019, P.14) thus; “In spite of the lofty provisions in the legal instruments that *guided the elections and mobilization efforts by INEC, the elections of 2019 recorded the lowest level of voter turnout in the annals of elections in Nigeria*”. Table 3 below is the statistics on the 2019 presidential elections announced by INEC.

Total number of registered voters	84,004,084
Total number of registered voters (as collated)	82,344,107
Total number of accredited voters (as collated)	29,364,209
Total number of valid votes (as collated)	27,324,583

Total number of rejected votes (as collated)	1,289,607
Total number of votes cast (as collated)	28,614,190
Percentage turnout (as collated)	35.66%

**Source:** USIAD and UKAID

Aleyomi (2013) noted that “in Anambra State chapter of the PDP where Professor Charles Soludo was imposed on the chapter as governorship candidate for the state by the National Executive committee of the party, the act triggered a spate of petition writing. The effect brought about factions in the party and last-minute cross-carpeting of some PDP members to other parties. The current imposition of Bamanga Tukur as the new PDP chairman is anti-core value of intra-party democracy. The imposition of Tukur was against the wishes and consent of the people who had already voted Babayo ab, initio, as the representative from North East zone, where PDP had zoned its chairmanship seat to. Babayo won the zonal primaries 292 but when it got to the PDP national convention, his victory at the zonal level was put on the back burner and he was shortchanged.”

In the same vein, Ike (2020) narrated how Cross River State Local and council elections were hijacked by the governor, Ben Ayade, who refused to conduct primary elections. This led to violent protests in Cross River State. According to Ike, the leadership of the party in the state is in a state of comatose as their functions to conduct and screen candidates have been usurped by the powers that be and their new team in government...the party is not allowed to sell forms to aspirants into chairmanship and councillorship elections so as to enable the party generate revenue as well as restore party discipline.

Furthermore, Adekeye (2017) listed some of the PDP candidates imposed by the party. According to him, “there were series of unconstitutional candidatures as evidenced in 2011 general elections leading to impositions and substitution of candidates. In Imo gubernatorial race, Mr. Ifeanyi Ararume was replaced with Engineer Ugwu. In Lagos, Hilda Williams who emerged as the winner in the primaries was also replaced with Senator Musiliu Obanikoro. Similarly, in Rivers State, Mr. Rotimi Ameachi was replaced with Mr. Celestine Omehia.” No wonder, Kura 2011 noted that:

*The disregard for constitutionalism culminated into the absence of party candidates in Rivers and Imo States. Between 2011 and 2015, other cases of escalating intra-party crisis were also recorded; spiraling conflict between the then party chairman, Alhaji Bamanga Tukur and the state governors led to the factionization and later defection of five state governors. Surrounding controversies led to the resignation of Tukur, who was replaced with Adamu Muazu. Within the same period, the then President Goodluck Jonathan's presidential ambition triggered another form of conflict between him and the Northern members of the party. He subsequently emerged as the party's sole presidential candidate which irked other interested members like Sule Lamido (Kura, 2011, p.15).*

## **Conclusion**

It is quite evident from this paper that few political elites or godfathers and stalwarts of PDP failed to implement the African Charter On Democracy, Elections And Governance and this affected the internal party democracy of PDP within the period under study; the incumbent political office holders such as President, Governors and other political elites of PDP have been imposing their candidates for elective positions disregarding the ACDEG's guidelines; and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) failed to perform its constitutional duties of monitoring political parties activities especially PDP in line with ACDEG's mandate.

Regrettably, these few political elites of PDP were only interested in maximizing their private interests instead of the common interests of the masses. Jettisoning the ACDEG guidelines that offer a common ground for the participation of every PDP member in the leadership recruitment, rather turned the whole scenario to political merchandize by detecting who will be who in the party. This attitude of few political elites of PDP not only led to selection of unpopular candidates, but also put the party in crisis.

In this light, the study concludes that the inability to implement the African charter on democracy and governance affected internal party democracy in PDP between 2010 and 2020. Finally, the Nigerian electoral institution did not comply with the ACDEG'S guidelines on monitoring of party activities between 2010 and 2020. Thus, the obvious consequences of abandoning ACDEG's guidelines by PDP was enthronement of anarchy which led PDP to lose elections at the federal and state levels.



## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that:

1. The Nigeria government should endeavour to amend some relevant sections of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), especially the area that deals with compliance with intra-party activities which reduced the power of INEC to supervise instead of presiding over the primaries, at least, to enforce ACDEG's guidelines. The National Assembly should ratify the recommendation of Ken Nnamani Reform Committee which recommends, among others things, the creation of a new body from INEC to be known as political parties and electoral offences commission, to regulate and monitor political parties in Nigeria (Nnochiri, 2017) and all ACDEG'S electoral guidelines must be domesticated and inculcated into our political system to be used as a yardstick for future elections in Nigeria.
2. The National Assembly should amend the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) to expunge "Consensus" and "automatic" ticket candidates and make laws for Option A4, which is in line with the ACDEG'S guidelines, to restore confidence on the electorate and halt incumbency factor in the imposition of candidates in Nigeria's electoral system. The media should be allowed access to all primary election venues to report processes. This will ensure transparency and reduce undue influences by incumbents, money bags and godfathers.
3. An Act of Parliament should increase the power of INEC to enable it become really independent in carrying out its functions. The duty of monitoring political party finance should be handled by more than one organ as it is evident that INEC cannot handle it alone. It is advised that the police, the EFCC and the civil society organizations be co-opted into monitoring of political party activities as it relates to financing. Political parties that disobey the led down rules should be sanctioned and individuals who are found culpable should be prosecuted.

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