

A Critical Assessment of Pre-Election Administration on Nomination of Candidates in 2019 Elections in Nigeria

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Abstract

As important as election to democracy is, election administration for a credible election result is equally germane. Election administration becomes a critical focus of scholars and stakeholders in election. It is unfortunate that Nigeria's 2019 nomination of candidates in the pre-election administration environment was heralded with tensions, accusations and counter-accusations, irregularities, violence, trade of blames by the ruling and major opposition parties, maladministration among other related issues. It is against this backdrop that this study attempts to examine and analyse nomination of candidates in the pre-election administration of 2019 elections in Nigeria, examine how the stakeholders in election administration have performed in this area. The secondary method of data collection was adopted for the study. The study relies on the theory of political participation and social justice theory. The paper adopts qualitative approach, using descriptive and content analysis to analyse the data obtained. The paper argues that nomination of candidates in the pre-election administration of 2019 election in Nigeria were heralded with a number of irregularities. The paper concludes that some of the shortcomings usually associated with the previous pre-election administration on nomination of candidates in Nigeria are also identified with that of 2019 elections. The identified challenges on the nomination of candidates in the pre-election administration of 2019 elections are discussed and policy options provided.

Keywords: Election Administration; Nomination; Democracy; Stakeholders; Candidates

INTRODUCTION

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A credible election not simply bestows authority and authenticity on political headship, it is as well critical to the nourishment of self-governing arrangement. Election empowers a country or nation with the autonomy to decide their leaders and to make a decision on municipal course of action. Beneath whichever self-governing structure, populace who are lawfully knowledgeable to implement authorisation are makes available with opening to decide political substitutes and to put together resolutions that put across their predilections (Schlozman and Verba, (1987). Diamond, Lin and Lipset (1989) illustrates that democratic system as supremacy replicate to facilitate and convenes three essential circumstances: rivalry in the midst of persons and political assembly; comprehensive structure of management employment;

and subsistence of a government of civil-political privileges. These circumstances give emphasis to the significance of election in cooperation as a command authenticator and as an underwriter of resident contribution in communal domination. No doubt about the fact that this could be achieved through a credible election. More so, credible election could also be achieved through a well-organised, monitored and supervised electoral process. This makes election administration so important in the conduct of election.

Nigerian democracy aims to ensure political stability and promote fundamental human rights. Elections in Nigeria which should have been a prelude for achieving a stabilise government accompanied with people's consent have contradicted these standards because of electoral irregularities perpetrated in all aspects of electoral processes. This is a serious concern hence, the stability and secured environment needed for the success of democracy have been severely jeopardized. Elections conducted since Nigeria's independence have been played in a do or die affair and this has made the peace-loving Nigerians to be dead scared in exercising their voting rights hence the suicidal nature of the politics. Evident has shown that the rate of citizen participation in elections these days have drastically reduced due to the improper operation of all aspects of electoral processes which include limited choice or lack of qualified candidates, in adequate legal framework, campaign violence and incredible voter registration exercise. These have made the country over the year politically weak. Hence, it is generally agreed by political pundits that a reform of Nigeria's electoral system and practice has become essential to engender the confidence of the Nigerian public in elections and the democratic process in the country (Iwu, 2008:1). In spite of this comprehensive reform carried out by the Iwu's Committee, evident shows that part of the reform that were put in place were poorly implemented by political actors, stakeholders in election administration, electorates and electoral body (INEC).

On the three stages of election administration: Pre-election, Election day and Post-election periods. Nomination of candidates in pre-election is the most important aspect of election administration because it is this that stands as foundation upon which other processes are built. Electoral manipulations start at pre-election period if the stakeholders in election administration fail to perform their monitoring and supervisory functions efficiently and effectively. Therefore, election administration particularly the pre-election process is the core determinant of the credibility of any election results.

It is on this note that this paper attempts to examine and analyze the pre-election process of 2019 general election in Nigeria on nomination of candidates to see how the stakeholders in election administration have managed this area. The paper takes up with brief introduction after the abstract; objectives of the study, methodology and theoretical framework are presented; clarifications of the concepts like election and election administration are carefully reviewed; Pre-election process on nomination of candidates is examined. Challenges confronting the smooth operations of this process are identified and discussed. Recommendations to address these challenges in future are provided. Conclusion forms the last part of the paper.

Objectives of the Study

There are two major objectives of this study, which include to:

1. Critically examine and analyse the pre-election administration of 2019 general elections in Nigeria on the nomination of candidates; and
2. Identify the challenges confronted the nomination of candidates in the pre-election administration of 2019 elections in Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the doctrinal approach to analyse the pre-election administration of 2019 elections in Nigeria. The study also adopts qualitative technique, relying on information from secondary sources. A number of these sources are: published books, journal articles, newspapers and magazines, internet publications, reports of election observers. These sources of information are utilised to examine and analyze the pre-election administration of 2019 elections in Nigeria on nomination of candidates. Challenges confronted the pre-election administration of the 2019 elections in Nigeria on nomination of candidates are identified and discussed. The paper then present the way forward.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Considering the nature and scope of the study, one theoretical approach may be inadequate as foundation upon which the discussions on the subject will be based, the study then adopts two theoretical frameworks: the theory of political participation and social justice theory. The theory of political participation involves a broad range of

activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it is governed, and try to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives. These activities range from, attending political meetings, participation in political campaigns at the local, regional or national level, to the process of formal politics, such as voting, joining a political party, or standing for elections.

According to McClosky (1968: 252), the theory of political participation is whereby 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”.

Milbrath and Goel (1977:2) observe that voluntary activities included in the classical definition of political participation are voting, seeking information, discussing and proselytising, attending meetings, contributing financially and communicating with representatives. The more active forms of participation include formal enrollment in a party, canvassing and registering voters, speech writing and speechmaking, working in campaigns and competing for public and party office (McClosky, 1968: 252).

The beauty of democracy depends not on the number of registered political parties in a country but rather, on the degree of popular participation in the democratic process. In his search for the best form of government, Adisa, (2010) opined that 'there is no difficulty in showing that the ideal best form of government is that in which the sovereignty or supreme controlling power in the last resort is vested in the entire aggregate of the community; every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty but called on to take an actual part in the government". Taking an actual part in the government does not mean that every citizen will have a portfolio in government house and begin to govern. It implies that every adult, citizen has a compulsory role to play in the choice of who governs either by contesting or by voting credible representatives to form the ruling class. In other words, every citizen must play a part in the democratic process. Adesina, (2016), argues that effective participation is a criterion for the perfect democratic governance. Therefore, the core of political participation is for someone to freely contest for position duly nominated by the party through a transparent process.

In relation to pre-election administration of 2019 election in Nigeria, it is important within the context of the theory of political participation that people have to

be allowed to be given freedom in participating in all aspects of pre-election without restraint. People should be allowed to take part in the nomination of candidates. However, what was reported in pre-election administration of 2019 on the above-mentioned area of pre-election process could not justify this theory's position. There are instances where the rights of the people to participate were infringed.

Secondly, social justice is a political and philosophical theory which asserts that there are dimensions to the concept of justice beyond those embodied in the principles of civil or criminal law, economic supply and demand, or traditional moral frameworks. Social justice tends to focus more on just relations between groups within society as opposed to the justice of individual conduct or justice for individuals. Social justice originated as a broad concept supporting equal rights through various types of initiatives for citizens. Social justice is closely related to conflict theory and redressing perceived wrongs of past or ongoing conflict between groups of people and parts of society. This often focuses either on favoring the interests of certain groups within a population whom its proponents consider to be oppressed or on undermining the interests of and directly attacking groups which they consider to be in some sense oppressors (Jim, 2019). Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality, and can be defined as the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society.

Social justice is a concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society, as measured by the distribution of wealth and opportunity for personal activity, and social privileges. In Western as well as in older Asian culture, the concept of social justice has often referred to the process of ensuring that individuals fulfill their social roles and receive what was their due from society. Similarly, Benn (1978) eloquently elaborates on the relationship between rights and justice. His argument on the concept of human rights is being placed on the concept of social justice. Principle of self-actualisation can be regarded as another fundamental principle of social justice, in effect, are directed towards the realisation of human potential and no human being should be deprived of the opportunities and basic material and non-material needs self-realisation.

In relation to pre-election administration which involves a lot of activities like attending political meetings, member of political parties, campaign, nomination of candidates, voter registration etc, citizens are to take part in these range of activities without being restrained on equal bases. Attempt to deny people from participating in these activities in pre-election administration or obstruct one's action(s) amount to injustice.

Clarification of Concepts

The concept of election, like most concepts and ideas is essentially contested, with no singular definition. The way the concept is defined depends on how the author conceives it. Therefore, an election is a decision-making process by which a voting population chooses an individual(s) to hold formal office (Afolabi, 2011). Elections serve as a process of achieving particular goal or aim for individuals and groups within a state, especially in the control of governmental power. Indeed, they serve as the source of political authority and state legitimacy. For example, election of a politician to a government post is intended for the person to discharge the responsibilities of that office for the public good.

Ujo (2001:1) 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 (1947:270) 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.

Adejumobi (2000:60) in his contribution, viewed election as a social pact between the state and the people, positing that: Election symbolizes popular sovereignty and the expression of “social pact” between the state and the people, defining the basis of political authority, legitimacy and citizens’ obligation. It is the kernel of political accountability and a means of ensuring reciprocity and exchange between governors and the governed. Jennings (1999:3) makes it clear that elections are political processes not merely technical exercises. Often elections, and therefore voter education, occur in the transitional or developing societies within a political context conditioned by painful economic experiences associated with moving from centrally planned to market-oriented economies and/or from military or one-party regimes to pluralism. The political context at the time of an election normally may reflect concerns such as economic recession, environmental degradation, skyrocketing unemployment and social disintegration. Moreover, in many transitional countries large sectors of citizens may have lost faith in public institutions, either because of the traumas of the prior undemocratic regime or because of disappointment in politicians during the early phase of transitions. Of course, in some countries politicians who claimed to be democratic may have turned out to be just as autocratic as the previous rulers. In such situation citizens may have completely withdrawn from the political process.

Meanwhile, election administration is concerned with management of elections by an electoral management body (EMB). Hence, the Election Management Body (EMB) is usually the legally recognized body or institution charged with the conduct of elections. Thus, we cannot examine election administration without mentioning Election Management Body responsible for that election. An Election Management Body is the organization or body which has the sole purpose of, and is legally responsible for, managing some or all of the elements that are essential for the conduct of elections and of direct democratic instruments – such as referendums, citizens’ initiative and voters’ recall (Wall et al, 2006). Jinadu (1997:2) defines election administration as the organization and conduct of elections to elective public (political) office by an electoral body. For him, subsumed in election administration are structure and process. By structure is meant the bureaucracy that is set up to or established to organize and conduct elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is a good example. By process is meant the rules, procedures and activities relating, among others, the establishment of electoral bodies, the appointment of their members, the registration of voters, the nomination of candidates, balloting, counting of the ballots, declaration of results, the selection and training of electoral officials, constituency delimitation, voter education and, in some cases, registration of political parties and supervision of party nomination congresses.

However, Election Administration goes beyond the conduct and management of elections. Instead of the process and structure identified by Jinadu, there is the institution, structure and frameworks/process guiding the operation and conduct of elections. While the institution refers to the Electoral Management Body because it is a formal creation of the constitution, Structure is subsumed in the Institution and is defined as the bureaucracy, (staff), organizational structure of and delineation of power within an EMB. Framework/process will include electoral system, rules, monitoring of political parties, constituency delineation, and other constitutional provisions that directly pertains and is incidental to the effective and efficient conduct and management of elections and associated electoral tasks. Apart from these three issues raised in Institution, Structure and frameworks in election administration above, it is recognized that nomination of candidates by parties and voters’ education by an EMB are of the most important works an EMB should engage in as well and it is crucial to having credible elections.

The electoral process is therefore a complex process that encompasses the good intentions and undesirable outcomes of election administration, particularly in emerging democracies where general elections are often marred by culturally hued electoral malpractices. In the Nigerian case, the truth remains that the electoral process is immensely characterized by a culture of electoral malpractices. Electoral malpractices refer to illegalities committed by government officials responsible for the conduct of elections, political parties, groups or individuals with sinister intention to influence an

election in favour of a candidate or candidates (Ezeani, 2004:145). Intense electoral malpractices often lead to electoral violence which in every polity must be considered undesirable. More so, nomination is part of the process of selecting a candidate for either election to a public office, or the bestowing of an honour or award. A collection of nominees narrowed from the full list of candidates is a short list. In the context of elections for public office, a candidate who has been selected to represent or is endorsed by a party is said to be the party's nominee. The process of selection may be based on one or more primary elections 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-election. Public statements of support for a candidate's nomination are known as endorsements or testimonials (Encyclopedia ace).

In some jurisdictions the nominee of a recognized political party is entitled to appear on the general election ballot paper. Candidates who are endorsed by a political party may be required to submit a nominating petition in order to gain ballot access. In others, all candidates have to meet nomination rules to stand. The nomination of candidates is to gain access to ballot, is the formal procedure by which political parties and /or individuals put candidate forward for election, and the acceptance of the Election Management Body of that nomination. In list systems, party put forward a list of candidates selected within the political party. In constituency systems, candidates are nominated individual (not as part of party list). Depending on the country, they can be nominated either by a political party or by individual. In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, precisely in the 2019 elections, nomination of candidates is based on constituency system and should be done by recognized political parties. Legal frameworks can place requirements on the composition of party list. In some cases, there are requirements aimed at increasing the representativity of the list by, for example, asking or requiring the party to have a certain number of women (or members of other traditionally under-represented groups) on its list. In some cases, not only the number but the placement on the list is specified.

Pre-Election Administration in Nigeria's 2019 Elections on Nomination of Candidates

A country can be said to be democratic only when its elections constitute a real competition among numerous political party-backed and /or independent candidates. Voters need to have a free and informed choice among various policy options and candidates to determine who either post-election representative will be. It is therefore crucial for most democracies to find ways to organize an effective and democratic system of representation. Political party and candidates are actors tasked with the electorate's trust and counted on to perform the representative function of government. At the basis of such a system, there needs to be an acceptance of the basic human rights,

freedom to speak, organize, stand for election, and hold meeting or publicly attended campaign rallies without intimidation or threat or arrest. Citizen engagement in and understanding of complex political issues to a large extent depends on the ability of political parties to activate and educate, formulate relevant and demand-driven policy options, and channel public opinion into the electoral and subsequent governing process. Only where parties and their candidates are legally recognized and free to form and function can they fulfill these roles.

The administration, conduct and results of elections in Nigeria since independence have been controversial and characterized by high scale of electoral malpractices, money politics, electoral violence and the use of ethno-religious divide in order to influence the voting patterns of the electorates. This has subjected the stakeholders in election administration to series of concerns and worries over the issue. The same trend cannot be disassociated with what transpired in the administration of 2019 elections in Nigeria most especially the nomination of candidates in pre-election administration. On this note, the paper critically concentrates on this aspect of pre-election administration in Nigeria's 2019 elections to examine how this process was performed by the stakeholders in election administration.

The 2019 general elections saw a record number of 73 political parties contesting for the presidency. While a few of the parties conducted primaries to select their candidates, most failed to conduct transparent primaries, leading to allegations of imposition of candidates. Commonwealth (2019:13) reports that in the 2019 elections, a total of 6,584 candidates from 91 political parties contested the 469 seats in the National Assembly. There were 1,904 candidates contesting the 109 seats in the Senate and 4,680 candidates contesting the 360 seats in the House of Representatives. For the state elections, there were 1,046 candidates for the 29 governorships, and 14,609 candidates for the 991 state assembly seats.

On the aspect of nomination of candidates on gender basis, Adebayo (2018) states that the chairman of INEC noted that for National Assembly elections, a total of 1,848 candidates, including 1,615 males 87.3 percent and 233 females 12.6 percent are vying for 109 Senatorial seats; while 4,635 candidates, comprising 4,066 males 87.7 percent and 569 females 12.2 percent are competing for the 360 seats in the House of Representatives. "As for state elections, a total of 1,068 candidates (980 male 91.7 percent and 88 female 8.2 percent) are contesting for 29 governorship positions with

805 male 75.3 percent and 263 female 24.6 percent deputy governorship candidates. It is evident from the above statistic that participation of women, going by the 30 percent affirmation principle, Nigeria's 2019 elections failed to meet up with this standard. The average participation of women in candidate nomination is a little over 12 percent while men participation is 87 percent.

In October 2018, political parties conducted primaries to select their candidates for the 2019 polls. IRI/NDI (2019:8) states that some primaries were undercut by vote buying and poor communication from party leaders about methods for voting, the location of the nomination conventions and the composition of party membership lists. Other stakeholders expressed frustration over the political parties' continued practice of substituting names on their candidate lists; several candidates who won their primaries, including numerous women and youth, were removed from the list by party leaders and replaced by preferred candidates. This is an indication that primary elections in preparation for the 2019 elections in Nigeria were characterized by irregularities. The irregularities in the primaries was confirmed by the wife of President Buhari (Aisha Buhari) when she criticized the ruling party comes after her brother lost the controversial APC governorship primaries in Adamawa State to the 8jm incumbent governor, Muhammed Bindow. According to Chikezie (2019), Aisha Buhari states that:

It is disheartening to note that some aspirants used their hard earned money to purchase nomination forms, got screened, cleared and campaigned vigorously yet found their names omitted on Election Day, these forms were bought at exorbitant prices, All Progressives Congress being a party whose cardinal principle is change and headed by a comrade/activist whose main concern is for the common man, yet, such impunity could take place under his watch. Given this development, one will not hesitate than DISSOCIATE from such unfairness, be neutral and speak for the voiceless. It is important for the populace to rise against impunity and for voters to demand from aspirants to be committed to the provision of basic amenities (Chikezie. 2019).

In Ogun state, there was confusion on the conduct of primaries of both the ruling party, APC and opposition party, PDP. On September 29, 2018, the two planned to hold controversial primaries. According to Dimeji (2018), there had been confusion about the APC primaries across the state as the members sent by the national headquarters of the party to conduct the exercise were not available. At many wards, party members

queued up amidst the rumours that the exercise had been postponed indefinitely. In the PDP camp, Demeji (2018) also reports that there were parallel congresses, with one held by the sacked state executives led by DayoBayo. The faction loyal to the lone Senator of the party from the state, BurujiKashamu, held its own at the party secretariat in Abeokuta. The other faction led by the recognised state chairman, Sikirulai Ogundele, and loyal to Ladi Adebutu, a member of the House of Representatives who is eyeing the governorship ticket, held its own primary at the Marquee Events Centre within the premises of Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Abeokuta.

APC also held parallel primaries in Ogun state on 1st October, 2018. The APC state Chairman of the party conducted a governorship primary where the candidate of the incumbent governor Amosun was declared winner (Taiwo, 2018). Meanwhile PM News (2018) reports that the Muhammed Ndabawa-led electoral committee sent to Ogun State by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the All Progressives Congress (APC) declared Prince Dapo Abiodun winner of the direct governorship primary of Ogun APC for the 2019 election.

Relatedly, in Bauchi State, controversy trailed APC National, State Assembly Primaries. According to Ishola (2018), the announcement of APC primaries held in State in October, 2018 brewed a lot of controversies among members of the party as some of them are claiming that the announcement did not reflect the actual thing that happened when the primaries were conducted. All the aggrieved aspirants who participated in the exercise have alleged that there was no election held in most areas where APC has declared results, while in some places, violence was recorded among other irregularities. According to Ishola (2018), a group called “Bauchi State Good governance Link” raised alarm over the National Assembly results released. The group said “there was no conduct of APC Senator, House of Representatives and State House of Assembly primaries in most parts of the state. Prof. Bakori Muhammed only announced the winner of the elections but the number of votes scored by each of the contestants were not made public”.

In the Nigeria’s pre-election administration of the 2019 elections, aggrieved aspirants filed nearly 800 election petitions. This development was confirmed by the Chairman of INEC, Prof. Yakubu Muhammed when he appeared at the maiden meeting of the Senate Committee on INEC that, “from the February/March, 2019 general elections, the commission is currently involved in over 1600 court cases. on the conduct

of primaries by political parties alone in 2019 general elections, the Commission was dragged to court over 800 times. “We have over 809 cases on pre-election matters and we have 807 cases on post-election litigations” (Queenesther, 2019). For instance, Sharareporter (2019) states that when the INEC released the final list of Presidential candidates, the name of presidential candidate of Social Democratic Party (SDP) was missing. Donald Duke, Former Governor of Cross Rivers State had won the Presidential primary election of the party but his victory had been challenged by Jerry Gana, a former Minister of Information. The Court recognized Gana and overturned the results of the primary. After the court ruling, the party disowned Gana and Affirming their support for Duke.

There were numerous court cases in pre-election administration of 2019 elections in Nigeria. Ruling party, APC was mostly affected. From Zamfara, Ogun, Rivers, Imo etc, there were high level of intra-party crisis which resulted into litigations. For instance, Rosemary (2019) reports that this is the fourth time a court has nullified last year’s APC state congresses and primaries in the last four months in Rivers State. On October 10, 2018, judgement was given by a High Court, presided over by Justice ChinwenduNwogwu; in November, 2018, the Supreme Court; then the Appeal Court in December, 2018; and January 7, 2019.

Similarly, according to Don Silas (2019) An FCT High Court in Jabi, Abuja dismissed a suit challenging President Muhammadu Buhari’s nomination in the 2019 Presidential Election for lacking in merit. Other respondents in the suit were the All Progressives Congress (APC) and its Chairman, Adams Oshiomhole. The suit was filed by Ozuzu Theodora, UdichukwuObina, Peter Oduba and Zaro Melchizedek, under the platform of Democracy, Human Rights, Anti-Corruption, Integrity Advocates (DHRACIA), NAN reports. The plaintiffs had approached the court by way of an originating summon and have presented three questions for determination. They prayed the court to declare that by virtue of the provisions of Sections 1 of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2004, the direct cash of N45 million as nomination fee by President Buhari was illegal and unlawful. Specially, the plaintiffs also prayed that President Buhari’s candidature on the platform of the APC should be declared null and void since the money used to get the form was direct.

There are several reported instances of intra-party crisis in 2019 election which were poorly managed by parties. Seye (2019) reports that in Zamfara state, there was

internal bickering among factions loyal to the incumbent governor, AbdulazizYari, and a group led by former Chairman, Senate Committee on Petroleum (Downstream), Senator KabiruGarbaMarafa, who represents Zamfara Central on the choice of candidates for APC in the state. The primary election conducted by the faction loyal to Governor AbdulazizYari, which produced Muktar Idris as APC candidate was challenged in Court. Other candidates that was produced by this primary eventually contested 2019 elections and won. However, Supreme Court later invalidated their victory and all the candidates of opposition party PDP were declared winners. This is how the lingering crisis in the party scuttled the victory of the APC chances in the state. To situate the aforesaid development in its true legal perspective, it follows that all the candidates of APC who purportedly participated in the National and State Assembly elections held on March 9, 2019, were never candidates in the eye of the law.

Relatedly, there were intra-party crisis in Rivers state chapter of APC on the choice of candidates for the party against 2019 elections between the factions led by the present Minister of Transport (Rotimi Ameachi) and Senator representing Rivers Southeast, Magnus Abe, a governorship aspirant. Senator Abe Magnus and his supporters formed a parallel party and held primaries won by Abe but later nullified by the Court in October 10, 2018 and disqualified the candidates. The other faction's primaries produced Tonye Cole as their governorship candidate. After a long legal battle, Rosemary (2019) reports that the Court of Appeal sitting in Port-Harcourt struck out the appeal filed by All Progressive Congress, APC on 16th January, 2019 challenging the ruling of the Justice ChiwenduNworgu of the Rivers state High Court which annulled the APC's wards, Local Governments and State Congress. This judgement is to correct erroneous impression that all windows for APC to present candidates for the 2019 elections have been shut.

Similarly, in Imo state, the intra-party crisis in the ruling party, APC on the choice of governorship candidate retrogressively metamorphosed into a theatre of absurdities with sharp discordant tuns as a results of controversial party primary that on two occasions produced two gubernatorial candidates of APC in the state- Uche Nwozu and Hope Uzodinma. Leadership (2018) reports that the party was polarized into two antagonistic camps. The siting Governor, Rocha Okorochoa presented his in-law, Uche Nwozu as his preferred candidate for the party which was a bitter pill to swallow for the majority of the APC members in the state. "Coalition Alliance" was formed by those who were not comfortable with Okorochoa's decision while the group loyal to Okorochoa

was named “Ugwumba Movement”. This led to separate primaries. The intervention of the National Working Committee, NWC of the party eventually produced governorship APC candidate (Senator, Hope Uzodinma). Uche Nwozu eventually picked tent on Action Alliance (AA) as the party gubernatorial candidate. This unhealthy rivalry made APC lost the state Governorship election to People Democratic Party, PDP in 2019 election. In Ogun state, attempt made by the Governor Amosun to impose Adekunle Akinlade as his anointed governorship candidate of APC in the state polarized the party and eventually led to Akinlade picked the Governorship ticket on the platform of another party but lost.

In Kwara state, Bolaji (2018) states that PDP governorship primary was disrupted on the first scheduled date following an attempt to impose a candidate on the delegates. The former Senate President’s preferred aspirant was Hon. RasakAtunwa. Attempt to impose him on the delegates at the point of election sparked reactions from other nine aspirants, which eventually disrupted the election. Subsequently, the primary election was rescheduled for another day. At the resume accreditation of delegates, eight out of the ten aspirants announced their withdrawal from the race. The primary election was then contested between the Former Governor of Kwara state and Senator representing Kwara North Senatorial District (Alhaji Sahaba Lafiaji) and Hon. RasakAtunwa, the preferred candidate of the Senate President (Bukola Saraki). Hon. RasakiAtunwa emerged the winner of the election as PDP governorship candidate for the 2019 elections.

Direct primary was conducted for all the elective offices in Kwara state for the 2019 elections by the ruling party, APC. However, after the election, the leadership of the party could not allow the votes to be counted, rather they resorted to picking their preferred candidates and imposed them on the people. When the present governor (Abdulrazak Abdulrahman) was announced as the governorship candidate of the party, other aspirants were aggrieved and protested the decision of the party. This development was not different from what happened in many states across the 36 states and Abuja. Leadership of APC was not consistent on the choice of candidates for all elective offices in 2019 elections across the country. Direct primary, indirect primary, consensus and imposition of candidates were adopted. Adedayo(2018) opines that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) lamented that the primaries conducted by various political parties ahead of the 2019 general elections, were the most rancorous in the history of Nigeria. Internal party democracy is still a source of

concern in the country's electoral progress. Unfortunately, we have also witnessed some of the most acrimonious party primaries in our recent history.

It is evident that some primary elections conducted in preparation for the 2019 elections were trailed with violence. For instance, Dimeji (2018) reports that at Ward 6, Itoko where Governor Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun state was to cast his vote, there was amid violence following the attack on the ward chairman (Olanrewaju Olalekan) by suspected political thugs. The thugs stormed the venue of the election when they were preparing for the congress asking for money and later descended on the chairman. Furthermore, in the PDP primary elections in Delta State on 2nd October, 2018, as the votes were being counted, a woman believed to be one of the aspirants approached the people in charge and started speaking angrily at them. All pleas for her to return to her seat fell on deaf ears. As the situation grew hotter, some of her supporters joined in the argument and started destroying tables and ballot boxes used for the election. Security agents, made up largely of policemen, who had been trying to calm the quarrelling parties down, were left with no option than to resort to the use of force. Gunshots were fired into the air to disperse the crowd, whom by now have become very angry and destructive (Kingsley, 2018).

On the issue of vote buying or the use of money in the primary elections in preparation for the 2019 elections, the environment in Port-Harcourt in Rivers state during the Presidential primary election of PDP speaks louder. There were several reports of the candidates displaying money to lure delegates to their side. It was reported that hard currencies were freely given to delegates by aspirants to mobilise them to vote for them. In some instances, money have been distributed to delegates before getting to the venues of the elections.

Challenges Confronted the Nomination of Candidates on Pre-Election Administration of 2019 Elections in Nigeria

It is evident and could be easily deduced from the discussion above that the pre-election administration of 2019 election in Nigeria on nomination of candidates are seriously challenged with a number of factors, which hindered the smooth running of the administration of the 2019 elections and also affect its credibility. The following challenges are identified in the study:

Irregularities in the Primary Elections

The primary elections conducted to produce candidates for the 2019 elections was characterized with irregularities. Some primaries were undercut by vote buying and poor communication from party leaders about methods for voting, the location of the nomination conventions and the composition of party membership lists. Political parties continued the practice of substituting names on their candidate lists; several candidates who won their primaries, including numerous women and youth, were removed from the list by party leaders and replaced by preferred candidates.

Gender Inequality

Pre-election administration on nomination of candidates in 2019 elections witnessed disparities or gender inequality. The number of women that nominated as candidates for various offices across the parties in Nigerian 2019 elections was relatively small compare to men. women nominated as candidates were below the required 30% affirmation principle for women participation in politics. The percentage of women nominated as candidates is relatively a little over 12% while men is over 87%. This disparity is too significant and does not promote democratic idea of equal participation.

Pre-election Litigations

Over 800 court cases were filed on primary elections alone in 2019 elections. This is an indication that the processes passed through innominating some of the candidates were manipulated. Some aspirants' rights were infringed. Popular will was not allowed to prevailed. The processes in nominating some of the candidates were lopsided, which breed acrimonies and rancor that led to unnecessary litigations.

Intra-party Crisis

There are unnecessary intra-party crisis in the nomination of candidates in 2019 election which eventually scuttled the chances of some parties, most especially the ruling party (APC) to control some states. For instance, Zamfara, Imo and Rivers states were lost to Opposition (PDP) as a result of intra-party unresolved crisis.

Financial Barrier

The cost of the form for expression of interest was so high beyond the reach of common man. This is an indication that common men have been tactically rigged out to participate. Millions of naira were required for party registration to contest elections which cannot be afforded by ordinary man.

Violence

Violence, in the history of Nigerian elections has been a thorny issue and an obstacle to smooth and successful conduct of elections. This development cannot be disassociated with what transpired in the nomination of candidates in the 2019 elections. This is linked with injustice, attempt made to deny some peoples' participation in politics or to deviate from the prescribed electoral processes on nomination of candidates.

Imposition of Candidates

Imposition of candidates was one of the major obstacles confronted the pre-election administration on nomination of candidates in 2019 elections in Nigeria. Some governors and political leaders imposed their anointed or preferred candidates on the party members. This resulted into series of rancor and acrimonies in the parties. This could be found in the ruling party APC in Zamfara, Rivers, Imo, Bauchi and Lagos states. In the opposition party, PDP, Kwara state is a typical example.

Voter Buying

Vote buying was noticed in the process of nominating candidates in the 2019 elections in Nigeria and stands as obstacles to credible conduct of primary elections. This development is noticed in the PDP presidential primaries in Port-Harcourt, Rivers state where hard currencies were displayed and distributed to delegates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. On nomination of candidate, INEC should enact a law with stringent punishment to erring party and candidate who deviate from the prescribed process. Legal

- framework should give INEC powers to reject nominations for candidacies if primaries are not conducted in line with legal requirements.
2. INEC and parties should design a mechanism that would encourage women participation like nonpayment of interest form or make provision for the percentage of women to be nominated by party.
 3. The legal department of INEC should be strengthened, recruit more qualified and competent lawyers to be able to handle court cases. The Alternative and Dispute Resolution unit of the Commission should be strengthened too so as to be pro-active in addressing some intra-party disputes. This, if properly managed, will reduce the number of court cases in respect to the electoral process.
 4. Party Monitoring Commission should be established which will be solely responsible for the management of the party. This commission should put a cap on the amount to be charged by party on interest form for a particular office contesting for. The amount must be reasonable and affordable for average members of the party.
 5. On the issue of violence, INEC, in collaboration with other relevant security agencies should develop some mechanisms that will properly secure the election material and also allow peaceful conduct of elections. Stringent punishment should be put in place for erring person or group of persons. The security agents should be fully armed and specially trained to perform this task.
 6. Imposition of candidate could be reduced or eradicated if political parties are independent and separated from government. Therefore, parties should assert full responsibility of managing the nomination of candidates through credible process. The control of the parties should be removed from the hands of political office holders, most especially the governors and the President.
 7. Vote selling and buying could be curbed through stringent punishment for culprits. INEC should design mechanisms to address this issue with the cooperation of security agents whoshould be specially trained to enforce the law appropriately. Camera should be installed in strategic areas to monitor this act and nonuniform security agents should also be used as measures to curb the illicit act.

CONCLUSION

The paper had examined and analysed the process of candidate nomination in the 2019 elections in Nigeria. The challenges confronted the 2019 elections on nomination of candidates are also identified and discussed in the study. It is evident from the study that there were a number of issues that require the attention of scholars in election administration on the nomination of candidates in the 2019 elections. The 2019 general elections saw a record number of 73 political parties contesting for the presidency. While a few of the parties conducted primaries to select their candidates, most failed to conduct transparent primaries, leading to allegations of imposition of candidates.

It is observed in the study that the process of candidate nomination was characterized by irregularities. The rule of the game, in most cases were violated by the actors especially the party leadership which eventually vitiated the results of the elections. These irregularities cut across the major political parties but more pronounced in the ruling party (APC). The study also discovered that, both direct and indirect primary elections were adopted in some parties while some adopted consensus in picking their candidates. The study also discovers the disparities that existed in the number of candidates between the male and female candidates. In the overall candidates nominated for the 2019 elections across parties, female nominated were less than 13% while men were more than 86 percent.

Part of the challenges confronted the nomination of candidates for the 2019 elections was that some primaries were undercut by vote buying and poor communication from party leaders about methods for voting, the location of the nomination conventions and the composition of party membership lists. Other challenges identified in the study include: a huge number of litigations of over 800 for party primaries alone; intra-party crisis which made some parties especially the ruling party, APC lost elections in some constituencies; electoral violence was also visible but minimal during the nomination of candidates in the 2019 elections. Vote selling and buying were reported in some primaries. The paper concludes that candidate nomination in the 2019 elections was characterized by a number of irregularities and confronted with a number of challenges. The paper then provides policy options to stem these identified challenges to be addressed in the forthcoming elections.

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