

# Factors Affecting Internal Party Democracy of The People's Democratic Party's Selection of Women Candidates in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Internal Party Democracy (IPD) of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), since Nigeria regained political independence in 1960 from the British until the year 2015, has had a crippling effect on Nigeria's democracy. IPD was responsible as adduced by the military for seizing power from the civilian administration in 1966 and subsequently up to 1999. Following 1999, the IPD of the PDP continued to represent a significant threat to Nigeria's democracy, engaging in everything from deliberate procedural violations of electoral laws to electoral fraud and candidate imposition during the party's primary elections. This qualitative study identified the factors affecting the PDP's IPD. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 13 females and 17 males for the study, comprising officials, elites, and members from the PDP itself, and the parliament. Thematic analysis revealed three major factors affecting PDP's IPD such as (i) the absence of a free and fair process, (ii) the lack of nomination of women's candidature, and (iii) the discrimination nature of the IPD style. The present study closed the gap in the literature by revealing the exact activities in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly in Nigeria. Hence, the study is a novelty in relation to previous research on PDP's IPD.

**Keywords:** Internal Party Democracy, Peoples' Democratic Party, Party's Primaries, Electoral Manipulations, Free and Fair Process.

## Introduction

Internal party democracy (IPD) is the main party candidate selection institution for general elections in both consolidated and non-consolidated democracies. According to a study, internal party democracy is the most important benchmark for a country to achieve democratic consolidation, good governance, rule of law, popular participation, and a free and fair general election (Madubueze, 2018). A well-established internal party democracy that is

sustained by outstanding and effective funding, openness, and excellence (Ajibola, 2016) ensures democracy's long-term survival. Thus, accountability, transparency, independence, sound ideology, and strong administrative and organizational structures of parties promote political viability (Madubueze, 2018).

Thus, internal party democracy consolidates global democracy. Internal party democracy is optimal. Scholars warn that internal party democracy is a function of party size, especially in the legislature, and that various parties have internal party democracy that matches their ideals (Borz & Janda, 2020). The US green party had the most active internal party democracy, followed by social democrats and conservatives (Poguntke et al 2016). A political party's three main goals are policy/ideology, office maximization, and vote maximization (Borz & Janda, 2020). The fourth is internal party democracy (representation and participation of members) (Harmel & Janda, 1994). Party strategic and electoral interests and declining legitimacy drive these efforts. Internal party democracy lacks ideas. Provide party-specific IPD characteristics. This is because parties in consolidated democracies are more likely to have ideal democracy than parties in tyrant, dictatorial, autocratic, and fascist democratic regimes as the case in most African, Asia, and Latin American countries where the democratic practice is far from democratic ideals. These non-ideal democracies, as argued by scholars (such as LeDuc, Richard, & Norris, P. (2014). ; Onapajo 2014; Dahl et al 2023; and Adejumobi 2000) in Abutu, Samsu & Fee (2021), have prominent frustration, intimidation, harassment, and suppression of oppositions at ballot coupled with redrawing electoral districts to suit incumbents, campaigning being conducted like a battlefield, media harassment, stuffed ballot boxes on election day, abusing the electoral and procedural processes.

Similarly, China for instance, with its coherent and well-coordinated one-party system, has a corrupt IPD within the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Qinglian compared it to asking a doctor to operate on himself. Though, the recent CCP meeting focused on intraparty democracy, which establishes the party's primacy (Li, China Leadership Monitor, No. 30); the Chinese one-party system is unable to address corruption within internal party democracy as argued by foreign and local critics. Western nations' strong mistrust of Chinese democracy is obvious in their perception that the CCP's leadership style is anti-democratic, especially since the one-party system is a semblance of a military dictatorship (Li, China Leadership Monitor, No. 30). Though the 17th Central Committee's fourth Plenary Session in September 2009 urged for party democracy and anti-corruption, yet the CCP's refusal to accept opposition parties mocked its numerous calls for, rebirth, and active promotion of internal democracy contrary to electoral democracy with multiparty competition (Li, China Leadership Monitor).

Similarly, Dynasty parties' informal decision-making, poor electoral party organizations, and high centralization have weakened Bangladesh's internal party democracy. Bangladesh IPD issues are affecting party politics and democratic consolidation (Amundsen, 2013). The Cambodian People's Party (CPP) on the other hand, deliberately undermines alternative parties like the National United Front for an independent, natural, peaceful, and cooperative Cambodia (Peou, 2020). GNRP was barred from the 2018 election (Peou, 2020), and Leadership supremacy is fostered by CPP internal democracy.

Conversely, since 1963, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)-led Barisan Nasional coalition has dominated Malaysia (Manikas & Thomson, 2003). After forty years of UMNO hegemony, Malaysia changed administrations due to elite defections, UMNO's lack of patronage resources, and economic upheaval (Case, 2010). A strong internal democracy protected the party from smaller parties for a long time. Political parties in Asia, like

elsewhere, are essential to democracy as they offer electorates choices and aggregate and integrate diffuse competing social interests (Manikas & Thomson, 2003), but internal party democracy must be divorced from corruption because most political parties engage in illegal and corrupt practices. Thus, anti-corruption and good governance efforts would fail if parties' internal democratic procedures were corrupt and undemocratic.

Internal party democracy (IPD) in most Asian countries, has different internal party democracies than North, Southern, Eastern, and West Africa IPD focusing on Tunisia, Ennanda, the largest party with 54 MPs out of 217, has long dominated and addressed intraparty democracy. Ghannouchi co-founded Ennanda in 1981. To save the party, party bye-laws required him to quit after two terms (Sadiki, 2020). South Africa's ruling party can force elected officials to resign if they don't like them (Ohazuruike, 2019). Thus, South African elected party representatives who disagree with the leader are at risk. Due to dysfunctional party structures, limited party member voices, party founder influence, inadequate oversight bodies, and the legislative framework, Tanzania's opposition and ruling parties' internal party democracy is limited.

This study indicates that incumbent and opposition parties' internal party democracy (IPD) is characterized by party founders and leadership tussles throughout Asian and African countries. The data also demonstrate that parties' IPD violates democratic ideals and slim chances of winning in the elections. Parties outside their IPD follow democratic norms due to political, democratic, and electoral regulations. Parties protect their IPD even inside interparty linkages on the continents investigated. Asian and African internal party democracy involves leadership struggles and party leader tyrannies. Hence internal party democracy is not about practising democratic ideals, but parties pursuing issues that could enhance their chances of victory in elections. Given this, IPD in the Nigerian context is examined.

Arguments were:

In Nigeria, elected public officials become party leaders at the national or state level and manage party activities to the point of removing the party leadership or forming a rival leadership. These activities by elected political leaders have been one of the biggest challenges to internal party democracy in Nigeria (Ohazuruike, 2019:91).

Another study found that Nigeria's internal party democracy (IPD) is weak due to the party's weak organization, excessive leadership power, intraparty conflicts, poor IPD, leadership mutual suspicion and conflicts, and poor management and administration of party affairs (Ego & Madubueze, 2018).

A Nigerian study found that before the electoral act of 2010, internal party democracy had many feuding issues, including a lack of adequate law that interpreted procedural steps to guarantee internal party democracy in the nomination of candidates for elections and compliance with internal party democratic principles (Okhaide, 2012).

A scholar also adds that internal party democracy in Nigeria since Nigeria's first to present fourth republic is bedevilled with not just a lack of internal democracy but also a casual factor that triggered the seizure of power by the military in 1966 coupled with all the ramblings in the Nigeria political landscape are all caused by poorly organized administration of parties' internal party democracy (Odigwe, 2015).

Finally, research shows that Since Nigeria's 1999 post-military democratic experiment, intra-party interactions have become increasingly authoritarian, emphasizing politics' ferocity. There were widespread claims of intra-party dictatorship and high-handedness by the gladiators who claimed to own the party (Joe-Akunnhe et al., 2022).

In driving home the discussion on internal party Democracy (IPD) of political parties in Nigeria since Nigeria's first to present fourth Republic, it could be deduced that IPD in Nigeria is a woe of ferocious politics, undemocratic practices, intra-party autocracy, high-handedness on the part of those gladiators, packs of democratic procedural violations, maladministration and poor organization, the excessive power of party leadership, intra-party conflicts, poor

Internal party democracy in Nigerian political parties is similar to that of Asian and other African countries because they all share the same undemocratic charade of democratic procedural violation, excessive power allocation to party leaders, and protection and preservation of power to party money bags and godfathers. Therefore,

Parties are now trying to maintain their social connections, and the reward they envisioned has hurt them. Parties went to the state for financial resources and other ways to profit in response to sociocultural and economic changes that had weakened their organizational standing and public reputation (Ignazi, 2020). They also introduced direct democracy practices inside the parties.

IPD is therefore seen as a global party where corrupt political machine bosses rule, giving cronies jobs, public contracts, and material benefits. These bosses obey their ward and city leaders but have no say in party affairs. These contradict internal party democracy's purported emulation of democratic ideals like casting ballots in elections and selecting and rejecting their office-holders, and lacking the party's internal democracy (Electoral Knowledge Network). In contrast to authoritarian electoral democracy, internal party democracies worldwide lack ideal democratic traits.

### **Literature Review**

The review of related literature for the present study is to produce the scholarly work of other scholars on internal party democracy. The essence of the conceptual clarification is to establish the gap left behind by other scholars which formed the basis of the present research.

Political parties use election rules to gain power in a democracy through party politics (Olaniyi, 2001). Party politics arise when elective principles are present in a state and by implication under a democratic regime that recognizes the citizens' right to elect their representatives. Party politics, according to Okoye (1982), are formal structures, institutions, or organizations that compete through the electoral process to control the government's personnel and policies and allocate a state's scarce resources through institutionalized means. Party politics seeks political power. Many researchers agreed on the core characteristics of accountability, transparency, inclusion, participation, and representation, but there is no universal definition of intraparty democracy (Yanai, 1999)). Internal party democracy implies forming the party "bottom-up" and distributing power among levels, bodies, and individuals rather than concentrating it in one organ (Pasquino, 2005)). Giovanni stated that internal democracy encompasses many ways to include party members in internal discourse and decision-making, building on (Sarrow, 2004). Mersel (2006) believes internal party democracy promotes more representative, transparent, and effective political parties. It recognizes party internal functions like candidate and leadership selection, policy-making, membership relations, women and youth participation, and party funding.

Teorell (1999) addresses two key characteristics of internal party democracy; the first involves free, fair, and regular elections for internal positions and representative bodies. The

second incorporates all members and groups equally and openly to better reflect interests. These two methods are necessary for a transparent, open, and deliberative political party in which everyone can vote equally and participate in various ways. Gosnell (1968) defined internal party democracy as vertical and horizontal links between deliberating areas and opposing issues. It means creating a party climate that allows all members to participate in decision-making and administration. This encourages party members and the powerful rich to participate.

According to Daniel et al (2018) cited by a study carried out by Odoh et al (2021) that apart from recruiting members, political socialization, and political communication, parties have the function responsibility to adopt the best approaches that are possibly suitable for winning other political parties at the poll in a general election. Therefore, the subject priority of a political party according to Waldi et al (2018) is to adopt approaches that will enhance voter's confidence in the party to eventually earn the party winning votes in the election. There is an inter-linkage between electoral activities and internal party democracy because the party's main internal party democratic practice is focused on strategies that will transform into votes. The gap lies in determining what are the factors that influence internal party democracy (IPD) of political parties, particularly influential ones like the PDP. This is the purpose of this study, and as such the concept of internal party democracy must first be understood.

In the practice of internal democracy within political parties, charismatic leaders tend to be chosen to propose more responsive policies to win more elections (Ego & Madubueze, 2018). However, good internal party democracy strengthens democratic culture and creates a virtuous circle where ordinary citizens are linked to the government, and the party benefits from adopting it and contributing to the legitimacy and stability of democracy through which parties compete for power (Scarrow, 2005). A mature democracy has three decision-making areas where internal party democracy may be measured. Leadership and candidate selection (party election), selection, policy formulation, and coalition creation (Croissant and Chambers, 2010; Scarrow, 2005).

In Nigeria, passage through a party candidate selection process is a requisite for election for Democratic legislators. However, the PDP's candidate selection process does not favour women candidates in most states including Nasarawa State. Studies show that from 2011 to 2015, no single woman was selected by the dominant party (PDP) in Nigeria or even other parties in the state to contest for the Nasarawa State House of Assembly election as no female was selected for the primary elections before the elections of 2011 and 2015. Only male candidates were chosen by the party scaled through as members of the State House of Assembly (Premium Times, 2017). Statistics indicate that 24 members elected were men, while no single woman was elected during both elections (Chukwuma & Nwankwo, 2019). This was mainly due to problems of the PDP Internal Party Democracy during the candidate selection process.

This is supported by other studies on internal democracy in Africa that highlight PDP's IPD is contaminated because it fosters leadership struggle, intra-party conflicts, lack of intraparty democracy, poor relations between political parties, suspicion and conflict, and poor administration and management (Ego & Madubueze, 2018). A good internal party democracy strengthens the democratic culture and promotes a virtuous circle where ordinary citizens are linked to government and the party benefits from adopting it and contributing to the legitimacy and stability of democracy through which parties compete for power.



Different scholars may have different opinions about the most critical processes for Internal Party Democracy evaluation. Therefore, the focus of this study is specifically on PDP's candidate. It is essential to consider members' rights, organizational structure, policy-making function, formal rules, and non-formal action. Apart from the official structure of political parties, they also have a non-formal structure that includes the elite at the exclusion of others, particularly women candidates. This study is needed because PDP is the largest political party in Nigeria which has won the General Elections from 1999 to 2015. There are hardly any studies that analyse factors affecting PDP's internal party democracy. This is important as it has a very big impact on women's representation in the State Legislative Assembly, whereby the situation is most severe in Nasarawa State—which is the main objective of this study.

### **Research Methodology**

The qualitative research method was used for this study because it allows participants to freely express their opinions and understanding of the issue being investigated by eliciting information from them through probing questions (Berry, 1999)

The researcher used in-depth, open-ended interviews with thirty experts who have years of experience in party politics, candidate selection, voting, and representation from within the People's Democratic Party and Nasarawa State House of Representatives, as well as the relevant political experiences for this study. The number of informants collected is normal and sufficient for social science study (Gaya & Smith, 2016). They were purposefully chosen from a variety of backgrounds because they needed to have relevant work experience that allowed them to be familiar with the idea of the factors influencing internal party democracy of the People's Democratic Party's selection of women candidates in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. They needed to possess several characteristics that would aid in achieving the study's objectives, according to (Collins, 2010).

Instead of interviewing people who are not particularly exposed to and knowledgeable about the issue, this allowed the researcher to gain insight into the subject (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, the researcher made an effort to find interview subjects who could accurately express the opinions of the main religious, cultural, and gender groupings within the People's Democratic Party. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, all informants' identities are kept secret following ethical principles and to reduce any potential damage to themselves or the political parties they represent. The data gathered from the interviews were verbatim transcribed, coded, and then subjected to a thematic analysis method to look for reoccurring themes (Surmiak, 2018).

Triangulation, member checking, extensive involvement in data collecting, peer examination, and validation of transcribed hard copy data by all interviewees are proofs of data validation (Varpio et. al., 2017).

### **Findings of The Study**

The findings were based on a thematic analysis of the data. There were three (3) major themes identified such as (a) the absence of a free and fair election, (b) the nomination of women's candidature in PDP's IPD, and (c) the discriminatory nature of IPD in PDP. Each theme also has several sub-themes identified in the following section.

#### **(a) The Absence of Free and Fair Processes**

This theme highlighted Nigeria's formal political parties' candidate selection regulations. Five sub-themes supported the claim that the PDP Internal Party Democracy (IPD)

was not free and fair: (i) violation of electoral rules and regulations for party candidate selection; (ii) negative influence on women candidate selection; (iii) influence of Godfatherism in candidate selection; (iv) discrimination against women candidates. This evidence supported the sub-theme of the absence of a free and fair process within the PDP IPD because there are some electoral processes, as shown by the informants' direct quotations.

**(i) Violation of Electoral Rules and Regulations**

The Constitution and Third Schedule Part One Section 15 authorize the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to organize, conduct, and supervise all Nigerian elections (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). The INEC also guides parties' candidate selection.

According to informants, IPD elections at all political party delegate conferences to pick party candidates for primaries are guided by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) rules. Nigerian 1999 Constitution as amended in Section 15 (f) of the Third Schedule, Part 1 as well as PDP Constitution rules (PDP Constitution as Amended 2012 page 50).

According to informants, all registered political parties must follow INEC standards without candidate selection. PDP Constitution Chapter Five includes similar prohibitions. Some sources say the PDP follows electoral protocols when selecting candidates. To Nigeria's detriment, internal democracy is flexible. This study will analyze the PDP's internal democracy by asking informants if its candidate selection process follows these standards. Following and respecting rules are different. Second, internal democracy demands standards, which explains the lack of women in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly. Thirdly, observing the regulations will determine PDP internal democracy's credibility.

Informant B1 said the PDP candidate selection procedure follows INEC and PDP constitution requirements. He said the party had other fundamental criteria besides INEC and the party constitution. He said

We follow the party's constitution and the guidelines in line with the INEC provision of selection. Maybe during primaries, we have our primaries guidelines, we have our constitution that involves the buying of forms, the screening, and people going into queues.

Informant B1 added that the PDP Constitution outlined the procedures for collecting forms, queuing, voting, and declaring. The insider assured that primary elections always precede general elections. The PDP primary is free and fair since it respects the PDP Constitution and other restrictions. Informant B1 stated

Our constitution requires buying forms, screening, and queuing. Screening occurs once you submit your form. If you have no other issues, people will wait and vote for whomever they want on primaries day. We hold primaries to choose party candidates.

Informant B4 emphasizes participants' final victories, which were usually based on the integrated candidate selection Constitution by buying forms. PDP primaries produce one winner.

Some informants felt that PDP candidate selection should follow electoral rules. Some informants also believe that PDP selection rules are crucial. Informant B1 reiterated that the

open balloting technique is fair because votes are cast and counted while queuing. The winner will be announced. The source said: The PDP employs open balloting according to the guidelines. Queue, vote, count. Winners win, losers lose. It's open, free, and fair. Contestants, voters, and primary delegates are all present. PDP cardholders would line behind anyone they wish. "To my understanding, our recent primaries were free and fair, and voters chose their candidates." Informant E5 further said: PDP selects candidates in Nasarawa State democratically. Primaries begin. Someone will buy nomination forms and be eligible in these primaries. It starts there by law. Informant A1 agreed that the party process is fair. The laws, guidelines, and processes are free, fair, and cumbersome though PDP officials influence all these processes. According to informants F1, A3, B5, A4, and C3, "That is why ascertaining free, fair, and credible primaries in the PDP process of candidate selection is an issue". Informant F1 added that "There are issues, and they are taking down the PDP. Godfatherism issues. Besides godfatherism, tribalism and process violations are destroying this political party.

Informant A3 has this to say

But for them to come certainly they will come but we will not allow the individual interest or individual's interest to overshadow the principle or the interest of the party. Even though, due to human error, one cannot rule out the possibility of violation of the process by some top party officials Informant B5 said in PDP, he votes if he's in the proper mind. However, some party leaders may have cheated. Other informants stated thus

Yes, the first major issue with party selection is that candidates sometimes don't express interest until it's too late. It's difficult, and when leaders introduce their male candidates, candidates move out of the parties or quit politics..... Informant A4

Sending money, and bringing money in a bag, are illegal. You know, some politicians pay some electorates with money, which makes them afraid to vote. Informant C3

According to informants F1, A3, B5, A4, and C3, the PDP's candidate selection rules are not fully followed. Thus, the inability to fully apply criteria to candidate selection may hinder some candidates, notably women. This may explain the lack of women in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly.

An "internal" democracy problem occurs when political party regulations are not enforced. Mersel (2006) said the party's structure and organization affect its members. Mersel (2006) claims religious, racial, and gender parties discriminate against their members. In contrast, oligarchy-ruled parties deny women and other members and can even replace party leadership (Mersel, 2006).

Thus, while the party may appear democratic and pursue legitimate goals, it may rule its members unjustly (Mersel, 2006). According to the informants' overall perceptions, the PDP members' leadership during candidate selection showed gender discrimination against women in following the regulations.

The most influential factor that affects the PDP IDP candidate selections is "The Absence of a Free and Fair Process"



**(ii) Negative Influence on Women Candidate Selection**

This sub-theme of PDP internal democracy raised the question of whether the candidate selection procedure included deliberate sex discrimination. This inquiry examines the PDP candidate selection procedure to explain low women representation in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly. The following are informants' comments on PDP primary candidate selection processes.

Informant D4 said both genders can compete. Informant D4 also mentioned that contestants can vote for their preferred candidates. The informant also revealed that the PDP gives women free tickets to run for office, so they don't even have to buy nomination papers. Women candidates should benefit. He concluded:

The party holds fair, open primaries during elections. The party always allows this. The party delivers free tickets to ladies. They receive free primary forms.

Other interviewees agreed with Informant A1 that the PDP candidate selection process has some internal democracy. That the process is free, fair, and cumbersome, according to the law's norms, and guidelines.

Informants F1, B4, C4, D3, and E5 said PDP officials are negatively influencing internal democracy. Informants added:

PDP leaders significantly impact all selection procedures. That's why free, fair, and credible primaries are important. If they don't cease, they'll render the political party unsellable. As you know, PDP is a powerful party in Nigeria, and we need fair leaders and participants.

PDP selectors are selfish. If two of us are running for the same office and the masses choose one of us, the other opponent will go to the primaries with money to show off. Delegates will abandon the correct candidate for money. General elections are problematic. Selfish party officials severely impact selection.

The above informants revealed that the PDP candidate selection is characterized by irregularities that hurt women, revealing women's planning and gender bias. According to a scholar, the democratic process in developing countries like Nigeria continues to derail and collapse elections and the electoral process due to numerous underpinning problems like corruption, religious factors, ethnicity, regionalization of political parties, power of incumbency, and money politics that have deteriorated Nigerian political structures and the inability of electoral bodies to conduct elections. Nigeria and most emerging nations face this situation.

Turner (1953); Carson & Williamson (2018) found that in Congressional primary elections, incumbents almost always won because they likely scared off rivals. In another US example, progressives expected primary elections to boost candidate competitiveness, but the opposite happened (Bibby, 2003). Thus, scholars found the primary election annoying. Asia, Africa, and Nigeria share the US condition. Thus, primary elections may lack justice, freedom, and legitimacy. Thus, incumbent intimidation may affect the PDP candidate selection, especially women. (Nwanegbo & Alumona, 2011) stated

Abuse of power and unequal distribution of democratic achievements are Nigeria's biggest obstacles to democracy, similarly, incumbency abuse is another obstacle (Nwanegbo & Alumona, 2011)

### **(iii) Influence of Godfatherism in Candidate Selection**

Godfatherism and regionalism in Yobe State are heavily studied in Nigerian politics (Ali et al., 2019). In Nasarawa State, qualitative interviews on godfatherism and women's political engagement and representation are few. This study addressed the knowledge gap. The informants' vivid descriptions helped the researcher explain these findings. The sources called "Godfatherism" a system in which influential party members back a candidate for a party position. They are wealthy elites who financially back credible candidates and force their interests on them regardless of popularity or qualifications.

Informant C1 claimed it affects selection. He claimed that sometimes or often, eligible applications are kept out, some have Godfathers or interested prospects, or money might skew the process. F1 stated godfatherism destroyed the PDP. Nigerian godfathers sponsored everyone, regardless of qualifications, limiting women's party nomination. Godfatherism frightened informant F1. PDP leaders depress him. PDP Godfatherism is also a serious issue. This worries women. The lack of political godfathers inhibits most Nigerian women from running for government. Informants feel godfatherism affects women's political aspirations, particularly legislators.

In Nasarawa State, having a godfather who supports you politically and financially influences other political figures to support you, making godfathers a crucial issue in candidate selection. A godfather would mentor a candidate in politics as informant E5 stated:

One of the concerns of the PDP selection process in Nasarawa State is godfatherism. In many political eras, if you don't have a godfather, you'll have a lot of problems even within the party. Sir, this is one of the biggest issues of PDP candidate selection in Nasarawa State.

Godfatherism politics is not limited to Nasarawa State alone, however, Nasarawa State godfatherism politics is unique in that it scheming out women from the PDP internal democratic candidate selection stage. PDP candidates compete with men and women. Due to godfatherism's high-level politics, women couldn't resist the friction in their violent competition with men. The informants' perspectives highlighted PDP internal democracy breaches due to gender equality power asymmetries in candidate selection. Thus, godfatherism, which allows men to hold most elected offices, puts women at a disadvantage.

### **(iv) Discrimination Against Women During Candidate Selection**

In Nigeria, a study carried out by the United Nations showed substantial evidence that there is discrimination against women in politics. Other research support this (Eniola, 2018; Milazzo & Goldstein, 2019; Women, 2018). While there are studies in Nigeria that highlight the discrimination against women in politics, *no study to date shows how women were being discriminated against in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) internal democracy concerning candidate selection* as captured by this subtheme. Therefore, there is a gap as highlighted by previous studies in this regard which this subtheme that emerged from the investigation can address, as filled by the testimonies of the informants Traditional, religious, and cultural views about women's roles contribute to Nigerian women's political exclusion, according to sources.

One key issue that kept occurring during the interview session was the act of making a distinction between male and female by male politicians. Informants kept mentioning cases of unfair and sexist treatment of women by men just because they are women. Some women politicians have been labelled as prostitutes. This was gender-based discrimination against women. Informant C2 recounted her ordeal when asked about PDP's internal democracy. She described women's mistreatment

I was a PDP councillor candidate, and guys are selfish and greedy. I was the sole lady among maybe three men. As the sole woman, they should leave that seat for me. But guys have this mentality of wanting to disrespect women, say all kinds of things about women, discriminate against women, and think every woman in politics is a prostitute, which is not true.

Some informants believed that culture discriminates against women in leadership or elective roles. Informant A1 said some cultures dislike women's representation. He added:

It could be cultural, it could be part of our culture, having a woman as the head representing you some communities don't feel very comfortable, or they don't appreciate the contributions or performance of women in a representative capacity or elective positions.

Informant B2 said males don't try women. Some guys resist women when they compete. Informant C3 stated, "Most leaders do not support women in politics, and that is why women are not interested in politics." E1 criticised African traditions for political discrimination towards women. Africa has historically prohibited women from politics. Most political women are shirkers. E2 called the candidate's imposition of party-member discrimination. That's why "forcing my candidate to go" impacts women's selection. D1 ascribed political indifference to religious discrimination. "As I've indicated, especially in religion, some religions don't allow women to participate in politics," he remarked.

Informants said Nigerian and other African women were discriminated against. These include religious, cultural, and family obligations. These difficulties influenced women in general elections and political party internal democratic elections, especially the PDP.

#### **(b) Lack of Nomination of Candidates and Women Candidature in the PDP Internal Party Democracy**

According to a study, political parties nominate candidates for voters. Parties follow two procedures. These include participative tactics where only leaders nominate and allow the democratic process, allowing voters or party members to choose party candidates (Hazan & Rahat, 2006 referenced by Aragon, 2014). Canadian party candidate recruiters (gatekeepers) discourage or encourage women candidates, according to 2004 and 2005 studies. More women than males will be nominated for political office if the gatekeeper (local party president) is a woman (Cheng & Tavits, 2011). Political parties can motivate women to seek government, according to this Canadian study. Political factors like party nomination affect women's nomination chances. Women are underrepresented in politics due to informal factors.

PDP's Nasarawa State candidate's candidature is justified by this. This highlights two issues: how the PDP changed the nomination procedure and women. Second, do women recruit? The PDP candidate selection process affects women, but these questions will help us

understand it. The PDP's national election candidate selection depends on the nomination, according to field statistics. There were two nomination methods. Party members proposing a candidate or self-interested members collecting and signing the nomination form are examples.

Informant B1 said PDP nomination forms are free. She explained:

My party in Nasarawa State requires aspirants to acquire nomination forms. After purchasing the nomination form, you fill it out and deliver it to the party via delegates, as in recent elections or primaries. The PDP nomination forms are free, but a letter of intent is paid. The free nomination form is already in the constitution.

Informant F2 stated that the committee must meet other conditions before clearing nomination applications. Such as candidates followed the party constitution's due process before giving them clearance.

Informant D3 adds that the screening committee screens candidates before they become party candidates. He said "My party selects candidates by selling nomination forms, screening them, and then interviewing them after further research. If you pass that process, the party presents you."

However, some informants were concerned about women in the party nomination platform. Informant A1 agreed with earlier informants that party women received free nomination forms in Nigeria. Informant C2 stated the party can only provide nomination forms free to its women members but allow people to vote for anybody they wished. Unlike nomination forms, women can vote for whomever they like at the election location. This theme has two subthemes and they are; Unfair Application Processes of Candidate Selection in PDP Internal Democracy and Undemocratic Electoral Process and Requirements.

#### **(i) Unfair Application Processes of Candidate Selection in PDP Internal Democracy**

Party selection for women requires special strategies. Interview, screening, qualification, and disqualification. Letter of intent, interview, screening, and candidate credentials are addressed. This analysis reveals that voting and party stereotypes hinder women's PDP candidature despite these unique constraints for all candidates.

The PDP's legitimacy depends on these procedures. The solution is gendered enlisted processes. General, primary, and candidate selection candidates must fulfil electoral rules. Candidates should be inspected before signing a declaration of intent because elections are fair, free, transparent, and credible. Process credibility is determined by the electoral management board (Dauda et al., 2019). Women candidates may suffer from unfair electoral administration.

According to Informant B1, the PDP requires men and women to pay for the letter of intent, making it impossible for women to access it. The informant said women must pay for the letter of intent, unlike the nomination form, which is free. The nomination form must not reach an unsuitable candidate.

Informant B1 didn't say if gathering a letter of intent is frustrating. We now know if the procedure favours women. Before clearance, informant F2 claimed the candidate must meet further conditions. The screening committee must check that they meet party constitution standards after nomination. Acceptability requires qualification and capability. A candidate's education, experience, talents, and personality are also considered qualifications. College

degrees, communication skills, party allegiance, and a positive attitude toward society are also qualities. In addition to formal credentials, contestants must be active PDP members at the ward, local government, state, or federal level. Women are less interested in party matters than men due to societal standards and familial commitments. Informant A1 ranks credentials.

Second, applicants must follow processes before declaring an interest. You can participate at the ward, municipal, state, and national levels with limits and minimum qualifications. Screened at all levels. Such levels are needed to emerge.

Most women are popular among a small group but not at the local, state, or federal level, according to the immediate informants. Women typically lose state primary elections.

Some informants thought the methods were biased and flawed, but others didn't. Informants B1 and F1 said the PDP candidate selection process favoured women. The leader and state favour women representatives, she remarked. They ignore women. Like we're voting for them, I'm asking them to give women a chance. They should vote for us despite our weaknesses.

It's the same, E6 said. Because of tradition and the belief that women are inferior to males, they are not chosen. In African culture, women are seen as inferior to men, hence we have fewer women lawmakers. We have few or no women.

B1, F1, & E6, as well as five more informants (A4, B1, B3, C2, & E3), said the candidate selection procedure favours women, even though F2 and A1 said otherwise. Under internal party democracy, voter bias and party bias against women cause underrepresentation of women. Voter bias hurts Spanish women's representation more (Eiras & Sanz, 2018). In Italy and France, voter bias precluded women from serving (Frechette, Maniquet, and Morelli, 2008 as mentioned in Eiras and Sanz, 2018). Esteve-Volart and Bagues (2012) blamed party bias for the Spanish Senate's lack of women (Eiras and Sanz, 2018). According to informants, voter and party prejudices in Spain, France, and Italy are similar to women's underrepresentation in the PDP internal democracy in Nigeria.

## **(ii) Undemocratic Electoral Process and Requirements**

Previous studies have shown that women are underrepresented in Nigerian politics, and informant A1 stated that only qualified candidates are selected in the PDP candidate selection election in Nasarawa State, just like any other state in Nigeria (Chen, 2005; Godwin, 2013; Abubakar & Ahmad, 2014; Dukor, 2015; Abutu & Salisu, 2018). In the PDP primary, where there are few women voters and violations of the free and fair voting process, imprecise franchise, and electoral standards, some informants wondered how a female delegate could win. The female candidate cannot represent women in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly without winning primary elections. Thus, women's candidate selection is affected by an unrealistic democratic electoral procedure and conditions. The PDP selection procedure in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly is examined.

The informants stated that the right to vote for the People's Democratic Party in Nasarawa State is contingent on meeting certain criteria. The accredited voters during the election were mainly PDP delegates from different regions of Nasarawa State who were already party members with elected positions, according to interviews. Having party members as delegates suggests that the party may favour incumbents and marginalise minority groups like women. Candidates are originally selected based on their desire in



running, their capacity to buy nomination papers, or their willingness to collect the free nomination form. As informant C2 stated, contenders must campaign at the delegates' homes to "sell yourself out to the people." Other criteria include participants' willingness to risk winning or losing. The fact that this ostensibly flexible approach requires candidates to go meet delegates regardless of where they live shows that only wealthy and connected candidates can win. The informants' perspectives were as follows:

Informant A1 stated that the eligibility starts from interest and said thus:

In Nasarawa State, it's just like ah.. every part of Nigeria; the requirement is one. First of all, I said you would indicate interest by buying nomination forms and secondly by showing interest, ah after which ahh set aside date will be communicated to everybody, and delegates selected from every unit, that is the electoral ward that is only elected are the ones that are allowed to now go into the selection process. This is a democratic process.

The data collected also indicated some level of adherence to democratic practice in the candidate selection process in Nasarawa state PDP to determine their candidates' eligibility. Informant E5 put it across thus:

.... PDP carries out its selection process in Nasarawa State by practising the democratic system. It starts with primaries. So, it is through these primaries that somebody will buy nomination forms and will be eligible. That is where the democratic process begins.

Informant C2 made it known that eligibility is considered through the use of delegates, those sent or authorized to represent others, particularly elected representatives, or selected by party officials to vote for a candidate within the party. He stated thus:

Okay, is through a delegate-ship because if you are aspiring for whatever position, you have to campaign very well, go to the rural level, and sell yourself out to the people, then at the end of it, the voting has to be by delegates. This is a democratic process.

Informant B4 indicated that the emergence of only one candidate entails that other contestants may have to cooperate. He stated thus:

The primaries are done by delegates who will vote and fish out the candidate of their choice. It is from there that other contestants will be patient since only one candidate will be selected.

One other important thing about eligibility has to do with membership. To be registered as a member of the party is paramount. Informant A2 pointed out this when he stated that:

The way we conduct our selection process in Nasarawa State is this; you have to be a member, first of all, and then the process of delegates making selections will commence.

Despite the informants' explanation that the practices of the PDP are somewhat democratic, the question that needs to be addressed is, how can elections be credible in an arrangement that involves only a few delegates as voters or electorates? Secondly, how can marginalized

people such as females be fairly represented in the selection process under the arrangement considering that being selected is based on a very high-stake game?

The answer is not far-fetched as Krouwel's (1999) study on the parliamentary candidate in twelve Western European countries provided the solution to the first and second questions. Krouwel (1999) argued that the method used in selecting parliamentary candidates has a far-reaching effect on the quality and credibility of the democratic political and electoral process. In the same way, the type of party candidates selected and their professional and educational background, including their gender and age greatly influence the quality of parliamentary governance on which the country depends on. The nomination and selection of candidates for parliament representatives are fundamental for political parties to ensure a credible democratic political system.

**(c). *Discriminatory Nature of the Internal Party Democracy in PDP***

Internal democracy in dominant parties is crucial to democratic consolidation. ANC internal democracy was insufficient, according to Lotshwao (2009). According to the analysis, the ANC's lack of internal democracy threatens democratic consolidation in South Africa. Democratic centralism was favoured by the party's national executive committee, which made all decisions. This permitted the leadership to pursue ineffective policies without pushback.

Bangladesh's democratic leadership election process and internal democracy were examined by Amundsen (2016). The internal party leadership selection and dynasties are democratic, according to the study. The findings demonstrated that weak electoral party organizations and a limited number of party insiders, known as political incumbents, wield enormous authority and influence and make informed decisions. Bangladesh's democratization was harmed by this study.

Understanding the internal democracy of the then-ruling PDP in Nasarawa State Nigeria is necessary due to the dangers of unregulated internal democracy, as seen in South Africa and Bangladesh. It will reveal the party's democracy and aid the current study's candidate selection process. This exacerbated the Nasarawa State House of Assembly's gender gap.

This third theme notably evolved from the PDP's internal democracy weakness. Interviews show that internal democracy has two definitions. First, free, fair, and regular elections, and second, membership involvement and interest representation equality. This theme has two sub-themes, and they are the willingness of individual delegates to participate in candidate selection and the National uniformity of the process of the PDP candidate selection.

**(i) *The willingness of Individual Delegates to Participate in Candidate Selection***

Given that internal democracy includes members' right to full participation, which is the ability to participate in party decisions that affect their interests, some informants stated that the PDP's selection process allowed for free participation following their constitution. Informant C5 advocated for selection freedom. C5 said that PDP's internal democratic party procedure is democratic because anyone can join. According to the interview, the party allowed women to participate to advance. E1 and C4 reported:

The PDP leaders initially did not encourage women to participate in politics, but as time went on, they saw the need to carry women along and gave women a chance to help move the party and country forward. Allowing ladies. Women are

increasingly politically active because of misguided patronage. They give women free forms to participate in elections so they can participate too. Informant E6 disagreed with the others because selfish interests are compromising the process.

I believe the PDP's internal democracy process is phased. Procedures are written and documented, yet they are not followed. My observation. The written procedures are available, however, the selection process used to be hampered due to various reasons.

E6 and F4 agree as he stated that since 1999, Nasarawa State women have not participated in politics. Men's selfish motives cause some to influence others' participation. Party issues arise. Informant F3 observed that men rarely encourage women. Some members have a second candidate. They go above and above to win. The informant defines party internal democracy as elite decision-making, exclusion of other members, and a weak electoral procedure that underrepresents parliament. Thus, PDP's internal democracy is flawed.

Based on the informants' conflicting responses, PDP's internal democracy in Nasarawa State is hard to prove. The ANC in South Africa and Bangladeshi political parties' problems are similar to PDP's internal democracy. Informants are willing to participate freely in the selection process, but there are many problems, including procedure violations and women's frustration owing to the process's lack of transparency. Thus, one wonders if these may define the PDP's internal democracy as weak as a system characterized by rule-breaking cannot be described otherwise.

### **(ii) National Uniformity of Process of the PDP Candidate Selection.**

The PDP is just one party but has different levels in operation. Most informants identified them as national, regional, state, local government, and ward levels. All other units are controlled by the national body. Informant A1 stated that they all operate from one central constitution of the party to get their candidates. He explained:

...there are different levels because you have participation at the ward level, you have participation at the local government, and you have participation at the state level, and of course, at the national level. And all these different levels are being screened. And one has to achieve and attain such levels before eventually before he emerges... it aligns with the provision of the party constitution, and the party constitution is guided by... by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As well as certain modalities objected to by the national electoral body.

Informant B2 echoed Informant A1's view on PDP participation levels. Informant B2 said the state follows the national guideline. The party's guidelines are well-guided because they come from the national, state, and local government, and ward/zone guidelines. Informant B4 concurred with informants A1 and B2 on candidate selection. She said, "The way it is conducted in Nasarawa State, not only in Nasarawa State, from National, everything was done in the PDP National that is how it will be done."

The informants agreed that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate selection process is nationally uniform, but they found the internal democracy process untrustworthy because leaders manipulate it to favour men, as informant B1 stated that the leaders and state are biased towards women representatives. Women aren't considered. Informant B1

said that women face severe hurdles because delegates vote for male candidates of their choosing rather than unfamiliar women who are occasionally in the contest or similarly qualified. She said most of our delegates vote for someone they know, agree with, and believe has leadership potential.

Some informants especially mentioned Nasarawa State because while the PDP's internal democracy is uniform in essence, states have distinct ways of influencing it. Thus, the procedure is not trustworthy since it is national.

### **Conclusion**

The investigation into the factors affecting internal party democracy of the People's Democratic Party's selection of women candidates in Nasarawa State, Nigeria reveals some established major findings.

The findings comprise the absence of a free and fair selection process within the PDP-IPD due largely to a violation of electoral rules and regulations; Secondly, there is a lack of practical application and strict adherence to the ideal democratic electoral process and requirements, and thirdly, there is a noticeable influence of political godfathers in candidate selection that helps in electing their anointed candidates to the detriment of women candidates. The fourth finding is the fact of men's discrimination against women during candidate selection exercise within the party thereby slimming the chance for the emergence of women candidates. Fifthly, it was identified that the nomination of candidates in the selection process within the PDP-IPD was characterized by unfair application processes which tactically eliminated women from the successful candidates at the end of the exercises while the sixth finding is the nature of the internal party democratic style in the PDP-IPD where all shades of secret manipulations of the selection outcome are not in favour of women candidates. The seventh discovery of the present study is that shreds of evidence are bound that the men were not having the willingness to vote for female candidates and also unfortunately, the female delegates hate to vote for their fellow females. Finally, it was acknowledged from the findings that there is no exact state conformity to national rules and regulations in the conduct of elections within the IPD of PDP due to state peculiarities.

In line with the findings, it is no doubt that there are serious challenges in the internal party democracy of the PDP serving as a great barrier to women's selection from the party. Therefore, this informed the low number and subsequent absence of women in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly during the period under study (2019-2015) majorly because PDP was the ruling party both at the Federal, State, and local governments' levels in Nigeria. While the findings of the study are a novelty for its ability to close the literature gap, it is also a novelty by identifying internal party democracy within the influential PDP party in Nigeria—and its impact on women representation. The favourable outcome is only possible due to the in-depth, qualitative interview conducted with 30 informants who were very knowledgeable and experienced, particularly regarding PDP's processes and practices.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions For Further Research**

Since the factors affecting internal party democracy of PDP has been identified, it becomes easier to make recommendations for improvement in hopes that women representation will increase. The nature of the internal party democratic style in the PDP which is at variance with the ideal global democratic ideals will be discouraged if mechanisms for electoral corruption are dealt with through identification and adequate punishment for the culprits. The unwillingness of menfolk to vote for women candidates and females not

voting for fellow women could only be corrected with a change of attitude and proper political orientation and application of discriminatory rules and provisions.

Elimination of discriminatory practices and other anomalies in the nomination of candidates in the selection process within IPD is very possible with the adoption of a transparent and open process as a yardstick for candidate nomination. Firstly, the lack of practical application and strict adherence to the ideal democratic electoral process and requirements could be eliminated if stakeholders are checked and properly monitored by the election management board by ensuring that all rules are adhered to. Secondly, discrimination against women during candidate selection elections in IPD could be avoided if the principle of political equality, political liberty is adhered to as the case in consolidated democracies. To realise this, the influence of political godfathers in the candidate selection process could be prevented using electronic voting and by adopting a transparent, open ballot system which would improve PDP's internal party democracy. Lastly, a mechanism should be put in place by the electoral management board to ensure that states conform to exact national rules and regulations in conducting the election of candidates within IPD. The recommendations could be achieved through the political will of the Federal, state, and local governments at all levels for proper implementation of existing electoral regulations.

### **Suggested Research**

The present research left a gap that can be explored in further studies using *quantitative research* to know the cause-effect relationship of factors affecting internal party democracy of the People's Democratic Party's selection of women candidates in Nasarawa State.

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