

## CHALLENGES OF INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY UNDER THE 2022 ELECTORAL IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA.

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### Abstract

Internal party democracy in Nigeria is beset with myriads of challenges which make it difficult to be achieved within political parties in Nigeria. Some of the observable challenges include imposition of candidates, controversies, internal wrangling, godfatherism, lack of ideology, inadequate provisions in the Electoral Act and inherent loopholes which politicians capitalize on, to undermine internal party democracy. This objective of the study is to establish whether or not the Electoral Act 2022 achieved its objectives of promoting internal party democracy as well as identifying challenges militating against achieving internal party democracy in Plateau state, Nigeria. Elite theory was adopted to explain the variables and a descriptive survey design was used due to the large sample size of the study. A total of 384 card carrying members of APC, LP and PDP formed the sample of the study. Findings reveal that poverty, selfish political interests and lack of party ideology are responsible for the failure of the Act in promoting internal party democracy. Again, non-adherence to democratic party principles and judicial interpretations are challenges standing on the way of achieving internal party democracy in Plateau state, Nigeria. This implies that internal party democracy will continually be undermined if the key findings of this study are not addressed. The study recommended the review of the Act; making adequate provisions, part-time legislation and two-party system. Moreover, independence of the judiciary and judicial review of judgments by an independent panel of judges will help promote internal party democracy in Plateau state and Nigeria at large.

**Key Words:** Electoral Act, Internal Party Democracy, Political parties, Democracy

### Introduction

Political parties are indispensable in democracies globally to the extent that one cannot think of democratic development without them (Anene & Ndubuisi, 2024). They remain key players in democracies as they do not just help in the conduct of elections, but also, in providing the needed framework for citizens' participation, leadership recruitment and robust policies (Usuanlele & Ajisebiyawo, 2025). In fact, democratic development will be a mirage without them. In contributing to development, they first of all ensure that they are internally democratic in order that they may do so meaningfully.

The level of internal party democracy within political parties is a major determinant of leadership quality, the direction of policies and good democratic practice in a given political system (Usonianlele & Ajisebiyawo, 2025). In Nigeria however, political parties face internal party challenges on matters such as candidate selection, leadership tussle, imposition of candidates, money-politics, hijacking of party structures, defections, sabotage etc. These challenges impact negatively on the political development of democracy in any country.

Globally, efforts geared towards regulating political parties and entrenching good democratic practices among political parties have been observed. The Council of Europe Code of Good Practice for political parties, the German political party Act (1966) and the Turkish 1965 and 1982 laws are good examples of attempts at regulating the activities of political parties and of mitigating some of the observable challenges of internal party democracy (Von Nostitz, 2016). In Africa, rules have been developed by many democracies in line with the laudable rationale of promoting and realizing the ideals of democracy within political parties. The Ghanaian 1992 constitution and the political parties Act 2000 (Act 574) stipulate that party activities must be internally democratic (Gyampo, 2018). The same applies to the South African political parties who do not just have the responsibility of being democratic, but also, are legally compelled to register any interested member owing to the nation's history of apartheid (My Vote Counts, 2022). In Nigeria, the Electoral Act 2022 has come to replace the Electoral Act 2010 and to regulate elections including the promotion of internal party democracy. It was signed into law on February 25, 2022 by the then President Muhammadu Buhari in order to strengthen the electoral legal framework and to overcome the challenges being faced within political parties. Some of its salient provisions as captured by Auta (2025) include:

- (i) The exclusion of political appointees from voting during primary elections of their political parties in section 84 (12).
- (ii) Increase in time period for political parties to submit list of their candidates vying for elective political offices from 60 to 180 days before general elections as captured in section 29 (1).
- (iii) Provision of consensus candidate in addition to direct and indirect primaries as captured in section 84 (9). The Electoral Act 2010 could not guarantee this provision in section 87 (2).
- (iv) Empowering INEC to reject candidates of political parties who fail to comply with the provisions of the Electoral Act as provided in section 84 (13). This is an improvement on section 31 (1) of the Electoral Act 2010.

Despite these noble provisions, cases of lack of internal party democracy persist. In Plateau state, the three leading political parties; APC, LP and PDP all managed to cope with internal crisis in the build up to the 2023 elections and this persisted even after the elections (Auta, 2025). The then Governor Simon Lalong was accused of scheming out other contestants of the APC in favour of Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda in the APC gubernatorial primaries. This act by the former governor led to defections some contestants. Although the PDP had a hitch-free primary elections, faction loyal to former FCT Minister and 2019 Governorship candidate of the party Lt. Gen. Jeremiah Useni did not give its full support to the candidate who emerged due to a feud on failed congresses which produced the PDP state Executive. Also, the Labour Party was not left out. Ambassador Yohanna Margif who won the party's ticket and was gearing up to fly the party's flag had the ticket taken away from him and given to Prof. Patrick Dakum. Prof. Dakum who contested the APC gubernatorial primaries and emerged second cross carpeted to the Labour party before the general elections and snatched the ticket from Ambassador Margif. Ambassador Margif could not get back his ticket even through the courts. It is in the light of the foregoing that this study was carried out to consider the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 in line with the general objective of promoting internal party democracy as captured in the fifth paragraph of the general introduction to the Act and to find out whether or not the stated objective of promoting internal party democracy has been achieved in Nigeria and particularly, Plateau state.

The desire to strengthen democracy through internal party mechanism has been the concern of different political actors in Nigeria. This is the reason why the Electoral Act 2022 came into being. Notwithstanding, the noble provisions of the Act, transparent and credible electoral processes within political parties in Nigeria are lacking. Different Acts to regulate political party activities and entrenched good democratic practices were passed into law yet the menace of lack of internal party democracy persists. It is a known fact in Plateau state and by extension, the country at large, that political party structures have been hijacked by politicians who have the wherewithal in terms of power and economic resources. Scholars have expressed views with regards to lack of internal party democracy. Some of these views such as the one put forward by Obinna & Sunday (2020) blamed the menace on greed on the part of politicians which led to so many litigations in courts while Idachaba & Makinde (2021) attributed the menace to so many flaws in the nation's electoral processes. To Ajisebiyawo (2015), lack of internal party democracy has materialist connection and to Nwoko et al (2023), the menace is to be blamed on lack of party ideology. It is the view of the researcher that these assertions as right as they may be, did not consider other remote causes such as the inadequate provisions in previous electoral Acts on matters which bother on internal party democracy and its lack of clarity to citizens. The result of this problem is the negative impact it has on leadership recruitment, public policies and democratic development as a whole.

Despite the noble provisions of the Act aimed at promoting and improving political party processes, the problems of lack of internal party democracy still exist. After the 2023 general elections, the APC in Plateau state challenged PDPs election victory up to the Supreme Court. They challenged the leadership that brought the PDP candidates into elective political offices and at the end, sixteen (16) elected lawmakers of the Plateau state House of Assembly, five (5) House of Representatives members and two (2) Senators lost out in the Court of Appeal while only the Governor of the state survived the legal tussle at the Supreme Court. This led to so much confusion and controversy within political parties but most importantly, the several legal tussles which bother the mind as to why they persist despite review of the Act.

This is why the study was carried out to establish whether or not the Electoral Act 2022 achieved its objective of promoting internal party democracy in Plateau State and to identify the challenges impeding the achievement of internal party democracy in Plateau state in addition to making useful recommendations.

## Literature Review

Political parties play crucial role in organizing the political system and they help structure political processes and facilitate orderly citizen participation. As lifeblood of democracy, political growth and development will be a mirage without them (Huntington cited in Oji, 2024). Just like other social science concepts, there are various ways of defining political parties just as there are different authors and scholars. Anene & Ndubuisi (2024) defined political parties as groups organized with the main intention of contesting, winning elections and taking control of government. Although the authors capture the main essence of political parties, they have failed to extend their conceptualization beyond just winning election to leading or ruling a country where they bring in to bare their manifestoes into policies and programmes in the domain they find themselves. Usuanlele & Ajisebiyawo (2025) did not differ significantly with Anene and Ndubuisi but have taken the understanding of the concept further. They see political parties as groups with similar political views about the state who come together to have a collective opinion on how the progress of the state should be enhanced. They added that a political party system is about trying to capture state power by popular authorization and determining how to further the state's agenda. This seems adequate and its adequacy can be likened to the definition advanced by Nnamdi & Ogah and cited by Usuanlele & Ajisebiyawo (2025) where they see political parties as "organization of men and women formed to identify state issues and problems and define them for the citizens' understanding as well as propose solutions to such problems to gain the citizens mandate to implement necessary solutions. A view advanced lucidly by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) captures the "people" and "goal" aspects of political parties and brought them to the fore. This has strengthened the understanding of the concept. The

Centre defines a political party as an association of people who hold similar views about what should be a community and society's priorities and come together to establish these priorities by gaining control of the machinery of government (Auta, 2025).

By and large, political parties exist to capture power and rule a country on a day-to-day basis using their manifestoes which are the foundations of their policies and programmes. They aggregate views and interests of members who usually come from different segments of a polity and harness them for a common purpose. It is also safe to say that political parties are association of citizens bound together by common interest in a nation's political system. They aggregate views and interests and come up with manifestoes which they use to campaign for power and after winning, they control the government and implement their policies and programmes.

The concept of democracy is usually traced to its origin in the ancient Greek city states. To the Greeks, "Demos" mean people while "Kratia" means rule. From etymology of the word, we can simply say democracy is rule by the people and in this sense, majority of the people. Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy as "government of the people, by the people and for the people" has become axiomatic and remains the most widely quoted definitions over time. In modern times however, scholars have offered more comprehensive definitions which provides more insight into the concept. While Lincoln's definition may have been advanced considering the small nature of Greek city states where it was possible for people to assemble and elect their representatives directly, the growth and size of modern day government is in tandem with contemporary understanding of the concept. It is a system of government that guarantees equal opportunity and participation in decision making for citizens irrespective of class, gender or societal status. Its practice engenders equal right, justice, peace and the rule of law (Nkwede, 2021). To Ayomoba (2024) democracy is "a form of government where the autonomous power belongs to and is implemented by the citizens directly or indirectly". He further asserted that it is a political system that is capable of rectifying its own dysfunctions and where ordinary citizens have influence indirectly in the affairs of the state. Ayomoba in the foregoing definition puts the people first and pointed to power as belonging to the people while further showing that it is a tool for solving government problems by the people. These are key components of a good understanding of democracy. However, Schumpeter in Ayomoba (2024) takes the definition further by bringing to the fore the competitive nature of democracy where he describes it as "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire power to decide employing a competitive struggle for the people's vote". From these definitions, it is observed that while Schumpeter posits that the acquired power which is at the centre of his definition comes through competitive means, Ayomoba sees it as being implemented by the citizens. Conclusively on this concept, democracy presupposes

a political system in which the people share governmental power through their elected representatives who emerge through popular suffrage.

As already established, political parties are key players in any democracy as they do not only conduct elections but also provide the framework for citizens participation in politics. In addition to facilitating the electoral process, it is expected of them to do so based on principles and democratic norms within them. This is known as internal party democracy. The extent of internal party democracy within political parties determines largely the nature and quality of leadership, direction of policies and democracy in a country (Usuanlele & Ajisebiyawo, 2025). Internal party democracy is used to describe a wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision making (Scarrow as cited by Bernadi, Sandri & Seddone, 2024). Bernadi, Sandri and Seddone (2024) describe it on the basis of the degree of inclusiveness and unmediated nature of internal party decision making process. The trio added that internal party democracy is mostly operationalized on the basis of the degree of inclusiveness of leadership and candidate selection process, but also looking at the procedures for allowing members to have a say in the formation of the party and programmes. Moreover, the establishment of an acceptable climate which ensures that all party members have a level-playing ground within the party with regards to decision making and management of the party's affairs is known as internal party democracy (Momodu & Matudi as cited by DanBala & Okafor, 2024). Internal party democracy presupposes that decision-making within political parties should be inclusive and the selection of leadership as well as emergence of candidates should reflect the wishes of majority of party members. Democracy itself is about majority rule from its formation stage in ancient Greek city states. It is impossible for decision making to reflect the wishes and desires of every party member. However, internal party democracy means that members should be included and carried along in decision making of their parties. In doing so, it is expected that minority will have their say while majority will have their way. This goes with the tenets of democracy and once this is done, we can say that internal party democracy has been achieved.

Chukwudi & Odigbo (2025) carried out a study on internal party democracy and political participation in Nigeria. The aim of the study was to examine internal party democracy and the extent it has impacted on political participation in Nigeria between 2007 and 2024. The study relied on documentary method of data gathering and sequential analytical technique while at the same time used institutional theory to explain the variables. Findings reveal the absence of internal party democracy which leads to defections, instability and narrowing down of the political space. It was therefore recommended that Nigeria should prioritize party institutionalization, re-prioritize

accountability, and ensure party loyalty and democratic principles which are the basis of the nation's political enterprise.

Anene & Ndubuisi (2024) carried out a study on challenges of intra-party democracy and democratization process in Nigeria's fourth republic. The objective of the study was to highlight how internal party democracy affects democratization process in the country. The study adopted historical design which made use of qualitative secondary data sourced from scholarly textbooks, journals, newspapers and other media sources. Findings from the study reveal that the Nigerian political parties are faced with several challenges which hindered internal democracy within the parties to include poor party ideology, excessive control by the elites in terms of decisions and imposition of candidates. The study recommended political party reforms in terms of creating well defined ideology, enshrining a system that ushers in free, fair and credible means of candidate selection, introduction of party discipline and credible means of generating party funds.

Jegede, Ajisebiyawo & Edogiawerie (2025) carried out a study on internal party democracy and opposition party politics in Nigeria using the Labour Party and the Peoples Democratic Party as case studies. The objective of the study was to examine the role played by historical development, ethnic politics, godfatherism, ideological clarity and internal democracy in influencing the effectiveness of these opposition parties in Nigeria's fourth republic. The study adopted qualitative technique where in-depth interviews were conducted on sixty (60) respondents purposefully chosen for the study from the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Elite theory was used to explain the variables. It was found out that the PDP is more controlled by the elite and historically conditioned. Despite organizational constraint, the LP is seen as having greater democratic potential while both parties are affected by systematic challenges undermining their ability to serve as viable opposition parties. The study recommended a radical internal party restructuring, empowered democratic institutions, ideological clarity and comparative learning programmes to improve opposition performance and contribute to democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Ononogbu & Okoroiwu (2019) conducted a study on effects of internal party democracy of the All Progressives Congress (APC) on Nigeria's democratic consolidation. The objective was to understand the effects of internal party democracy of the APC and on Nigeria's democratic consolidation. The study adopted the Marxian theory to understand and explain variables in the study. Qualitative design was used in data collection, analysis and interpretation of data which came from secondary sources. Findings reveal that political parties have failed to uphold democratic principles which are major factor in democratic consolidation and non-adherence to the rule of law. The study recommended that the APC government consider Nigeria's constitution as supreme

in order not to undermine the rule of law and to pay careful attention to candidate selection process.

Enioden (2024) carried out a study on internal party democracy and elections in Nigeria using the Peoples Democratic Party as a case study. The aim of the study was to analyze internal democracy in the PDP and to investigate the factors militating against internal democracy in the party. Elite theory was used to understand and explain the variables of the study while the design used was historical. Secondary sources of data were also adopted by the study. Findings reveal that the failure of P.D.P has lack of internal party democracy at the centre and that elites of the party deviated from the vision of the founding fathers of the party. The study recommended that there should be a regular convening of PDP national executive meetings of elective and non-elective conventions where serious issues are addressed.

Conspicuous gaps exist on this subject matter. Most studies on this subject took the path of advocacy, looking at the need for inclusiveness, transparency and the impediments to democratic consolidation in the country. These writers aside the ideals of intra party politics have also taken the path of lamentation on the missing principles and values of democracy within different political systems. Little has been done to digging down with a view to proffering solutions to certain key challenges facing party politics such as the loopholes observed in the electoral legal frameworks put in place and their adequacy in guiding the conduct of internal democracy at the party level. The law remains an indispensable tool in engendering good democratic practices globally but unfortunately, there appears a dearth of literature on internal party democracy and electoral laws, particularly the Electoral Act 2022 and how it is an invaluable tool for understanding and promoting democracy. Aside newspaper commentaries, there is no empirical study focusing on Plateau state despite its strategic position in Nigerian politics and the drama that kept unfolding which makes it worth considering for an empirical study on this subject.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Elite theory**

This study adopted the elite theory to explain Electoral Act 2022 and internal party democracy in Plateau state, Nigeria. The elite theory according to Anene and Ndubuisi (2024) inquires and elucidates power relationship in the society. Major proponents of the elite theory include Vilfredo Pareto (1935), Gaetano Mosca (1939), Robert Michels (1911), James Burnham (1905-1987), Buttmore (1993), Boyd Hunter (1952), C. Wright Mills (1956), Thomas R. Dye (2000), G. William Domhoff (1967) and Robert D. Putnam (1977). Elites refer to a group of highly distinguished persons who are characterized by exceptional performance in politics, who effectively utilize or

monopolize power and who possess a sense of group cohesion as well as a corresponding esprit de corps while at the same time excelling in the ability to secure power and rule (Ekundayo, 2017). The theory envisions society as a division between two groups; the masses and the elites. In this division, the power to take and impose decisions valid to the whole society always belongs to the latter. The purpose of elite theorists is to establish a scientific explanation to the fact that no matter when or where in society, the resources in existent, be it economical, intellectual and cultural are concentrated in the hands of a small group of people which use them to exercise power over the rest of the population (Mariotti, 2020).

### **Criticism of the Elite theory**

The Elite theory is criticized on the grounds that it is anti-democracy by being oligarchic due to its tacit support for selfish interest with regards to power by a few. It views democracy as a fraud and utopian hence, it promotes the minority and does not believe in equality but thrives more on inequality. Apart from being undemocratic, the theory is accused of not being empirical and its rejection of Marxism is considered as polemical. Being a theory from the works of classical theorists, its tenets were rejoinders to the central element of Marxist political theory (Salawu, 2023).

Pareto focused on the ruling elite which according to him ruled with a mixture of force and cunningness. His assertion is in tandem with Nigerian leaders to a large extent and particularly retired military generals and certain top officials of the government who have joined the political scene. This according to Pareto typifies Robert Michel's "Iron Rule Oligarchy." These leaders and officials use their influence to bully others and cling to positions of authority while at the same time dictating what happens.

Elitism in Nigeria's political parties has roots in the pre independence era. The three major political parties; NCNC led by Nnamdi Azikiwe from the eastern region, Action Group led by Obafemi Awolowo from the Western region and Northern Peoples Congress led by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa from the northern region were not just tribal in nature but also elitist. There were no stiff opposition and the unflinching idolization and support for them in the regions, the culture of undemocratic values surreptitiously became currency within political parties. When Chief Akintola, Awolowo's deputy tried to stand in the way of his leader, there was such a misunderstanding which led to the Action Group crisis of 1962 and the eventual declaration of state of emergency in the Western region. Members of the pre independence and first republic parties felt it was an abomination to challenge their leaders or demand accountability, equity and fairness. This did not help internal party democracy rather; it undermined effort that could have been consolidated upon to the present dispensation.

Furthermore, on the Nigerian example, and particularly Plateau state, political leaders have assumed the position of mini gods who approbate and reprobate. They dish out favours to whom they desire and at when they desire. The fall of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Plateau state in 2015 presents a good example where lack of internal party democracy became one of the reasons for the downfall of the party. The then governor Jonah David Jang jettisoned zoning in the state and insisted on a northern Plateau candidate from the same ethnic origin with him. His effort to impose Senator GNS Pwajok was met by stiff opposition which led to stiff resistance and eventual defection of political party bigwigs to the APC. This lack of level playing ground led to the failure of the PDP in the state. Elite dominance has also manifested in the APC in the build up to 2023 general elections. In Plateau Labour party, Ambassador Yohanna Margif had clinched the party's ticket but it was snatched from him and given to Prof. Patrick Dakum who contested the APC primaries and emerged runner up. As elite who possess the wherewithal, his influence and resources ensured that he dominated politics within the Labour party immediately after joining the party. Moreover, it was elite dominance that paved the way for Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda to have secured the APC gubernatorial ticket in 2023. Long before the primary elections, it was clear that the then Governor Simon Lalong had preferred Prof. Yilwatda who emerged against all odds. Despite the protest by the then Deputy Governor and other contestants, nothing changed the will and desire of the Governor who always had his way in candidate nomination at all levels in the state. Even when laws have been passed to control the dominion of leaders, Musa et al (2020) agreed with Obah-Akpowoghaha that the laws weaken slowly not the leaders. They further asserted that the situation in Nigeria is worse because election results within political parties are known and decided before the conclusion of a recruitment process for flagbearers.

With this insight, the elite theory was found suitable for adoption as working theory to explain the Electoral Act 2022 and internal party democracy in Plateau state.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted descriptive survey design in data collection and analysis. This is justified on the grounds that the nature of variables requires numerical understanding and because it adopted a survey of a large population. The population of the study consisted a total of Two hundred and three thousand, five hundred and forty seven (203,547) card carrying members of the three leading political parties in the state; APC, LP and PDP. This was extracted from the political party registers of the three political parties in Plateau state. This population is taken from the six local government areas purposely chosen for this study to include Jos North, Jos East, Mangu, Bokkos, Shendam and Mikang. The population of APC from these six local government is 122, 241 representing 60%, Labour Party is 28,806 representing 14% and PDP is 52, 500

representing 26%. Using Krejcie and Morgan as adapted by Hamza (2021), a sample size of 384 was determined. The sampling technique adopted was purposive and the questionnaires were distributed based on percentage of card carrying members of the different political parties as follows:

Table 3.1: Distribution of questionnaires according to Political Parties and the Six LGAs

| S/N | L.G.A        | Political Party            |                          |                            |
|-----|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
|     |              | APC<br>Questionnaire = 230 | LP<br>Questionnaire = 54 | PDP<br>Questionnaire = 100 |
| 1   | Jos North    | $230/100 \times 44 = 101$  | $54/100 \times 27 = 15$  | $100/100 \times 19 = 19$   |
| 2   | Jos East     | $230/100 \times 8 = 18$    | $54/100 \times 10 = 5$   | $100/100 \times 13 = 13$   |
| 3   | Mangu        | $230/100 \times 14 = 32$   | $54/100 \times 19 = 10$  | $100/100 \times 21 = 21$   |
| 4   | Bokkos       | $230/100 \times 5 = 12$    | $54/100 \times 16 = 9$   | $100/100 \times 19 = 19$   |
| 5   | Shendam      | $230/100 \times 25 = 58$   | $54/100 \times 14 = 8$   | $100/100 \times 15 = 15$   |
| 6   | Mikang       | $230/100 \times 4 = 9$     | $54/100 \times 13 = 7$   | $100/100 \times 13 = 13$   |
|     | <b>Total</b> | 230                        | 54                       | 100                        |

Primary data were sourced primarily from the field while secondary data were obtained from journals. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using means. SPSS was found suitable for the quantitative analysis.

### Data Presentation and Results

This section shows data and results of the study. Data of respondents on respondents precede the results as follows:

#### Data of Respondents

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

| S/N | Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|--------|-----------|------------|
| 1   | Male   | 248       | 65%        |

|   |              |     |      |
|---|--------------|-----|------|
| 2 | Female       | 136 | 35%  |
|   | <b>Total</b> | 384 | 100% |

Source: Field survey 2025

From table 4.1, male respondents represent 65% while female respondents represent 35%.

**Table 4.2: Educational Qualification of Respondents**

| S/N | Qualification   | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1   | NCE/Diploma     | 158       | 41%        |
| 2   | B.Sc./B.A/B.Ed. | 131       | 34%        |
| 3   | M.sc/M.A        | 37        | 10%        |
| 4   | PhD             | 58        | 15%        |
| 5   | Total           | 384       | 100%       |

Source: Field survey 2025

From table 4.2: NCE/Diploma represent 41% respondents, B.sc/B.A/B.Ed. represent 34% respondents, M.sc/M.A represent 10% respondents and PhD represent 15% respondents.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents according to Political Parties**

| S/N | Political Party                 | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1   | All Progressives Congress (APC) | 230       | 60%        |
| 2   | Labour Party (LP)               | 54        | 14%        |
| 3   | Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)  | 100       | 26%        |
|     | <b>Total</b>                    | 384       | 100%       |

Source: Field survey 2025.

From table 4.3, APC respondents represent 60%, Labour Party represent 14% while PDP represents 26%.

**Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Age**

| S/N | Age          | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|-----|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 1   | 18-30        | 73         | 19%         |
| 2   | 31-40        | 152        | 39.5%       |
| 3   | 41-50        | 98         | 25.5%       |
| 4   | 51 and above | 61         | 16%         |
|     | <b>Total</b> | <b>384</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Field survey 2025.

From table 4.4, ages 18-30 represent 19%, ages 31-40 represent 39.5%, ages 41-50 represent 25.5%, while ages 51 and above represent 16%.

### Results

This section includes qualitative and quantitative results. The qualitative results precede quantitative results while corroborating each other as follows:

| S/N | Statement  | N   | $\bar{X}$ | SD   |
|-----|--|-----|-----------|------|
| 1   | The Electoral Act 2022 has achieved its objective of promoting internal party democracy in Plateau State.        | 384 | 2.71      | 0.41 |
| 2   | How would you rate the extent to which the Electoral Act 2022 achieved its aim?                                  | 384 | 2.41      | 0.39 |
| 3   | The Electoral Act 2022 when reviewed will help in achieving more with regards to party politics in Plateau State | 384 | 4.74      | 0.91 |
| 4   | How would you rate accountability within your political party prior to the Electoral Act 2022?                   | 384 | 3.45      | 0.74 |
| 5   | Through the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022, participation in political party activities has been enhanced  | 384 | 2.47      | 0.74 |

Source: Field survey 2025

Result of analysis from table 4.2.3 revealed that items 3 and 4 were accepted because the items had mean score above the criteria mean of 3.00. This implies that the respondents agreed that the Electoral Act 2022 did not achieve its objective of promoting internal party democracy. They agreed that the Electoral Act when reviewed will help in achieving more with regards to party politics. Again, accountability with regards to party politics prior to the 2022 Electoral Act was rated high. Items 1, 2 and 5 were rejected because they had mean below 3.00. This implies that the Electoral Act did not achieve its aim, the achievement of the Act was rated low and participation in political party activities was also low. Despite the fact that the cluster mean of 3.10 is higher than the criteria mean of 3.00, specific questions point to the fact that the Act did not achieve its aim of promoting internal party democracy in Plateau state.

**Table 4.6:** Result of quantitative analysis of the challenges militating against the achievement of internal party democracy in Plateau state.

| S/N | Statement  | N   | $\bar{X}$ | SD   |
|-----|--|-----|-----------|------|
| 1   | The provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 do not adequately address the problem of internal party democracy | 384 | 4.16      | 0.91 |
| 2   | The provision of the Electoral Act 2022 are being circumvented by desperate politicians                    | 384 | 4.52      | 1.02 |
| 3   | Judicial interpretations have made light the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022                          | 384 | 4.18      | 0.91 |
| 4   | God-fatherism has affected the practice of internal party democracy negatively                             | 384 | 4.66      | 0.87 |
| 5   | Vote buying has affected the practice of internal party democracy in Nigeria                               | 384 | 4.11      | 0.94 |
|     |  |     | 4.33      | 0.93 |

Source: Field survey 2025

Result of analysis from table 4.4 revealed that all items were agreed upon because the items had mean above the criteria mean of 3.00. This implies that the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 do not adequately address the problem of internal party democracy. The provisions were being circumvented by desperate politicians and also, judicial interpretations have made light the provisions of the Electoral Act. God-fatherism and vote buying have affected the practice of internal party democracy negatively. The cluster mean of 4.33 is higher than the criteria mean of 3.00. This implies that most of the respondents agreed that all the identified challenges affected the practice of internal party democracy.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Findings from research question one reveals that issues bothering on provisions of the law and its lack of clarity, poverty, selfish political interests and lack of ideology were the reasons why the Electoral Act 2022 could not achieve its objective. This is in consonant with Okoriowo & Ononogbu (2015) who asserted that the laws in Nigeria are made for only a few and that poverty has eaten deep into the Nigerian youths and because of lack of ideology in the Nigerian political space, the youths are being bought and politicians move from one party to the other to fulfill their personal ambitions. Therefore, the objective of the 2022 Electoral Act which is to promote internal party democracy has not been achieved. The implication of this is that the law needs to be revisited so that grey areas can be addressed.

Findings from research question two reveal that some of the challenges on the way of achieving internal party democracy is lack of party ideology, lack of adherence to democratic party principles and judicial interpretations. These factors did not just mar effort of political parties but also the electoral body INEC. Amundsen (2013) found out that decision-making and leadership selection in Bangladeshi political parties is largely informal and handled strictly by party elites. This undermined democratic principles making his study and findings similar to Nigeria's case where democratic principles are not upheld by politicians. In Plateau state, we have continued to have factions in the leading political parties in the state which is as a result of internal wrangling and hijacking of party structures by the elites. Amundsen recommended that political parties educate citizens on democratic values, principles and procedures. These parties should be able to contribute to the establishment of a democratic culture by being themselves internally democratic. Also, Mark (2015) provided an insight by asserting that when

political parties have ideology, party principles and laws guiding their operations, the right candidates with the right ideology will be selected and the political parties will function well.

## **Conclusions**

This study on the Electoral Act 2022 and the challenges of internal party democracy in Plateau state, Nigeria aimed to establish whether or not the Electoral Act 2022 achieved its objective of promoting internal party democracy in Plateau state and to identify challenges standing on the way of achieving internal party democracy in the state. In order to have a full grasp of the issues under study, key informants who understand party politics and have either been involved in partisan party politics, including media personalities, party administrators and INEC administrators were interviewed based on the objectives of the study. The study also found out that the challenges standing on the way of the Electoral Act achieving its objectives include lack of party ideology, lack of adherence to political party principles and judicial interpretations which negatively affects the political parties' effort. In view of the foregoing, it is safe to conclude that the Electoral Act 2022 did not achieve the objective of promoting internal party democracy in Plateau state, Nigeria.

This study recommends that the Electoral Act 2022 should be reviewed with a view to strengthening the Electoral laws and giving more clarity most especially on issues of internal party democracy. In addition, INEC should as a matter of policy be involved in adequate sensitization aimed at providing clarity on electoral matters and internal party democracy. Again, it is recommended that that the country reverts to party system for effective control as this will nip in the bud the frequent cross-carpeting and internal wrangling within political parties. Moreover, independence of the judiciary should be promoted and the review of court judgment by an independent panel of judges should be considered. In conclusion, part-time legislation is necessary to reduce the attraction and conflicts that comes with politics.

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