



FROM THE RULING TO THE OPPOSITION PARTY: NIGERIA'S PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

Background: Towards the terminal end of military dictatorship, and the epoch of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, the People's Democratic Party emerged as Nigeria's foremost political platform. Resultantly, the party, for sixteen uninterrupted years bestrode Nigeria's political landscape like a colossus; controlling the federal government, dominating the Senate, and House of Representatives, and having the highest number of governors than the other political parties put together at a point in time. However the party lost out, and assumed the position of an opposition party after the 2015 general election. **Objectives:** To examine the rise and fall of Nigeria's foremost political party in its Fourth Republic - The People's Democratic Party. **Methods:** To achieve the objectives of this work, direct observation and secondary data were used. Also, interest articulation and interest aggregation; accountability and transparency; democratic consolidation; and conflict management, were used as variables to assess the performance of the PDP. **Results:** It was found out that the PDP fell short of its objectives, dismally performed, and failed to translate the aspirations of Nigerians into concrete-observable realities. Rather, for sixteen years of its hold onto power, the party was an academy of intrigue, lacking internal cordiality and cohesion. Consequently, massive corruption, insecurity, godfatherism among other socio-political ills, characterized Nigeria's political landscape for the period in view. All these (performance-failure of the party and the inevitability of change in particular) contributed to the defeat and the repositioning of the party from the ruling to the opposition position. **Conclusion:** The ability of the electorates to vote out any political party or individuals for lack of performance (as the case of the PDP in Nigeria) is one of the attractions of democracy.

Keywords: Democracy, Political Party, Governance, Change.

1. INTRODUCTION

One undeniable feature of the Nigerian State during the days of military rule was her designed-to-fail transitional programmes, pioneered by her over-ambitious, deceptive and power-drunk military, which formally lost its political virginity on 15th January, 1966. As observed by Amuwo (2005), rampant greed, crass opportunism, and unbridled self-aggrandizement were the hallmark of Nigeria's military usurpers, who through extra-constitutional modalities became the focus and locus of political power [1]. During these periods, the Pandora's Box for political instability, economic macabre, social quagmire, and cultural balderdash were opened, leading to a revolution of rising frustration, cynicism, despondency and despair in the polity. The constitution which was meant to safeguard people's rights was subjected onto several, severe, crude, and unimaginable tortures, and eventually replaced with devious, monstrous, and obnoxious degrees, infamously called Ouster Clauses. The Judiciary, which is the last hope of the common man, was arrogantly permitted to exist. The media, which is often referred to as the fourth estate of in a democracy was intimidated and suppressed. Consequently, civil strife, arson, human right violations, illegal detentions took the centre stage, and it was apparent that the country which was famously decorated as the *Giant of Africa*, was on the brick of imminent collapse. However, event took a new turn with the sudden and well-celebrated demise of the General Sani Abacha, on 8th June, 1998. This birthed another transitional programme, this time by General Abacha's successor, General Abdul-Salami Abubachar. This finally culminated into civilian rule on 29 May, 1999 and ended the horrors of military rule.

Since the return to civilian rule, and the formal commencement of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), bestrode the country's political landscape like a colossus for sixteen uninterrupted years (May 1999- July, 2015), controlling the federal government, dominating the Senate, and House of Representatives, and having the highest number of governors than the other political parties put together at a point in time. The situation did not only endanger constitutional democracy in Nigeria, it at the same time questioned the formidability of the opposition to wrestle

power from the PDP which prides and parades itself as 'Africa's largest political party'. This scenario perhaps prompted the Party at a point in time to assert that it would remain in power for a period of sixty years. The assertion generated fascinating arguments from scholars, political commentators, policymakers and the general public before, during even after the 2015 general elections.

The focus of this paper is to examine reasons why the PDP held on to power for sixteen uninterrupted years, and why the party lost it in the 2015 general elections. To achieve this onerous task, the paper is divided into five parts. Part one is the introduction; part two focuses on conceptual clarification, and examines the historical development, objectives, covenant, and the electoral triumph of the PDP before the 2015 general elections; part three is the methodology; part four is the discussion under which the performance of the PDP was critiqued against some of its objectives in five major areas. The fourth part also analyzed reasons why the PDP did not retain power for sixty uninterrupted years as asserted; and part fifth is the conclusion.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

In this paper, the conceptual construction of political party, democracy and governance are undertaken for the purpose of ensuring analytical clarity and neatness, and easy comprehension of the discourses. As Rubbin and Babbie (1989), noted "we specify what we mean when we use particular terms for purposes of facilitating their contextual operationalization and comprehension" [2]. In similar vein, David McEntire (2004:p2) describes concepts as "heuristic devices which enable understanding and create mental image of things or activities in the minds of those who speak, read or hear about them" [3].

2.1. Discourses on Political Party and Democracy: Political party has been variously defined by different scholars based on their intellectual persuasions and ideological leanings. Appadorai (1975:p538) quoting Lowell asserts that "political parties are the brokers of ideas in a political system" [4]. On the other hand, Alexander Pope in Appadorai (1975:p539) conceives political party "as the madness of many for the gain of the few". However, for the purpose of this discourse, the operational definition of political party is "a voluntary association organized by the persons bond by common interests or aims, which seek to acquire or retain power through the election of its candidates into public office" [5].

In modern societies, political parties are distinct from other organizations because their primary focus is to contest elections for the sole purpose of controlling the instrumentality of government. This unlike other organizations, political parties make articulate the inarticulate desires of the masses [4], and the articulation and aggregation of interests in a democracy are anchored on them [6].

As observed by Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009:p186):

Political parties rely on permanent structure and organization with defined offices and roles, which enhance their mobilization of supporters. Also they manifest hierarchical order from the grassroots to the highest level of government. More strikingly, political parties seek to put their candidates into public offices through election in order to realize the conscious objectives, which bond their members [5].

Political parties have become veritable instruments or adjunct of democracy. In any democratic system, political parties are not only instruments for capturing political power but they are also vehicles for the aggregation of interests and ultimately the satisfaction of such interests through the control of government. Obviously, political parties are crucial to the sustenance of democracy and governance. As Agbaje (1999) noted that the extent to which political parties aggregate freely, articulate, represent and organize determines the level of accountability in public life including access to and use of power as well as political performance [7].

On democracy, Adefisoye (2015:p2) observes that:

People from various intellectual discipline and ideological persuasions have in one time or the other defined and used the concept of *democracy* whether actively to capture and situate a particular action or event within the confines of a definitional construct, or passively as a dictum. This perhaps has made democracy a concept which has over time been a victim of an unimaginable definitional pluralism. Even the most repressive military regime had in one time or another abruptly adopted democracy as a base-line for its actions [8].

Dorothy Pickles captures and corroborates this foregoing when she expressed thus:

Not only is there no agreed definition, but some definitions are so vague as to be virtually useless and others so specific as to be obviously incomplete. One of the difficulties underlining the definition of democracy is that political systems as well as value systems and ideas are always in a continual state of change or evolution. As ideas change, so does the content of democracy in people's minds [9].

Despite the various contradictions, the fundamental features and principles of democracy remain. Olaoye, (2005:p269) stated that self-rule, participation, rule of law, and self-determination by the people to choose those who are to govern them and for what length of time, are the hallmarks and attributes of democracy [10]. Gauba (2007:p421) articulating the views of John Seeley (184-95) a foremost ardent of democracy, describes democracy as "a form of government in which everyone has a share" [11]. These points to the inclusive nature of democracy, and to its ability to accommodate, integrate, and synergize the socio-political, cultural, and religious differences that might exist among a people. In his view, Gauba (2007:p421) defines democracy as "a form of government in which the 'ultimate authority' of government is vested in the common people so that public policy is made to conform to the will of the people and to serve their interest" [11]. Gauba's opinion stems from the etymological dimension of democracy as derived from the combination of two Greek words: *Demos*, meaning people, and *Kratia*, meaning power or rule. Contributing to this foregoing is the Comment (2003:p13), which explicated that democracy is the form of government where public policy is conceptualized, formulated, and realized through the people's will as expressed by the elected representatives [12]. It is an antithesis of military dictatorship. Democracy is anchored in reverential respect and divine worship of the constitution, as the supreme law of the land [11].

Stemming from the above definitional expedition, it is important to note that democracy as a form of government is people-oriented and people-directed. This is because the principles and processes of democracy are open and transparent. As part of its principles are: the existence of political parties to articulate and aggregate interests; the presence of an active and vibrant civil society; the conduct of a free, fair and credible elections by an independent and unbiased electoral body; conduct of elections periodically and regularly; freedom of press and the independence of the judiciary; majority rule and the protection of the wish of the minority; the rule of law, and the protection of fundamental human rights; supremacy of, and strict adherence to the constitution; and so on.

Linking party politics with democracy, Justice Kayode Eso (2003:p38) in his view describes democracy as:

A government which must have been elected by the majority of the people whom the government is meant to serve. The people must have been free to vote, they must, in the same token possess equal rights. And, as soon as they are no more enamoured of its usefulness, they send it out, with the ease with which they brought it in, by taking a free and accepting a verdict of the majority [13].

James Bryce's in Guaba (2007:p423) finds the justification of democracy in the concept of relativity, that is, by comparing its merits and demerits with other forms of government. According to him:

The test of a government is the welfare of its people. Thus, the standard of merit of any government can be judged by the adequacy with which it performs the chief functions of government: the protection of its people from internal and external enemies; the securing of justice; the efficient administration of common affairs, and bestowal of aid to individual citizens in their several occupations [11].

Literature has however shown that the above functions can be carried out by democracies as well as any other forms of government. But democracy has an additional merit in that it stimulates men to self-education, because participation by the people in government activities opens wider horizons for the individual and tends to broaden his interests. This participation is the essence of democracy. Gauba (2007), explains that the people in a democracy exercise their authority in two ways: (a) they determine the ends towards which their government shall aim; and (b) watch over those into whose and they have placed the actual power of administration [11].

Additionally, Diamond et al explain that democracy is:

A system of government that meets three conditions: meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; a highly inclusive level at political participation in the election of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair election, such that no major (adults) social group is excluded; and a level of civil and political liberties- freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organization- sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participate [15].

Articulating the above thoughts, Omotoso (2005:p28) identified three major issues viz-a-viz: extensive competition among individuals; political participation in the selection of leaders; and political liberties.

2.2 Discourses on Governance: As remarked by Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009:p186), the concept of governance in the literature of political science is nebulous, ambiguous and vague [5]. The reason for such conceptual ambivalence and confusion is hinged upon the fact that governance spreads its tentacles and pinches its tent in every sector of human endeavour. However, for the purpose of this discourse, some definitions shall be examined.

Conceptualizing governance, Kooiman (1995), simply stated that 'government is an act of governing' [16]. In explaining its purpose, he opined that governance relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power, or verify performance. It consists of either a separate process or part of decision making or leadership processes [16]. Natufe (2006:p2) posits that governance is the process and systems by which a government manages the resources of a society to address socio-economic and political challenges in the polity [17]. This conception lends credence to the fact every human society is faced with the problem of scarcity; common good. Governance is synonymous with good government and in order for the distribution of these resources not to destroy the fabrics of the state and lead to the Hobbesian state of nature, evolves the mechanism of govern to authoritative allocate the scarce values. Dozie (1999) relates governance to the totality of processes entailed in the exercise and management of the collective will of a people or group under a defined authority or constitution [18]. Governance is not only concerned with political activities and institutions such as economy, family, and other human congregations. Thus, governance can be regarded as the provision of leadership throughout a given society for the actualization of. For purpose of contemporary relevance governance needs to be qualified good [19].

Good governance is measure in terms of certain attributes such as popular participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness, equality, respect for the rule of law, political stability, peace and security of lives and properties, economic self-dependency, and social welfare system. Governance is also expected to provide the mechanisms, processes and institutions for citizens and group to articulate their interests, exercise their rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences [20].

2.3 The PDP: Historical Development and Objectives: What is known today as the People's Democratic Party stemmed from a coalition of leaders of like-minded political associations such as the G-34 and the People Democratic Movement (PDM) on 28th July, 1998 [5]. The PDP was one of the initial nine provincially registered parties under General Abubakar Abdul-Salam military administration based on its satisfactory performance in the December 5, 1998 local government elections in which the chairmen and councilors were elected in all the local government councils in Nigeria [5]. It is important to note that the origin of the PDP is linked with the change in political order as manifested in the increased liberalization of participation and competitive electoral politics after prolonged years of military rule. As Olarenwaju (1999:p 15) had rightly observed, the PDP had in its membership the Doyens of Nigerian political elite which included a bulk of former military officers most of whom were in the corridors of powers in the immediate years [21]. Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009:p191-192) thus stated that "the circumstance surrounding the emergence of the PDP are quite reflected in its mission, vision and objectives. They are stated below:

1. Maintain and preserve the integrity, unity and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as one indivisible political entity.
2. Ensure genuine restoration, permanent entrenchment and practice of democracy, the rule of law, equity and social justice.
3. Promote national integration and harmonious co-existence of the diverse communities of our society.
4. Build an egalitarian society founded on the principle of freedom, equality and justice,
5. Uphold the independence of the judiciary, a free press, as well as uphold the freedom of speech and of association.
6. Ensure that only competent, dedicated, patriotic and credible candidates are sponsored for elective offices at all levels of governance.
7. Ensure that the programmes of the party at all levels conform at all times with the fundamental objectives, and directive principles of state policy, as contained in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as conform at all times with ethic, aim and objectives of the constitution of the party,
8. Promote mutual respect for and understanding of the religious, traditional and cultural heritage of the various communities of our nation.
9. Eradicate illiteracy in our society and to promote learning and research, science and technology.
10. Build, promote, sustain and consolidate political economic and social independence and self-respect for all Nigerians.
11. Cooperation with Africans and other nationalist movements and organizations working for the eradication of imperialism, neocolonialism, racism and to strive relentlessly towards African Unity, as well as greater understanding and cohesion among all peoples of African descent.

12. Cooperate with all members nations in promoting the course of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU), the Commonwealth and United Nations Organization (UNO) and other international and regional groupings shall be in the best interest of Nigeria and Africa, and help to find just and peaceful solutions for international disputes.
13. Build a political culture in which all Nigerians are equal members where each contributes according to his ability, where no one person dominates and where, no political party belongs to one individual.
14. Undertake other activities, which in the opinion of the party are conducive to the attainment of the aims of objectives of the party [5].

The party's vision statement, manifest, ideologies, and programmes are:

"We the People's Democratic Party of Nigeria, conscious of our historic mission to build a modern democratic state founded on Justice, Equity and Fair play. Realizing the need to;

Make fundamental break with past mistakes in order to realize the optimum potentials of the Country; and Build a qualitatively better society based on the principles of democracy, human rights and social justice under the rule of law [22].

2.3.1 Party's Commitment: On paper, the commitment of the PDP are: restructuring Nigeria in the spirit of true federalism and responsible tiers of government, so as to achieve a just and equitable society; and resolving such fundamental issues as proper devolution of powers between the three tiers of government [22].

2.3.2 Covenant: The Indivisibility of the Nigerian Polity: The PDP has it as one of its covenant, to affirm the belief in the unity of Nigeria under the Federal System of Government" and consequently, the party is committed to promoting political tolerance, accommodation and compromise, religious harmony, as well as inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic accommodation and co-operation [22]. Also, the Party is poised (on paper) to promoting geo-political balancing as a fundamental principle of power sharing in the country, in line with the principle of federal character. This by implication provides the springboard for the principle of power rotation to thrive all levels of government.

2.3.3 Supremacy of the Constitution: The party is said to belief in the supremacy of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the sovereignty of the Nigerian nation and its people. This on paper affirms the party's commitment to strict observance and enforcement of the provisions [22].

2.3.4 Independence of the Judiciary and Operation of the Rule of Law: The PDP affirms its belief in the supremacy of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the sovereignty of the Nigerian nation and its people [22]. The party thereby affirms its commitment to strict observance and enforcement of the provisions. As a political party, it seeks to conform to the spirit and the letter of the provisions of the constitution.

2.3.5 Sanctity of Human Dignity: The part affirms belief in respect of fundamental human rights, as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution and International Protocols and Conventions [22]. It is thereby against all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, place of origin, or ethnicity, race, beliefs, etc. The PDP intends to strive to protect the rights of vulnerable groups in society, including women, children, senior citizens, physically challenged and minorities [22].

2.4 Direct Principles

The PDP's principles are:

I: Democracy and good governance; ii. Freedom, human rights and human dignity; iii. Justice, equity, popular participation, inclusiveness and the rule of law; iv. Integrity, transparency and accountability in the conduct of public affairs; Sustainable development through the creation of an enabling environment for private sector led economic development [22].

2.5 Policy Direction

2.5.1 Political Objective: The political objectives of the people's Democratic Party are to: i. Seek political power for the purpose of protecting the territorial integrity of Nigeria and promoting the security, safety, welfare, and well-being of all Nigerians. ii. Promote and establish political stability in Nigeria and foster national unity and integration while safeguarding our culture and our values; iii. Provide good governance that ensures probity and participatory democracy; iv. Guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens and persons resident in Nigeria. v. Promote and nurture democratic ideals and traditions on a sustainable basis; vi. Provide the political environment that is conducive to economic growth and national development through private initiative and free enterprise; Offer equal opportunities to hold the highest political,

military, bureaucratic and judicial offices in the country to all citizens, and protect, defend and safeguard the interests of all including minorities [22].

2.5.2 Governance: In the area of governance, the PDP is said to be committed to: i. The principle of participatory democracy that lays emphasis on the welfare of our people; ii. The principle of social justice and the equality of opportunities for all Citizens; iii. The promotion and defense of the Nigerian Federal System of government; iv. The principles of accountability and transparency in order to restore confidence in the institutions of government, discipline and leadership by example as basis for public life and personal integrity as an important moral value in the conduct of public affairs; v. Fostering the spirit of oneness among our people by treating all Nigerians fairly and equitably, regardless of their social, political or economic status; and vi. The preservation of Nigeria as a multi-religious state whilst guaranteeing freedom of religion and good conscience [22].

2.5.3 Economy: The eradication of poverty and the improvement in the well-being of Nigerians is the ultimate objective of the PDP's economic policy. Thus, the party's focus is designed be to create a market-based economy driven by small and medium scale businesses and regulated by a reformed public sector. At the very foundation of the above objective of the party is the pursuit of a strong, virile and diversified economy built to rural urban migration through investment in modern agricultural methods. PDP's economic policy is centered on people and seeks to realize the Millennium Development Goals while aiming to:

i. Develop a middle class driven by small business owners, professional class with access to credit. ii. Create easy access to transferable property rights in urban and rural areas. iii. Protect the weak and poor through initiatives that are designed to integrate them in the economy. iv. Improve investment in physical and social infrastructure.

The PDP aims, altogether, at establishing the leading economy in Africa and one of the 20 leading and largest economies in the World by 2020; an economy that experiences rapid and sustained growth of not less than 10% per an nun [22].

2.5.4 The Judiciary and the Administration of Justice: The Party envisioned to uphold at all times and defend the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; ii. Uphold the principles of separation of powers as enshrined in the Constitution; iii. Uphold the Independence of the Judiciary; iv. Ensure the security of lives and property of all Nigerians [22].

2.6 PDP's Election Triumph before the 2015 General Elections

The PDP since 1999 has bestrode Nigeria's political landscape like a colossus, and operated on all the political theatres of the federation. At the federal level, the party occupied the Presidential seat from the inception of the Fourth Republic to 29th May, 2015. Olusegun Obasanjo won the presidential elections in 1999 and 2003, although under questionable circumstances to complete a-two term tenure. He was re-elected with 61.9% of votes cast. In December 2006, Umaru Yar'Adua was chosen as the presidential candidate of the ruling PDP for the April 2007 general election, receiving 3,024 votes from party delegates as against his closest rival Rochas Okorochoa who pulled a total number of 372 votes, and was eventually declared the winner of the 2007 general elections. The story was not quite different in the 2011 election as the party pulled a total number of 22, 495, 187 popular votes (58.89%), as against 12, 214, 853(31.98%) and 2, 079, 151(5.41%) by the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), respectively [22]. In the legislative election held on 12 April 2003, the party won 54.5% of the popular vote and 223 out of 360 seats in the House of Representatives, and 76 out of 109 seats in the Senate [22]. Similarly, in 2007, the party won 260 out of 360 seats in the House of Representatives and 85 out of 109 seats in the Senate [22].

However, situations which surrounded the party prior to the 2011 general elections witnessed the mass exodus of party members and supporters including founding fathers like Chief Audu Ogbah. Despite this, the party did not relinquish its control of the Legislature by controlling the majority of 72 seats out of 109 and 205 out of 360 seats in the Senate and House of Representatives respectively [22]. At the State level, the party's triumph was massive, controlling as at present, 23 out of the 36 States of the federation [22].

3. METHODOLOGY

Data used for this study were gotten from objective and unbiased direct observation of the political events which characterized the Nigerian space during the days of military rule (particularly before its terminal end - between 10th June, 1998- 28th May, 1999); and the epoch of the Fourth Republic. One notable event of the period was the registration of three political parties, namely; People's Democratic Party (PDP), Alliance for Democracy (AD) and the All People's Party (APP).

Besides, secondary data which included articles in journals and newspapers; textbooks; and information from PDP's official website and other relevant media were used to assess the performance of the PDP in the areas of Interest Articulation and Interest Aggregation; Accountability and Transparency; Democratic Consolidation; and Conflict Management.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 A Critique of the PDP's Performance

This section makes an assessment of the performance of the PDP in line with Party's set goals in the context of the values of Interest Articulation and Interest Aggregation; Accountability and Transparency; Democratic Consolidation; and Conflict Management.

4.1.1 Interest Articulation and Interest Aggregation: One desirable attraction of the democratic order is that it anchors the articulation and aggregation of interests. And these perhaps are done by the people through the instrumentality of political parties. As opined by Appadorai (1975:538), political parties 'articulate the in-articulated interests of the masses' and these in turn are transformed to policies, and programmes which address the needs of the masses [4]. In Nigeria, the case is not different. The PDP since coming board has total betrayed the Nigerian people with series of its anti-people policies and programmes even in the face of a serious public outcry. Vivid among such is the 1st January, 2012 fuel subsidy removal policy of the federal government which was greeted by serious hostilities by Nigerians.

4.1.2 Accountability and Transparency: As observed by Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009), governance under the PDP has witnessed the establishment of several anticrime and corruption commissions such as, the cyber-crime commission, the code of conduct bureau, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Crimes Commission (ICPC) and Economic Financial and Crimes Commission (EFCC) [5]. Although these Commissions have served as instruments of restraints on the corrupt tendencies and practices of the public officeholders, their performance under the PDP-led government between May, 1999 and May, 2015 were undermined by lack of full autonomy especially the Clause that empowered the President to hire and fire their Chairmen. Consequently, the anti-graft Agencies were hijacked, submerged and deployed as instruments to witch-hunt and intimidate perceived political opponents or political cronies who have fallen out of favour from the 'big boss'. Furthermore, corruption in Nigeria under PDP was elevated into an unimaginable pedestal, progressing from arithmetic, to a geometric progression. It took a new, unscrupulous and an unimaginable form. Dollars at a point became the official currency for corrupt practices in the country [23]. The \$182 million Halliburton bribery scandal which indicted top echelon of the Obasanjo's Administration; Farouk Lawan versus Femi Otedola saga; the Ibori versus Ribadu bribery scandals; the purchase of 255 million 2 bullet-prove cars by the erstwhile Aviation Minister, Ms Stella Uduah; and the 2.1 dollars arms deal which was diverted to bankroll the 2015 general elections, to mention but few, validates this fact [23, 24, 25, 26, 27].

4.1.3 Democratic Consolidation: It is a known fact that free, fair, credible and acceptable elections are quintessential for democratic consolidation. Hence, it is apposite for every democratic system to strengthen its electoral system in order to attain democratic consolidation, stability and good governance. But sixteen years of the PDP rule witnessed a profound assault, rape, debasement, travesty and reversal of democracy [5]. The general elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011 which were conducted under the control of PDP government were characterized by notorious electoral malpractices. As expressed by Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009:192), the general election were like warfare with a flurry of intimidation, thuggery, outright violence, widespread electoral irregularities, horse trading, ballot box stuffing with thumb printed ballot papers, political anomie, suppression and intimidation of the electorates, ballot box snatching, election rigging, manipulation and falsification of election outcome and announcement of preferred candidates as winners were the hallmarks of elections under the PDP [5]. The 2007 presidential election which was famously tagged "do or die" by President Obasanjo; the Ekiti 2009 re-run election and the gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun States in 2014 which were declared war by the then Speaker of the House of Representatives Rt. Hon Dimeji Bankole and the Vice President Namadi Sambo respectively, are very good examples of PDP's democratic recklessness and anti-democratic instincts [28, 29, 30].

Moreover, outcome of the elections did not reflect the preferences of the electorate rather than the outlook of the PDP government [5]. This was manifested in the series of election litigations after the elections, and the upturning of election results by the Court. The 2003 election in Anambra, 2007 elections of Edo, Ekiti, Osun, and Ondo are vivid examples. More worrisome was the annexation of INEC, especially under Professor Morris Iwu who total abdicated the primary responsibility of conducting free, fair and credible elections, to hunting after political parties and their candidates. Resultantly, the 2007 election was adjudged as the worst in the Country's history [31, 32]. Attesting to this, the late President Yar' dua openly declared that the electoral process which brought him to power was nothing than a sham [33].

Furthermore, preparatory to the 2015 general elections, the idea by INEC under Professor Atehiru Jega to bring innovation and improve the electoral process through the introduction of electronic voting system that entails the use of Permanent Voters Card (PVCs) and card readers, were vehemently resisted and rejected by the PDP [34]. The party was of the opinion that the country was not ripe for such. The move was a clear demonstration of anti-democratic tendencies by the PDP in an era of electronic voting and governance. Worthy of note, is the drama and the attempt by Elder Godsday Orubebe, a foremost member leader of the PDP and representative of the PDP at the collation centre for the 2015 Presidential Election to truncate the outcome of an election that was adjudged as credible by both local and foreign observers [35].

Internally, there were serious erosions of democratic values during the sixteen years of PDP's dominance. Primaries, conventions and congresses, which are the legal grounds for nominating party candidates for elections and electing party officials, were marred by irregularities. Thus Osumah and Ikelegbe, 2009:192) express that internal democracy and mobilization which are direction functions of political parties were seriously compromised by the PDP [5]. The PDP government witnessed the development of godfatherism, babaism, personality and military cult of the highest dimension, which till today are dangerous blights that have immensely contributed to the bad posture of Nigeria's political arena [5]. Vivid cases include: Celestine Omeha versus his embattled cousin, Rotimi Amaechi in Rivers State in 2006/7 and the Ekiti gubernatorial primaries that eventually produced Segun Oni as the Party's flag bearer: someone that was third behind Yinka Akerele and Bayo Ojo [36,37]. It is on record that some of the party leaders tell members having ambition with air of finality to forget it because there is no vacancy; this they do in preferences of " an anointed candidate [39,40]. These cases in no small measure affected the quality of leaders and democratic governance in the country [5].

It is thus important to express and summarize that electoral mal-practices have made the electorates lose confidence in whole electoral process; affected the emergence of strong and credible opposition; hindered good governance; and affected legitimacy [38-5]

4.1.4 Economic Reforms: As opine by Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009:196), when the PDP took over the rein of governance in 1999 the Nigerian economy was in comatose [5]. This was one of the ripple effects of the long military rule. As captured by Kunle (2005), the military could hardly make a demarcation between the public purses and their private ones [1]. In response to the problem, the PDP government has embarked on myriad of programmes, policies and reforms of the public sectors, financial and monetary institutions to enhance macroeconomic stability and public financial management as well as resource mobilization. Some of these economic reforms include the promulgation of privatization and commercialization act, bank consolidation, budgetary control, eradication of poverty and pursuit of foreign direct investment [5]. The backlash effects of most of these economic reforms have been high cost of living and unemployment due to mass rationalization of the workforce.

The implementation of the privatization and commercialization programme as observed by Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009: 196), has mainly helped some powerful Nigerians to pocket our national inheritance like the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) and National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) which changed to Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) and now the sector has been total deregulated [5]. The privatization programmes also resulted in the mass retrenchment of workers in the affected establishments [5].

Also the Poverty Alleviation Programme of the Federal Government has been fundamentally flawed. Chunk of financial resource committed for the implementation of the poverty alleviation could not be accounted for [5]. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) about 48.5% of Nigerians were living on less than one dollar per day in 1998 but by the year 2006 the figure has increased to 70%. Nigeria has become one of the 20 poorest nations in the world. The level of unemployment even among graduates of polytechnics and universities remain high. The economic policy which the Jonathan led administration on the first day of January, 2012 suddenly announced the removal of subsidy from crude oil. By implication, the prices of petroleum products sky-rocketed, leading to the sharp increase of other commodities. This action the government claimed would stabilize the economy since, it was on the verge of collapse. This action however was greeted by hostility by Nigerians.

The PDP also intended to eradicate illiteracy in our society and promote learning and research, science and technology. In pursuit of this objective the PDP government implemented the Universal Basic Education and the Teachers Education programmes. But they were inadequate and ineffective to achieve the intended objective, as preparation for the programmes was shoddy. It was also undermined by teacher shortage [42]. Also the several industrial actions and the current strike of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), over the PDP government breach of the 2001, and

recently the 2009 agreements between ASUU and the federal government over the funding of the universities are indications of the level of commitment to this objective [5].

Similarly, the performance of the PDP-government in the areas of youth and women empowerment has been abysmally low. Here, it is needless to overemphasize the large under-representation of youths and women in the PDP government. It is estimated that 43 million Nigerian youths are jobless (Osumah and Ikelegbe, 2009:196). Despite these misnomers, the country prides itself as the largest economy in Africa.

4.1.5 Conflict Management: Conflict is inevitable in every human setting. This has informed the need to have a stable, consistent and effective conflict-resolution mechanism on group to harmonize the varied entities that may be present in such an organization, and the same time to prevent the escalation of any form of rancor to degenerate into a hullabaloo, thereby destroying the fabrics of such group. Unfortunately, the PDP presents a veritable landscape for the study of unprecedented, callous and shameless crisis. Thus Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009:192) express that "since its first tenure the party has become an academy of intrigues ridden by lack of coherence, cordiality, internal wrangling, squabble, divisions, schisms and factions. The various levels of party hierarchy have been factionalized" [5]

Between 1999 and 2009, as x-rayed by Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009: 192), the party, at the national level, a schism developed between President Olusegun Obasanjo and his vice Alhaji Abubakar Atiku [5]. The PDP also had problems at the various state branches such as Edo, Delta, Oyo, Imo, Anambra, Ekiti, Kwara, and Plateau. The crises in the states and other levels of the party are induced by the attitude of the PDP headquarter to control or influence the machinery of the party state level. The inability of the party to manage these self-inflicted antagonisms, crises and conflicts have resulted in the withdrawal or decamping of many of the founding fathers and chieftains of the party among others are chiefs Awoniyi, Edwin Ume-Ezeoke, Bamanga Tukur, Audu Ogbе former chairman of the PDP, Vincent Ogbulafor, former executive secretary of the PDP, Olabode George, former Vice Chairman of the PDP West Zone. The heightened level of conflicts within the PDP resulted also in the establishment of parallel PDP secretariats at the national level and in most states such as Delta, Edo, and Imo. The problem also manifested in divisions in the state houses of assembly into two blocs along the lines of the rivalry within the party. In Delta State, the crisis between the Obielum faction backed by the national government in Abuja and the Governor James Ibori faction had resulted in the impeachment of Honourable Young Daniel Igbrude, speaker of the State House of Assembly and an ardent loyalist of Ibori. Also in Edo State, the crisis of confidence and in-fighting between Chief Anthony Anenih and Governor Lucky Igbinedion had also degenerated into the split of the state Legislature into two blocs, which warranted the change of its leadership twice [43, 44].

Also in Plateau State, the schism between the Deputy Senate President and an Obasanjo right hand man Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, former Science and Technology Minister Paullen Tallen and Fidelis Tapgun, Industries Minister on the one hand and the State Governor Chief Joshua Dariye on the other hand resulted in the spilt of the State House of Assembly into two blocs and the eventual unconstitutional impeachment of Governor Dariye for alleged gross misconduct by eight of the law makers under the leadership of Hon. Michael Dapalong backed by national PDP [45]. In resolving these conflicts the PDP had demonstrated preferences for the coercive or military strategies such as suspension, expulsion, intimidation, denial of privileges and outright violence against perceived political enemies.

In Ogun state, the schism between Governor Gbenga Daniel and a PDP senator, Ibikunle Amosun resulted in the masterminding of impeachment of two of its local council chairmen – those of Abeokuta South and Imeko Afon Local Government Councils loyal to the senator [46, 47]. In fact the PDP has been imputed with so many atrocities. Most of the high profile political killings in Nigeria since the inception of this democratic experiment are believed to have the imprimatur of the PDP machine [48].

Although, a conflict resolution committee was set up by the party leadership in 2007 under the chairmanship of former Vice President, and one of the founding fathers of the party, Chief Alex Ekwueme, nothing seems to have changed. More so, the resolution of the committee was not implemented. This no doubt has contributed to the spate of crises in the party between 2011 and 2013. In 2012, we witnessed Bamanga Tukur (the party chairman) and the party's secretary (Prince Oyinlola): a crisis which eventually led to the arbitrary removal of Oyinlola. Though, the court later validated him as the secretary, the party, he was eventually expelled based on the offense of anti-party activities.

The fallout of the governor's forum election in May, 2013 was another major crisis. The crisis that rocked the PDP-dominated governor's forum, attracted and generation tensions within the polity. This, coupled with the personality clash between President Jonathan, and the Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi yielded a negative sign about the internal coherence of

the party with each party wielding support and power from both within and outside the party's wall. Although, there was an attempt by the leadership of the party to restore sanity by setting up a conflict resolution committee this time headed by the Bayelsa State Governor, Seriaiki Dickson. The committee was saddled with responsibility to look into the several of rift within the part, particularly as the 2015 election approached. However, every attempt to restore order resulted to a fiasco, as the crisis deepened with a emergence of the 'new PDP', led by Alhaji Abubachar Baraje with seven governors of Sokoto, Adamawa, Kwara, Niger, Jigawa, Kano and Rivers states. Other prominent members include Dr. Sam Jaja, Olugusoye Oyinlola and so on.

Eventually, the unabated crisis led to the defection of five out of the seven governors and their supporters, and 37 members of House of Representatives to the All Progressive Congress (APC) in November and December, 2013 respectively [49]. Resultantly, the APC presently controls the majority of seats at the House of Assembly.

Another unfortunate event was the face-off between the President Jonathan and his predecessor, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo, an elder statesman and a strong member of the PDP, on December 2, 2013, had sent a letter to Mr. President, pointing out some of the flops and follies of this administration [50]. The letter, and the subsequent reply by the presidency on the 24th of December, generated serious controversies especially within the PDP's circus [51]

Osumah and Ikelegbe (2009:192-193), conclude that, the creeping crises within the PDP at the various levels are antithetical to democratic consolidation and good governance in Nigeria. Two implications that can be drawn from the widespread crises in the PDP and the style it adopts in managing them are: First, the various crises apart from heating up the polity, undermines the conditions necessary for the success of democracy and implementation of development programmes of the government. The various crises within the PDP create intense atmosphere across the country, and distracts the focus and direction of the elected representatives in government. As Mumeh (2006) notes "the present leadership can't think, act and work together [52]. It is clear now that Nigeria is at crossroad because we have strange bedfellows operating in a parallel line as leaders in government".

Second, the coercive or quasi military measures the PDP has adopted in resolving these crises within it no doubt poses great danger to the rights of Nigerian across the country and the prospect for peaceful election as well as scaring decent persons from vying for elective position thus leaving the governance of the country in the hands of mediocre, and midnight rascals.

4.2 Why the PDP Did Not Rule Nigeria for Sixty Uninterrupted Years as Asserted.

The first unavoidable reason is the inevitability of change. The long history of human civilization and political development has proven the reality of change, whether forceful and bloody, peaceful and democratic or systematic and incremental. Heroclitus's aphorism validates this: "Change is the only constant thing in life, thus, everything is in a state of constant flux, and the idea of fixity is nothing but an illusion of the senses" Men had in time past sought alternative means to express their political wills even in this face of perceived oneness and sameness.

Second was the performance-failure of the PDP. The party, after sixteen years of the Nigeria's uninterrupted democratic experience in the Fourth Republic was unable to transform the aspirations of teeming Nigerians into concrete observable realities. Instead of ameliorating the lives of Nigerians, the party succeeded in worsening it. For example, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) about 48.5% of Nigerians were living on less than one dollar per day in 1998 but by the year 2006 the figure increased to 70% [5]. Consequently, Nigeria was rated as one of the 20 poorest nations in the world. The effects of this manifested in the increase in youth restiveness, prostitution, armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism and so on. Another area of failure was tackling corruption. In 2014, the Minister of Aviation Ms Stella Uduah, under the umbrella of the NACA approved the purchase of two bullet-proofs Armand-carrier vehicles for the sum of 255million naira. This act violated the import regulatory act.

This and more may have spurred a former Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Aminu Tambawal, to express that the body language of President Jonathan encouraged corruption. Obviously, corruption in Nigeria since 1999 has been elevated onto an unimaginable pedestal. It has progressed from an arithmetic progression to a geometric progression, thereby institutionalizing the menace.

The level of unemployment even among graduates of polytechnics and universities remain high. Besides, the quality of products of our higher institutions of learning is very low and shameful due to the dilapidated posture of these institutions. This is traceable to the underfunding of education in the country. It is important to state that the educational sector of the country only gets 8% of the country's annual budget. This is a far below is stipulated 26%percentage recommended by UNESCO.

Again, the unbearable state of roads, electricity and other infrastructures was of a great concern during the reign of the PDP. Roads were death traps. Electricity was far more epileptic than how it uses was before 1999. Hospitals and medical facilities were in comatose. Frequent strikes by doctors under the umbrella of the Nigerian Medical Association, further rotten the system.

Governance is about enabling the mass of men to attain social good at the largest possible scale [53]. And Similarly, James Bryce (1883-1922) in Gauba (2007:421) expresses that:

The test of a government is the welfare of its people. Thus, the standard of merit of any government can be judged by the adequacy with which it performs the chief functions of government: the protection of its people from internal and external enemies (which also include natural and man-made disasters); the securing of justice; the efficient administration of common affairs, and bestowal of aid to individual citizens in their several occupations. Prentices mine [11].

Truly, all over the world, people now expect the state (through its government) to protect them not only against internal and external threats to their lives, but also against unemployment, inflation, illnesses, diseases, accidents (by road, water, air, land), terrorist attacks, polluted air, inadequate housing, collapse of buildings, flooding, mud slides, ocean surges, hurricane, drought, tornadoes, earthquake, and so forth. However, the spate of calamities, catastrophes (mostly preventable) which have befallen Nigeria during the sixteen years was alarming. The several plane crashes, road accidents, flooding, all attest to this.

The fallout of the governor's forum election in May, 2013, and its associated effects was another major cog on the wheel of PDP's election triumph. The crisis that rocked the PDP-dominated governor's attracted and generation tensions within the polity. This, coupled with the personality clash between President Jonathan, and the Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi, and the eventual defection of Amaechi to the APC further affected the performance of the PDP in the 2015 election. The emergence of the new PDP under the leadership of Alhaji Abubachar Baraje (a forum with seven aggrieved governors of Sokoto, Adamawa, Kwara, Niger, Jigawa, Kano and Rivers States and other prominent members include Dr. Sam Jaja, and Prince Olugusoye Oyinlola), and its eventual defection of five out of the seven governors and their supporters, with 37 members of House of Representatives to the All Progressive Congress (APC) in November and December, 2013 respectively, signaled the end of PDP's domination.

Another unfortunate event is the face-off between the President Jonathan and his predecessor, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo, an elder statesman and a strong member of the PDP, on December 2, 2013, had sent a letter to Mr. President, pointing out some of the flops and follies of this administration. The letter and the subsequent reply by the Presidency on the 24th of December generated serious controversies. Eventually, Obasanjo switched allegiance to President Jonathan strongest opponent at the 2015 election – General Mohammedu Buhari.

Apart from the above discussed issues, the spate of insecurity in the country was a major issue. Under the Jonathan-led Administration, insurgency took the centre stage in the country, which led to the death of thousands of people especially in the North West region of the country; properties worth billions of naira were destroyed; a number of people were abducted including 250 Chibok girls; and worst of all the country was ranked top among the list of terrorist nations. The Islamist fundamental group, Boko Haram, proved to be a monster which was untamable by the Nigerian state under the PDP-led government, and especially that of Goodluck Jonathan.

Finally, was the emergence of the All Progressive Congress (APC). One major reason the PDP enjoyed sixteen years of uninterrupted and majestic ride on the country's political landscape was the absence of a well-grounded opposition party which would compete fiercely with the party. However, the successful merger of three different opposition parties; The All Nigerian Peoples Party, ANPP, the Action Congress of Nigeria, ACN, the Congress for Progressive Change, CPC, to form the APC, provided an alternative and formidable political platform. Eventually, the APC was able to end PDP's dominance in Nigeria's political arena.

5. CONCLUSION

One of the unique attributes of democracy that makes it different from other forms of government is that the ultimate power resides with the people. By implication, good performance can be rewarded by continued support from the people, while a dismal one, could be rewarded otherwise by voting out such political party or individual. The rise and fall, or rather the switch from majority to minority of the People's Democratic Party attests to the fact that the ultimate power resides in the people; and they could vote out any party or individual that they perceived has fallen short their expectations. For sixteen uninterrupted years, the PDP which earned a lot of respect from Nigerians especially towards the terminal end of military rule and the epoch of the Fourth Republic in 1999, apparently performed below the expectations of Nigerians. Rather than translate the aspirations of most Nigerians into concrete-observable realities, the Party succeeded in pushing Nigerians to their wilt ends. The non-performance of the PDP is manifested in the increase in unemployment, insecurity, poor infrastructure, massive corruption, and so on.

Beyond the catalogue of failures as enumerated above, the PDP's defeat could be attributed to various internal contradictions and mismanaged conflicts that rocked the Party. For sixteen in power, the party presented a veritable landscape for the study of internal disunity, gross misconduct and indiscipline of the highest order. And as it is commonly said, "a house that is divided among itself, cannot stand" Although, conflict is an attribute of group-life that cannot be wished away, however, the ability to manage such, and prevent them from escalating into precarious situations is very important. It is important to express that such undesirable feature is not peculiar to the PDP, rather an integral part of Nigeria's political system since inception. And this perhaps suggests that party politics in Nigeria is still faulty, parochial, and immature. This is manifested in the spate of mismanaged leader tussles among party members, unethical cross-carpeting and so on. It is thus right to conclude that the assertion by the PDP to remain in power in Nigeria for sixty uninterrupted years, was not realized majorly due to the performance-failure of the party, and coupled with the inevitability of change.

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