

Federalism and the Quest for National Restructuring in Nigeria: Issues and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

Federalism is the theory or advocacy of a federal political order where final authority is divided between the sub units and a center. Structurally, Nigeria exemplifies a federal state but in practice, what is obtained is far from what federalism represent. The Nigeria federal system of government was founded not on economic, geographical basis rather on the option of colonial administrative conveniences imposed by the British. The adoption of federalism in Nigeria with its plurality therefore, negates utilitarian and pragmatic principle permitted by negotiation, consultation in the federal state. This entrenched ethnic rivalry and conflict in the country federal polity and the manifestation of creation of many states with no viability and less fiscal independent with very powerful center, plague the country to the ills of consolidation and national building with plethora of agitation for restructuring. Very worrisome is that Nigeria federalism lacks the basic minimal requirements to claim its position to have attained the practice of federalism as postulated by K. C. Wheare since 1966. Therefore, the main objective of the study was to analyze issues of federal practice hatching on restructuring the Nigeria federal polity. The study adopted qualitative method of analyses while data were collected from secondary sources and the study was anchored on system theory as unit of analysis.. The study argues that the incessant frictions in Nigeria federalism is due to derailment on the constitutional provisions on the powers of the component units which negates of the principles of federalism. Therefore, the study recommended the need to build strong institutions, most importantly political institution, embark on consultative constitutional review and renegotiate the bonds of federalism possibly return to dual federalism by reintroduction of regional government in the country.

Keywords: Federalism, Quest, National Restructuring, Issues, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Federalism is a form of government that attempt decentralization of the central authority and the components units that come together for one or more significant reasons with inevitable constitutional stipulations. The system of governance is mostly adopted to integrate heterogeneous societies for economic, administrative advantages, historical association, cultural and ethnic factors, and similarity of political institutions and so on. The circumstances of the federal practical hinge on negotiation, consultation and agreement to guarantee mutual privileges and interdependence of the diverse groups that form the government. Therefore, federalism is formalized and adherent on mutual respect, cooperation and compromise between the constituent governments.

The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates with the introduction of the indirect rule policy and doctrine in 1914 by Lord Lugard marked the evolution of federal system of government in Nigeria. The system was formally enshrined in the Lord Milverton constitution of 1946 which was drawn without consultation with Nigerians and the creation of three regions by Arthur Richards prompted the formation of three major ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo) in Nigeria. The subsequently, additional one region was created to make it four regions of Eastern, Western, Mid Western and Northern regions. Between 1960-67

twelve states in 1967 to 36 states in 1996 and six geopolitical zones. The trend of the state and zones creation perhaps was to adequately and equitably distribute powers among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria without considering of the viability of the areas for the stability of the federal polity.

Notwithstanding, Nigeria at independence embraced regional federalism, each region identified its area of strength, mobilized their human and material resources in revenue generation and developed a Marshall plan of human capacity building which stimulated a high pool of intellectual resource management without undue interference by the central government. This provided dynamisms in macro and micro economic policies for national strength and development. Unfortunately, since the military incursion in 1967, the practice of federalism in Nigeria became intensely contradictory due to affront violation and refusal to present the federal principles in operations but rather mix application of unitary system practice and deprive power distribution to states by successive military government. The reintroduction of the current political regime in 1999 brought aggravated incitement that, the federal system will constitute a device to build strong national institutions (economic, political and social) for the development of the country but contrary has been the cries of dysfunctional structural deformities. Presently, the vast minority groups in the country are beckoning for restructuring of the country which is synonymous to resource control. Restructuring has become a national debate despite forces that vehemently resist such agitation and resent to the decree of assured strong and reliable unity in diversity of ethnic nationalities for prosperity and national transformation of the country and to a large extent promotion of competition and productivity as attended in the early period of independence between 1960 -63.

Suffice to admit that federalism as practiced in Nigeria today is a far cry from what true federalism represent and incongruous to the modern idea and have failed to manage the Nigeria ethnic diversity. The advocacy of federalism to promoting the form of organization of state in which power is dispersed to safeguard local identities and individual identities have been jettison and also divorce the institutional compromise inherent in the federal practice. Therefore, the main objective of the study was to analyze issues of federal practice in Nigeria and the question hatching on restructuring the Nigeria federal polity. However, the study adopts qualitative method of analyses with a view to identify critical issues that disrupts Nigeria federalism. Secondary data were consulted from textbooks, online publications as well as journal publications.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on system theory developed by David Easton 1953. Easton proposes “the political system” as the most suitable unit of analyses of political life. A system is a set of elements or units which interact in some way and will separated from their environment by some kind of boundaries. Eastern political system has a conversion process or machine which takes the inputs of demands and support from the environment in which it is embedded and produces outputs in the form of policies and decisions, which in turn through feedback process, influence the supportive sentiments that members express towards the system and the kind of subsequent demands made by members into output. Therefore, support is in form of actions and orientation which promote or oppose the political system or decision needed for the system to keep going. System theory is more suitable in the study of the Nigeria federal structure taking into consideration the heterogeneities in relation to the federal formation in the country. As informed by Kirchmair (2017), system theory which is most suitable for studying a heterogeneous state system, federation and or a complex setting/society/setup where both the political system and its system and sub-system are inter-dependent on each other in terms of input, output functions, and what affects one automatically affects the others. Restructuring in the study reflect the sub systems i.e. component units which are relatively dependent on another and how adjustment of the subsystem will affect the entire system.

Concept of federalism

The concept of federalism as a political arrangement has been severally contended on its proper application due to constant changes in the arrangement of institutions of governance it refers to. This is because the word “federalism” which emphasis self government, has been contradicted with decentralization of powers among forces. The contradiction has made Dare (1979) to assert that the recent study of federalism is a theoretical jungle. The definition of federalism has been provided both by the classical and contemporary authors. An

example of the classical author was the one provided by Elazar (1986), he describes federalism, “as the mode of political organizations which unites separate polities within an overarching political system so as to allow each to maintain its fundamental political identity”.

The contemporary principle of federalism has been the one provided by KC Wheare which most authors used in divergence views. Wheare’s views federal government as a constitutional arrangement which divides law making, powers and functions between two levels of government. In a whole, to Wheare (1967) federalism is a constitutional arrangement in which law making, powers and functions are divided among tiers of government in such a way that within its sphere of jurisdiction and competence, each government is independent and autonomous and coordinate. The assertion lay claim self-governance and coordinating rule among the participating constituent units to foster development. A cardinal principle of federalism is that, there is no subordinate government even though there may be two or more levels of governments. The insubordination within levels of government makes the form of government where component of the political organization participating in the political arrangement, share powers and functions in a cooperative manner. That is, each unit comprising the federation has equal powers to operate in its jurisdiction such that superiority is not admitted by any of the units. Suffice to deduce that federalism is a product of agreement reached through rigorous negotiation. Therefore, in a federal system, there is no hierarchy of authorities with the central government which overwhelm the authorities of the component units.

The fundamental and distinguishing characteristics of a federal system as posits by Wheare is that neither the central nor the regional government are subordinate to each other, but rather, the two are coordinate and independent. The method of dividing powers must guarantee coordination and independent of the two levels of government (general and regional) within their sphere. The coordination and independent of the general and constituent units of government promotes accountability and individual inclusion of divergence national identities and also generate economic prosperity in the federal arrangement. Majekodunmi (2015) opined that federalism connotes the existence of two levels of government, each, constitutionally or jurisdictionally empowered to make decision independent of each other within the legislative sphere assign to it. The arrangement is mandated by congruent agreement between the federating units comprising different ethnic diversities. The existence of a federal state is not birth with the constitutional provisions or the institutional structure rather inherent diversities in the society because the federal government must pave way for federal qualities consultation and preserved. This reflects Livingston idea in Anthony and Obiajulu (2004), that federalism is a system in fashioned to hold different nations together in a state while still allowing each of them a degree of autonomy in certain areas.

However, federalism is system of government that unites or binds diverse entities that form federation and guarantee independent empowerment and also allow for sovereignty of each entity with supremacy in coordination of the affairs of the entire federation. It connotes a relationship of coordinate existence of different unions in an entity while the political unit which has chosen the appendage in the federation may differ in terms of operation, certain characteristics and soon.

Concept of Restructuring

Generally, restructuring is defined occasionally as it fit the situation. Restructuring denote changes that occur in operation, reorganization or alteration of structure. Restructuring is the methods of reviewing the present structure to what and how it is intended to be and making it functional to achieve the perceived realities. Restructuring could be political, economic, in a broader perspective; Sanusi (1999) defined restructuring as an omnibus word for all forms of adjustments, alterations and cosmetic manipulations aimed at changing the formula on the basis of which economic resources and political power are shared or distributed among the elites masquerading as ethnic groups. The definition by Sanusi seems to have directly stresses changes in the economic resources management and political power distributed in the system for harmonious relationship. Adeosun, Ismail and Zengent (2017) sees political restructuring as both political re-configuration of a country and devolution of powers to the constituent units as it is practiced in other climes. The devolution of powers to the constituent units especially in the federal political system requires the identity, control and management of resources located in the constituent units by the unit as stipulated by federal principles.

Over-bearing of powers of the central government could be surmounted through the devolution of powers from the central to component units of governments. As contended by Ibaba (2017), restructuring represents concerns to correct the intersegment imbalances and ethnicity-based political domination. Uneven development, inequitable revenue allocation, and over-bearing powers of the central/federal government through the devolution of powers from the central to states and local governments, transfer of resource ownership from the federal government to the state governments, delisting of local government from the constitution and making them the sole responsibility of the states in terms of their creation and funding, recognition of the six geo-political zone as the federating units of the country and increase of the derivation principle from 13 percent to 50 percent.

However, restructuring could be seen as the alleviation of the constituent units of governments from the bond (economically and politically) powers of the central/federal government to consistently contend with identification, development and management of resources in their respective independence territories while ensuring coordination with the central federal government.

The Nigeria Federalism

The history of Nigeria federalism dates back to 1951 when the Macpherson constitution was enacted. The constitution corrected the anomaly of the Richard's constitution of 1946, provided for a question of federal political structure. Nigeria is a country with many cultural diversities, thus the colonial master saw federalism as the best form of government that was inevitable because of the diversity without consultation. The British desirously obliged to introduce federalism primarily as long as they were able to exploit the economic resources of the Nigerian territory through amalgamation policy.

As stated by Ojiako (1981); the attempt to create one country by name Nigeria by British colonial masters started in 1906 when the colony and protectorate of Lagos and the protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated into the colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. This followed the eventual amalgamation of the two administrations of Northern protectorate and Southern colony and protectorate. Another notable formal phase of creating federal system of government in Nigeria was the 1946 that was drafted by Arthur Richards which created three regions of East, West and Northern in Nigeria and was affirmed by Littleton constitution of 1954. Majekodumi (2015) confirm that, the eventual transformation of Nigeria into a federal state started in 1954 as a result of the 1953 Littleton for constitution conference. He further posits that the adoption of this governmental arrangement dated back to 1954 when it merged a federation of three regions defined by the three major ethnic groups. In 1964, a new region of mid western region was created from the western region due to agitation the minority ethnics groups in the western region to sum the number of regions to four region.

By 1966 after the military coup which ushered in Gen. Yakubu Gowon as the head of state, the Nigeria federal structure was subdivided into 12 states. The trend of state creation continued with 19 states in 1975-1979, 21 states and subsequently 30 states under Gen. Ibrahim Babangida administration. In 1996 Gen. Abacha created six new states which increased the total number of state to 36 states. Apparently, most of the states were not and still not economically viable as it turned out and are solely depending on the federal government for survival. Undoubtedly, the unabated state creation was essentially to satisfy the agitation and yearning of the educated and political elites to grant them opportunity for exploitation and amassing of wealth of the new state. The creation of 36 states is associated with attendance of 774 local government areas structure prevalent today in Nigeria.

This has created a three tier (federal, state and local governments) structure and defile the principle of federalism which stipulate for two levels structure. A scenario which has impair power distribution between the federal and component units because, the federal government has continually annex powers to the detriment of other units. Power distribution as asserts by Majekodummi (2015) is a volatile issue which if not properly handled could lead to various forms of crisis which are bound to crop up. As noted by Uhunmwuango and Ekpu (2011), Nigeria has not been forth right applying this principle to the letter and the result of this has been the heightening of ethnic tension, mutual mistrust among ethnic groups, minority problem clamour for an answer to the national question etc. As it stance now, minority groups are struggling with corrugated power arrogated by the majority groups for equality which evident in increase agitation of

different sort. One could convincingly attest that the national question has taken the center space of the Nigeria federal polity with minority groups in the country lamenting of marginalization on development, deprivation strategic position in governance and agitation for resource control. As admitted by Aderonmu (2010), the crux of the matter lies in the fact that the federal government has too much power, plays dominant role and overbearing influence which has been grossly abused thus leading to intensified calls for restructuring coupled with suppressed frustrations and resentment during the long years of military rule resulting in inter-communal violence now threatening the peace and unity of Nigeria.

Issues of Federalism in Nigeria

Issues of federalism in Nigeria could be discuss in the following dimensions;

Constitutional Power: K.C. Wheare, (1967), claimed that federalism is a system of government that is organized such that each level, usurp its power, govern it jurisdiction territory with equal and authority as stated in the constitution. Nigeria operates a multi-level government system with overlapping authority of cooperative federalism and shared responsibilities. This presupposes supremacy of the central government over the states but all levels of government are regarded as equal federate with mutual responsibilities. In this regard, decision making on different function should be made at all levels of government and collaborate in policy making avoid duplication of functions to stem impairment in the federation. Elazar (1982), emphasized more on decision-making union between the central and the state levels on functions at different unit on fiscal matters.

However, the practice of federalism in Nigeria seem to create centripetal relationship whereby other levels of governments operate, under the precepts of the central government. The central government abridge the power of other levels of government such that they subsist at the mercy of the federal government on fiscal capacity, denied them involvement in most of the governmental functions and activities by allotting much power in the exclusive list. These constitutes perennial conflict between the federal and state government. For instance, the case instituted by states against the federal government on the power of the state to collect Value Added Tax (VAT) in 2022 which the supreme court arbitrated in favour of the state government and many other instances.

Moreover, federalism has been noted for optimal arrangement for advance inclusiveness in ethnically diverse political system to achieve unity in diversity. In Nigeria, the 1999 constitution provides in part 1 and 2 of the second schedule of section 4, 68 exclusive list of items for federal powers or responsibilities and 30 items in concurrent list which defines the extent of federal and state powers while residual list contains subjects which only the states can legislate. This shows that, the actual constitutional distribution or jurisdictional power seems not to reckoned with the local government due to what Agi (2002) conceive as the constitutional conception of local government as exclusive creation of the state and provincial government. As stated by Ola (2018), fiscal federalism in Nigeria is appropriated to three-tiered system of government, Federal, State and Local Government and Adegbite (2020) highlighted that the Federal government exclusively control the major sources

Presently, the country is confronted with agitation for restructuring to provoke equality in responsibilities between the various tiers of government in order to accommodate the interest of diverse entities as set out in various laws and regulations for jurisdictional powers.

The table shows revenue allocation (%), fiscal responsibilities and revenue sources;

Levels of Government	Revenue Allocation (%)	Fiscal Responsibilities	Revenue Sources
Federal	52.86%	Debt service (21.1%) Infrastructure (14.5%) Education (7.2%)	Oil (Petroleum/gas Profit taxes)Tax revenue Non-Oil tax (Direct and indirect) Trade and Investments, subsidy removal, Tax system reforms and

		Healthcare (5.6%) Agriculture (3.4%) Social welfare (2.5%)	so on.
States	26.72%	Education (25.6%) Healthcare (20.5%) Infrastructure (17.1%) Social welfare (12.3) Agriculture (8.2%) Security (5.5%) Administration (4.8%)	Internal sources (personal income tax) value added tax, business permits and license
Local Government	20.60%	Primary education (40.6%) Primary health care (26.4%) Infrastructure (15.1%) Social welfare (10.3%) Agriculture (4.2%) Security (2.5%) Administration (1.9%)	Collection of local taxes (property taxes, business premises tax Fees: Markets, sanitation, etc

Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2024

Above data highlights the constitutional powers assigns to the three tiers of government. These reflex interplay of duties defined by the constitution. Although the framework was premise on expectation for practical necessities for both levels of government to coordinate efforts to ensure effective governance especially in areas of healthcare, education, security and infrastructures which are critical to the well-being of citizens but to an extend, the dominant power on revenue allocation percentage favour the federal government.

Political Power: Federalism cultivate political participation and atmosphere of democratic affinity and avail conservation of autonomy and self-determination. Political justification in federalism as opines by Zahrin and Mohamed (2022) protect the requisites of the minorities diverse nation dampen alienation and decentralizes conflicts. But the Nigeria federalism has always been dominated by the majority group in political power.

Nigeria is defined by 3 major ethnic nationalities (Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba) with other minority groups. From independence public governance has always been dominated by majority groups depriving other minority groups the opportunity of holding political power. Studies shows the following; Nnamdi Azikiwe, Igbo (1963-1966), Gen Ayuyi Ironsi, Igbo (1966-1966), Gen. Yakubu Gowon, Hausa/Fulani (1975-1976) Gen. Murtala Mohammed, Hausa/Fulani (1975-1976), Gen. Olusequn Obasanjo, Yoruba (1976-1979), Shehu Shagari, Hausa/Fulani (1979-1983), Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, Hausa/Fulani (1983-1985), Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, Hausa/Fulani (1985-1993), Ernest Shonekan, Yoruba (1993), Gen. Sani Abacha, Hausa/Fulani (1993-1998), Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, Hausa/Fulani (1998-1999), Olusequn Obasanjo, Yoruba (1999-2007), Umani Yar'Adua, Hausa/Fulani (2007-2009), Goodluck Jonathan, Ijaw (2009-2015), Muhammadu Buhari, Hausa/Fulani (2015-2023), Armed Bola Tinibu, Yoruba (2023-till date). These show to a greater extent marginalization of the minorities in political power in the federations and has presumably establish degree of dissatisfaction and threaten conflict of agitation for cessation and restructuring, and annihilate conflict resolution which federalism can influence. As Gagnon, (1993) summarizes, federalism has the

capacity to influence conflict resolution (as a conflict resolution mechanism), as articulated by democratic actions supporting modification in policy priority and as a shield for minorities and territorial interest.

Resource Control: Federalism is a concensus arrangement or organization of government and the activities by providing autonomy differently to the central government's and regional or constituent units of the federation through cognitive constitutional guarantees. The core functional theory of federalism emphasizes on power for performing functions at each level of government, central and component units (Ogunnoiki, 2017) to include resource control. However, Nigeria continued with federal system practice after independent in 1960, powers were preserved, consolidated and responsibilities guaranteed as enshrined in the constitution with 3 regional governments before military in curtion in politics in 1966. The period secured relative and competitive development occasioned with unity in diversity among the three regions in the country. Regions were granted distinct authorities to control resources within the respective regions. But federalism in Nigeria has assumed a different dimension, authority now becomes vertical on fiscal relates, the federal government dictate the task of resource control. The controversial military document in form of Nigeria constitution lack provision for resource control by resource based federating units and often nurture demands for balance in federal practice. Titus, Mbon and Edem (2024), highlights that some of the factors that create conflicts in countries politics is lack of consideration for society capacity, institutions and resources before making economic policies. As observes by Othman, Osman and Mohammed (2019), resource control is the major reason for agitation and controversy over restructuring in Nigeria. The position has extensively affects national security as the militant groups in the Niger Delta of the South- South minority zone as opines by Onigbinde (2008), continue to challenge the federal government to hastens response to their demand for resource control by states in the region. The situation which has unwoven the country's security and breed faceless groups that terrorize, destroy public and private properties, kidnap and kill innocent people and also threaten the unity of the country. As posits by David and Atakpa (2017), in the Niger Delta, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) indulges in murder, arson, militancy while insurgency and terrorism is on high altitude in the North East of the country.

Comparatively, all parts of the country are blessed with essential natural resources and solid minerals strategically located in all the 36 states of the Federation but the country highly depend on oil/gas deposited in the minority extraction as the major source of revenue. Oil and gas contributes over 80% of revenue, 95% of export reciepts and 90% of current exchange earings, while other mineral resources at the majority zone are control by the state government and individual bourgeoisie within the zone.

List of minerals resources and their locations

S/N	STATE	MINERAL RESOURCE
1.	Abia	Gold, Lead/ Zinc, Limestone, Oil/gas, and Salt
2.	Abuja	Cassiterite, Clay, Dolomite, Gold, Lead/Zinc, Marble and fantalite
3.	Adamawa	Benlonite, Gypsum, Kaolin and Magnesite
4.	Akwa Ibom	Clay, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Oil/gas, Salt and Uranium
5.	Anambra	Clay, glass Sand gypsum, iron-ore, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, Phosphate and salt.
6.	Bauchi	Gold, Cassiferite (tine ore), Columite, Gypsum, wolfram, coal, limestone, lignite, iron-ore and clay
7.	Bayelsa	Clay, gypsum, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, manganese, uranium and oil/gas
8.	Benue	Barite, Clay, Coal, GermstonGypsum, Iron-ore, lead/zinc, limestone, marble and salt.
9.	Borno	Bentonite, clay, diatomite, gypsum, hydro-carbon, kaolin and limestone

10.	Delta	Clay, glass sand, gypsum, iron-ore, kaolin, lignite marble and oil/gas
11.1	Ebonyi	Gold, lead/zinc, and salt
12.	Edo	Bitumen, clay, dolomite, phosphate, glass sand, gold, gypsum, iron-ore, lignite, limestone, marble and oil/gas
13.	Ekiti	Feldspar, granite kaoline, syenite and faxium
14.	Enugu	Coal, lead/zinc, limestone
15.	Gombe	Gemstone and gypsum
16.	Imo	Gypsum, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, manganese, oil/gas, salt and uranium
17.	Cross River	Barite, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, manganese, oil/gas, salt and uranium
18.	Jigawa	Butyles
19.	Kaduna	Amethyst, aqua marine, asbestos, clay, flosper, germstone, gold, graphite kaolin, hyanite, mica, rock crystal, ruby, sapphire, sihnite, superntinite, tantalime, topaz and tourmaline
20.	Kano	Cassiferite copper, gemstone, glaas-sand, lead/zinc, pyrochinre and tantalite .
21.	Katsina	Kaolin, marble and salt
22.	Kebbi	Gold
23.	Kogi	Cole, dolomite, feldspar, gypsum, iron-ore, kaolin, marble talc and tantalite
24.	Kwara	Cassiterite, columbite, feldspar, gold, iron-ore, marble, mica and tantalite
25.	Lagos	Bitumen, clay, and glass sand
26.	Nasarawa	Amethyst (topaz garnet) bay fex, barite, cassirite, chalcopyrite, clay, columite, coking coal, dolomite/marble, feldspar, galeng, iron-ore, limestone, mica, salt, sapphire, talc, tantalite, quarts, tourmaline and zireoa.
27.	Niger	Gold, lead/zinc and talc
28.	Ogun	Butimen, clay, feldspar, germstone, kaolin, limestone and phosphate
29.	Ondo	Butimen, clay, coal, diovensionstones, feldspar, germstone, class sand, granite, gypsum, kaolin, limestone and oil/ gas
30.	Osun	Columite, gold, granite, talc, tantaline and tourmaline
31.	Oyo	Aqua marine, cassiterite, clay, dolomite, germstone, gold kaolin marble, silimonite, talc, tantanlite. S
32.	Plateau	Barite, marine, bentomite, bismuth, cassiterite, clay, coal, emeral, fluoride, gemstone, granite, iron-ore, kaolin, lead/zinc, marble, molybdenite, phrocholre, salt, tantalite, columbite, tin and wolfram.
33.	Rivers	Clay, glass-sand, lignite, marble and gas
34.	Sokoto	Clay, flakes, gold, granite, gypsium, kaolin, letarite, limestone, phosphate, potash, silica, sand and salt

35.	Taraba	Lead/zinc
36.	Yobe	Soda Ash and Tintonite .

Source: Nigerian embassy the ague

Federalism and the Quest for Restructuring in Nigeria

Essentially, federalism represents a unique form of government arrangement which promote unity among diverse nations and secure greater participation of native in deciding on their affairs independently thus, becomes a devise for compromising of unity in diversity. The independence constitution of 1959 obligingly disposed to federal system of government and impressively granted autonomy to regional governments, and each region maintained the financial autonomy. These was because each regions were viable enough to sustain and maintain their financial obligation. Supporting this fact, Obikeze (2004) stated that the federation in the first republic favoured the units to the extent that the regions hoped that they would be capable of existing on their own in case of balkanization of the country into regions. The unity and development of the country was assured during this period of regionalism until the collapse of the first republic through military coup which ushered in military in governance in 1966. Consequently, the regional government entrenched formation of ethnic basis and earl it over minority ethnic groups that existed within the territory. The action was against the advocacy of Dr. Azikiwe who emphasized on centrifugal government rather than unity in diversity. By this period, the decentralized administrative system of government as stipulated in the practice of federalism was adopted and strictly adhered.

However, federalism in Nigeria today has shifted from decentralized to centralized administrative system due to mix heritage of the military in governance. Eme, Onyishi, Sam (2011) contends that, the military by the way and manner it administered Nigeria for more than 40 years virtually annihilated federation and operated it as a unitary state in consonance with its centralized command and authority structure. Presently, the country has been plung into socio-economic, political and even administrative impediments and the general chorus by minority ethnic groups has been “restructuring”. As asserts by Ademola (2019), the call to restructure Nigeria like glamour for resource allocation formula and resource control could be argued that, it is with the departure from adequate remuneration to the efforts of the constituent states in the federal system, as well as the accompanying lack of equity in giving what is due to states that generate the enormous revenues, which are also seen being used rather recklessly and corruptly by the federal government.

The agitation by the groups specifically aimed as overhauling or redefining the operational compromise relationship embedded in the constitution to suit workings of federal system of government. Noteworthy is the fact that, the new style of federalism is premise on the shift from dual federalism to cooperative federalism anchored on mutual respect, cooperation and consultation in governance in the federal system in respect to financial management. It is certain that the federal government today is more powerful than the 36 constituent units, by allocating the greater share of national revenue of about 52.68% to it level, 26.72% to state and 20.60% to the local government. By skewing very much to the central government, the federating unit becomes an appendage to the center due to financial resources to adequately address their peculiar development objectives. Consequently, restructuring has become a point of discourse in the geo-political zones, Othma, Osman and Mohammed (2019) affirm that, the elites from all geo-political parts of Nigeria have together found a safe and secured market and space for political popularity, access to state power and resources, accommodation, relevance and to divide and rule Nigeria. Baba and Aeyinghe (2017) argues that, politics in Nigeria in both orientation and character, the calls/agitations for restructuring Nigeria and resistance of same and the calls for national unity are mostly dishonestly driven to achieve certain person interest of the few.

Now, restructuring has become a jingle of geo-political zones. The Niger Delta region (south south zone) are clamoring for resource control, South East agitation for presidency to fill the gap of marginalization or otherwise resent to secession while the western zone glamour for arrogation of power to the zone to develop the potential realities of the zone and in more recent times, leaders from the northern part of the country have increasingly beaten drum for restructuring. However, be it restructuring or resources control, that may be call,

the position of the agitator is for the country to reverse the administrative and political structures to what was obtained in the early 1960's regional government and also adopt co-operative federalism which guarantee streams of economic, social, political interaction among levels of government.

Prospect of Nigeria Federalism

Historically, Nigeria emerged as a product of the administrative, political, economic convenience and cultural preferences of the British colonialist without consultation with the citizens. The Nigeria federalism was a force union away from the formal inauguration of federations which exist on negotiations. The result of the force declaration of a federal form of government birth fear of domination by either of the northern or southern Nigeria right from the beginning. For this reason, Lt. Col. Gowon, in a nation-wide broadcast entitled "Towards a Nigeria" in 1966, opines for drafting of a new constitution that will reflect the generally expressed desire for a stable federation devoid of domination by any region or tribe. It's pertinent to posit that, federal constitution are written to safeguard domination by powerfull blocs constituting the federation. In addition to the ethnic regionalism that was created in Sir Richard and Littleton constitutions which manifested in the creation of Northern, Western and Eastern regions. This has resulted in contention of power among ethnic groups. Therefore, deductively one can argue that powers' sharing has been the major problem of Nigeria federalism.

However, the Nigeria constitutional allocation of power is majoraly between the federal government and 36 states of the federation, and the 775 local governments left at the mercy of the state government. Despite the plurality of Nigeria society certainly, reduction in ethno-political conflicts could permit equality in power sharing through democratic process and ensure maintenance of plural identity on value consensus. As stated by Bogaards (2006) when ethnic groups are provided equal opportunities for sharing the value resources, they generally function according to the rules of the political game.

Consequently, the clamour for restructuring becomes a tape because of the marginalization of same ethnic groups due to the alteration of the federal format by the military was laid during independent in 1960. As put forward by Opadere (2018), the clamour for restructuring has pitched because of the dissatisfaction of Nigerians on the manner of governance the nation had experience hitherto, whereby leaving much more to be desired in terms of justice, fairness and equity, hence the call for new-experimentation.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

Nigeria's federalism in plagued by contradictions such as inequality in power sharing, ethnic marginalization, deprival of the federating units of competences and independence and compelling to accept the token from the center at their expense. This has eroded the principle of true federalism thereby demising attainment of competitive development aspirations obtainable during early independence. For all intent and purpose, the size of fund available to the tiers of government is not commensurate with the quantum of responsibilities they are expected to perform. The issue of allocation of funds has rooted the federal polity of Nigeria since independence as there has never been a generally accepted formula of sharing revenue because the process has always been subverted in one form or the other. These breeds constantly demand for a new fiscal regime.

Thus, the demand has taken a new dimension as the oil rich south-south states are now agitating for a complete autonomy to control every resource generated from their area while other large ethnic groups are in dilemma of the idea because of the benefits they enjoy from the resources accrued from the zone. Contentiously, the enthronement of military dictatorship led to the derailment from constitutional provision and abrogation of true federal principle adopted at independence to usurpation of constitution powers which has been disproportionate in favour of the federal government. The consequences of incessant derailment in the constitutional provisions on the powers of the sub units and negate the principle of federalism has over hatch the entire federal system, hence agitation of restructuring.

Therefore, there is need to build strong, formidable institutions devoid of corruption, most importantly the political institution to strengthen and overhaul the entire federal polity. Also, a consultative constitutional review and renegotiate the bond of federalism possibly return to dual federalism of regional government.

These arguably will address federal/state conflicts, inequalities and deprivation of some ethnic groups in the federation and forestall incessant agitation for restructuring of the polity.

In view of the challenges included in fiscal federalism, the constitution should be amended to grant greater fiscal autonomy to all tiers of the government to generate revenue independently and also build the capacity of state and local governments to manage their resources effectively.

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