



Nigeria and the travail of federalism: An Appraisal of Unending Agitation

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Abstract

Sequel to the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates in 1914, Nigeria's minimal state has continued to witness serial and intractable agitations, political interplays and intrigues and aspirations of statesmen and nationalist turned into defensive, mutual distrust and regionalized. The social formation was at disequilibrium, hence, heightening the rate of agitations from different quarters. More worrisome is ever increasing calls for reformulation and restructuring of quasi-Nigerian federal practice characterized by centripetal forces. However, it is based on this backdrop that the study sets review composition of Nigerian federalism and logic of political restructuring and the implications of Nigerian's perceptive on restructuring question. Methodologically, the paper appropriated documentary method and data were ostensibly generated through secondary sources of data collection and analyzed in content. The enthronement of democracy in Nigeria in 1999 was expected to usher in a period of rapid economic transformation after a prolog military dictatorship. The findings of the study had significantly revealed that federalism in Nigeria is more or less caricature federalism. Also implicated is that Nigerian state has failed to foster social engineering and nation-building, thereby enhancing agitations for restructuring. The paper recommends the need to devolve powers to other tiers of government other than concentration of power at center.

Keywords: Federalism, Agitation, Restructuring, Secondary data, Nigeria.

1.0 Introduction

Structure of Nigeria federalism started crystallizing with the establishment of different Constitution that endorsed the division of Northern and Southern provinces. Other Constitutions of Richard (1946) and Macpherson of 1951 contributed in giving Nigeria different shades of structure of federalism which was effective on October 1, 1954. The Constitution guaranteed the sharing of power between the center and the regional component units. Exclusive and Concurrent list power was entrenched in the Constitution. This followed the Independence Constitution of

1960 which conferred Independence status in Nigeria incorporated the federal structure earlier established by the Lyttleton Constitution. Nigeria was divided or rather compartmentalized into three regions, and four in 1963 where the Mid-western region was created.

The Ironsi's reime introduced a unitary pattern of government and abolished federalism whereas Decree No. 34 otherwise known as the unification decree was enforced. The counter coup on the Ironsi's junta produced General Yakubi Gowon as the Military Head of State, and Nigeria was turned to federalist structure with 12 states.



The agitations for restructuring continue to be on course up to 19990's when more States were created to the present 36 States. Nigeria is a multicultural and multilingual sovereign entity. It is a country characterized by well over 374 ethnic groups, over 400 distinct languages, at least three groups of belief-systems (Christians, Muslims and Adherents of African Traditional Religions), as well as a large variety of customs. Thus, Nigeria has sufficient reasons for concern over issues of pluralism and complexity (Tamuno, 1998). From the above depiction of Nigeria as an entity with multitudinous diversities, one can, without fear of contraction describe it as a plural society. This pluralism and complexity, therefore present a logical basis and somewhat convincing explanations why certain mechanisms were designed and employed by some political architects to cope with the attendant phenomena. These features make it a natural candidate for a federal system of government. These political arrangements are supposedly meant as grease that will oil the wheels of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic harmony and engender and promote our mutual coexistence as a sovereign geo-political entity. Unfortunately, these have, in most cases suffered grave set-backs that often put us on the precipice of disintegration than integration. These phenomena, consequently affect political participation negatively, and by extension our democracy. However, my emphasis here will be on travail of federalism: An Appraisal of Unending Agitation.

Successive government in Nigeria have tried with different degrees of sincerity, commitment and effort to operate federal institutions that can accommodate the country's ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversities and nurture a sense of

national unity. It was the belief of the Nigerian nationalist that a federal system of governance was most suitable for the country as this will generate stability which will eventually lead to a strong and united nation. For instance, while chief Awolowo contended that "the constitution of Nigeria must be federal...any other constitution will be unsuitable and will generate ever-recurring instability which may eventually lead to the complete disappearance of the Nigeria composite state." Sir Ahmadu Bello contended that federalism provided the "only guarantee that the country will grow evenly all over, we can spend the money we receive, the money we raise, in the direction best suited to us" (Abada, Okafor & Udeogu, 2018).

Federalism remains the only known potent political antidote till date, in addressing the problems of irreconcilable political differences and schisms between centrifugal and centripetal social and political forces in an ethnically diverse and socially pluralistic society. However, realities and evidences from federalist states, including advanced federalisms, have shown that the adoption of federalism has further precipitated what it was initially designed to address: the concerns and interests of the centrifugal and centripetal groups (Fossum & Jachtenfuchs, 2017). Evidences from Nigerian federalism, albeit its shortcomings, has witnessed consistent rise in those calling for more transfer of governmental powers from the center to the component units, and those calling for more concentration of more powers in the center (Suberu, 2016).

It is also a point to note that, agitation for restructuring in Nigeria polity has been recurring one, particularly in 2015 through 2017 when the Nigerian State witnessed economic recession. People from different quarters more especially from the political



class chanted for restructuring the Nigerian federalism which becomes a national discourse.

The above factors further reinforces the weak and tenuous character of the Nigerian state vis-à-vis its leadership and the inability of the latter to steer a visible road-map for overall transformation of the Nigerian people. The vortex of this argument reifies itself in the chequered system which is hinged on elite idiosyncrasies to the detriment of the average Nigerian who is lost in the foray of ethnic strife and contestation for resource control of Nigerian's commonwealth. Literatures on Nigerian politics speak volume of the ever increasing embourgeoisment of virtually every fabric of the Nigerian elite who hardly find any constructive meaning to nation-building. The average Nigerian elite are a sale-out in the manner and character of its predecessor and colonial overlord. This article is therefore an attempt to unbundle politics surrounding Nigeria and the travail of Unending Agitation.

Nigeria in her post-jubilee years, precisely over half a century since her political independence still gropes in the dark in search of viable political re-engineering. The main reason for this state of affairs is a function of self-identification by contending forces and ethnic nationalities in the affairs of state in the process of competition and struggle for space. This self-esteem therefore poses as a major albatross over and above which a person or groups see themselves in their social alignments (Erunke, 2011). The position as above has been further corroborated amongst scholars of the Nigerian political system who have increasingly argued that sectional nationalism and the quest for group identity as is currently (of course it has always been) practiced portends grave dangers for

Nigeria's nascent democracy, national integration and democratic consolidation. Salau & Hassan (2011:131) opines that:

One of the main causes of problem in Nigeria is ethnic nationalism...first and foremost Nigerians see themselves as members of an ethnic group rather than members of a nation. This tendency has been shown in some ways and particularly in the allegiance people pay to their ethnic group. In Nigerian society today, many prefer identification with their ethnic group rather than with the nation or even state... This shows that Nigerian still exhibits a strong allegiance to ethnic group and this has consequently encouraged primordial sentiments among Nigerian people.

Today cases of denial, exclusivity and deprivations have become overly pronounced. Moreover, the practice of federalism in Nigeria was long overdue, and has implicated the constant calls for assessing its practices through the instrumentation of restructuring. It has been conceived that the plausible solution to the failed attempts through the convocation of National Sovereign Conference is the urgent action aimed at restructuring. It is worth knowing that the calls for restructuring in Nigeria accounts to the nature and character of power consolidation among the tiers systems, marginalization, coercive federal option and poor securitization of the lives and property of the people.

According to Ifesinachi (2018), he noted that poor federal practices had engendered constant agitations for justice, consultation, opening of political space, re-negotiation of then Nigerian pacts and now restructuring. Accordingly, he avers that political restructuring is orchestrated by the separatists and irredentists' aspirations against perceived structural defects, institutional deformities, injustice,



functional inequalities, vexatious transition processes and controversial constitutional reviews and reforms in Nigeria federalism. Likewise, Abutudu (2010) aligned that the tensions between the component units and the center, between the constituent units themselves and various interests often fuel demand for restructuring. He continues that the demands for equity and justice in the allocation of political space from minorities and marginalized groups have all made for a consistent and perennial stream of agitations for restructuring which suggests that the search for a national community has remained elusive in Nigeria. By implication, this means that the logic of restructuring needs impetus to restore the appearance of a federal system, a condition that allows each region or component unit to control resources within its jurisdiction and pay stipulated royalties to the government at the center. This would help to a greater extent, the development of the federating states toward self-reliance. Therefore, the major purpose of this study is to examine Nigeria and the travail of federalism: An Appraisal of Restructuring Agitation. Other specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine possible ways of restructuring Nigeria for true federalism.
2. To examine the factors affecting incessant agitations for restructuring in Nigeria.
3. To examine the process of restructuring Nigeria for good governance.
4. To suggest possible ways of strengthening stability in a restricted Nigeria.

Literature Review

Federalism does not seem to tend itself to any universally accepted definition. This is because of the ideological, cultural and historical contextualization that underpin it several meanings. In spite of all these,

however, Oowononi's surmise that federalism is identical to the partial decentralization of the functions of governance in which each federating unit is allowed to carry out its activities as best as dictated by the peculiarities of its circumstances but within the overall framework of minimal distortion to the collective good of society. The underlying philosophy of this statement is that some economic, political and administrative functions are best performed by the centre while by sub-national units. Federalism has its long history from the experience of Australia and the United States and is hinged on the theory of public goods and the theory of public choice of the political process.

Akindele & Nwabuzor (1996) see federalism as a political system arrangement erected on two (or more) levels of government. And, these levels deal with common and territorially diverse issues. It is thus 'a government in which the written constitution, or an inviolable statutory precedence, specifies that certain fundamental authority belongs to smaller states'. On the same argumentative plane, Smiley posits that 'the most characteristic aspect of a federal constitution (i.e. federalism) is its division of law making power between the central and regional government'. This is well supported by Friedrich (1963) when he contends that federalism is; A union of groups united by one or more objectives but retaining their distributive group being for other purposes, it unites without destroying themselves that are uniting and it is meant to strengthen them in their group relations. In a nutshell, the above opines federalism as essential about the distribution of political and economic decision making powers among



constituent units and levels of governments. Elaigwu (1971) asserts that;

A federal system of government often arises from the desire of people to form a union without losing their identity...it is a compromise in a multinational state between two types of self-determination-the determination to maintain supernatural framework of government which guarantees security for all in the state nation or the nation-state on the one hand and self-determination –of component groups to retain identities on the other.

Examples of federal state include the United States, India, Brazil, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belgium, Argentina, Pakistan, and Australia, Ethiopia and Nigeria. A closer look at these countries shows that there are among them huge differences of size, population, wealth, number of member states or political systems (Presidential in the United States, collegial in Switzerland, parliamentary in Austria and India). The United States, Canada, Australia, and India are some of the most successful political systems among them. Even some unitary systems (Spain, Belgium and South Africa) experiencing strains have responded to that impulse by incorporating federal features. Yet, neither the first group nor the second can be said to be flawless. More importantly, a number of federal states are known to have collapsed (Central Africa Federation, East African Federation, West Indian Federation, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, etc). The implication of the above is that federal arrangements alone are sufficient to account for the failure or success of political system. Since federal arrangements are designed to solve problems that becloud the nation-states, the character of the state

seems necessary concomitant for evaluating the performance of federal system

Essentially, government performs three major economic functions-viz: allocation, distribution and stabilization. Ntenutu (1999) argues that the allocative function of federalism is put forward on the assumption that there are well defined sets of publicly provided goods whose provision and consumption are made contingent upon payment while other publicly provided goods are not contingent upon payment. The cost of providing such goods is so enormous and its special incidence covers the whole nation that its consumption cannot be easily determined by a market price.

Scholars such as Oates (1972), Ogban-Iyam (1998).Cremer et al (1994) and Taiwo (1999) opine that the central government is best suited to perform the distributive and stabilization function of fiscal federalism and provide national public goods almost exclusively, while the sub-national governments are allowed the allocation function to a significant degree and allowed to provide local public goods because their spatial incidence and benefits are limited to their geography.

Ricker (1964) also functionally describes the concept of federalism as a technique of governance. In the process, he identifies federalism as a technique of governance. In the process, he identifies federalism as the main alternative to empire. And structurally, he gives its characteristics thus; there are some guarantees of autonomy for each government in two spheres (even if it is a mere statement in the constitution). Paradoxically, however, Nigeria's federal experience reveals that federalism is about competition and struggle over resources among the fractured societies that constitute the country. In another vein, Attahiru Jega (1996) avers that Nigerian federalism



translates into competition and/or struggle between the powerful and the weak, between the rich and the poor, in the context of federating units as well as in the sense of the socio-economic and class configuration within the federation.

Valoon & Whittington (1976) argue that the basic features common to all Federal System have been provided by scholars like Wheare, Ricker, Livingstone classical contributors as well as contemporary scholars who have done various works on the concept in the furtherance of knowledge enrichment. Wheare, conceptualizes Federalism as 'the method of dividing powers so that central and regional governments are each within a sphere, coordinate and independent'. He further puts forward doctrines that form the basis of all federal policies and these includes:

- a) Firstly, division of governmental responsibilities between levels of government.
- b) Secondly, written constitution spelling out this division and from which federal and state authorities derive their power.
- c) Thirdly, judiciary independent of both levels of government that acts as arbiters in cases where there are conflicts over the jurisdiction enumerated in (1) above
- d) Fourthly, federal arrangement is emphasizing co-equal supremacy of the various level each in its respective field of operation; the citizens of the federation being concurrently under two authorities and owing loyalties to them.

Wheare's framework has provided the springboard for subsequent formulations which are presented as improvements over rigid cast. For example, William Livingston also looked beyond the narrow confines of legal formulation to the federal systematic view and saw federalism as the product of the interaction of socio-cultural and political

factors, while noting that the documentary constitution may be a poor guide to whether a political system is federal or otherwise. He explained:

The essential nature of federalism is to be sought for, not in the shading of legal and constitutional terminology, but in the forces-economic, social, political, cultural-that have made the outward forms of federalism...The essence of federalism lies not (only) in the constitutional or institutional structure but in the society itself (Livingston, 1967).

This quote is marked departure from Wheare's legal construct. By it Livingston demonstrates the interaction between the constitutional framework and the socio-cultural substructure. In effect, he shows that, the form of the constitution is not independent of the centripetal and centrifugal forces operating in the society. From this, Livingston distinguished between a federal constitution which is the legal document and a federal society which necessitates the federal constitution. The federal constitution, he notes is the arrangement incorporating the federal principles such as the division of powers, while the federal society is one with cleavages which are patterned along geographical lines (Livingston. 1967). A federal society is thus, one with a plurality of ethnic groups with different historical, cultural and linguistic background, but in which each ethnic group occupies a marked and distinct geographical location from the others. Federalism therefore becomes a device for compromising unity and diversity, as concluded by Livingston: Federal system should be seen as the institutionalization of compromise between demands for unity and diversity, the intensity of these demands being reflected in how the constitution works. While taking a



broad view of the concept of federalism, Friedrich (1966, 286) wrote that: Federalism should be seen as a process by which unity and diversity are politically organized and this process includes, like all political phenomena person, institutions and ideas. Agreeing with Wheare and Livingston, he noted that: Federalism should be seen as a group of state united by one or more common goals or objectives, but retaining their distinctive group character in other spheres. Thus, federation incorporated unity and diversity (Friedrich, 1966). Friedrich's major contribution to the theory of federalism is, however, in his observation that the values of the society do affect the integrative or disintegrative process. His argument is that: Federalism results from the unwillingness of groups of people to subject themselves to one government in all matters. This unwillingness is a manifestation of societal cleavages in respect of race, language, religion, culture and geography (Friedrich's, 1966).

From this conception, we can conclude that the mere drafting of a federal constitution does not put an end to these forces, Friedrich termed interests, values and beliefs. Conflict over the distribution of power persists but the arena is changed to the legislatures, the executive councils and above all, the court of justice and all common institutions. Since ideas, values and beliefs change over time, the structure of federalism would also change.

However, in relating this conception of federalism on the basis of division of power, constitutional arrangement and most importantly the pluralist nature of the federal system, to Nigeria, we can conclude with the point of Odojin (2003, 25) on the nature and trend of Nigerian federalism:

The situational and environmental context of a federation often dictates the tone and

texture of federal politics, which correspondingly influences the stability and intergration of the federal state. For example, in a federation where exogenous factors provoke and shape the endogenous factors of federal imperatives, as in the case of many post-colonial states among which Nigeria is typical, the stability of due process becomes precarious and the state becomes very vulnerable to the vagaries of politics! One of the high points of the advocates for the convocation of National Sovereign Conference is that federal arrangement in Nigeria was externally negotiated and was originally designed to facilitate the objectives of colonialism and that the inputs of Nigerian people were minimal.

In the light of this, Nigerian people were denied the opportunity for the negotiation of guarantees and safeguards, which would have embedded in the constitution to protect their divergent interest arising from their cultural diversity. Thus, inter-ethno-regional tensions, the North-South dichotomy, religious and communal crises which characterize the federation are said to be directly linked to the circumstances of the origin and evolution of Nigeria federalism. Nigeria is a federation; however, it is a contestable issue whether since independence Nigeria practiced anything near federalism. There is no doubt that, a true federal constitutional arrangement guarantees good government and harmony in the body polity, and global experience recommend the practice of federalism as a better way of uniting diverse peoples and nations in a polity than any unitarism.

Since 'federalism' in Nigeria had run into problems before the intervention of the military in the governance of the Nigeria polity, going back to where we were in 1966 is unlikely to produces a significantly better



Nigeria. More specifically, the Nigerian federation was never voluntarily formed by any independent states or nationalities or ethnic groups. A federation must be formed voluntarily by fairly independent entities if it must last. The overconcentration on petrodollar money since 1970s ignoring the other sectors of the economy has led to the intense competition over how the wealth can be distributed. Agitations about environmental concern and need to control their resources by the people of south-south have led to various responses. Agitation has continued in renewed attacks, kidnaps and violence in most parts of Nigeria. How resources are shared in the federation is the highest challenge to the Nigerian federalism.

Thus historical evidences of an irrefutable nature have shown firstly, that you can unite but can never succeed in unifying people whose language has set distinctly apart from one another, and second that the more educated a linguistic group becomes, the stronger it waxes in its bid for political self-determination and autonomy, unless it happens to be the dominant group and a true reflection of Nigerian federalism.

Biafra Secessionist Agitation and Intergroup Relations

No federalism is perfect, but then, no federalism is also quasi. It is either it is federalism or not federalism. Thus, if this premise is relied upon in ascertaining whether a political system is a federal system or not, then there will be no such concepts as quasi-federalism or developing federalism is perfect is apparently due to the human factor in the practice of federalism. Federalism is not imperfect because its ideals and philosophies are flawed, but, rather, as a result of the dynamic nature of humans in its practice. Apparently, the imperfection of federalism is not located in

the absence of one or more of its ideals and classical principles.

Federalism, for Suberu (2009) & Isumonah (2003), has been relatively successful in overcoming and containing the syndrome of state disintegration, large-scale internal disorder, and the breakdown of law and order that has afflicted some of the world's other large un-federal states. Nigeria's relative stability for Suberu (2009) derives significantly from its unique federal structure, which has, over time, been reconfigured, especially after her 1967-1970 civil war from an unstable union of three unwieldy ethnic regions into a more integrated 36 unit multiethnic federation. Why Suberu's submission of transformation of Nigerian federalism from an unstable union of three unwieldy ethnic regions into a more integrated 36-unit multiethnic federation may fail the test of contemporary reality and empirical check in contemporary Nigeria is that there has been a resurgence of unprecedented and sustained conflagration between the centrifugal and centripetal forces within the Nigerian state in recent times over the restructuring of the political and governance structures of the country. Within the federalist divides, the advocates of the centrifugal measures and policies have sustained vigorously their demands for the restructuring of Nigeria's governance and political structures in line with the dictates and true idea.

Within the federalist divides, the advocates of the centrifugal measures and policies have sustained vigorously their demands for the restructuring of Nigeria's governance and political structures in line with the dictates and true idea of federalism since the installation of Nigeria's fourth republic in 1999. This position has been the fulcrum of the Igbo ethnic nationality's agitation in Nigeria. Since the end of Nigeria's first



republic from 1963 to 1966 which witnessed Nigeria's second coup d'état where many officers of the military of the Igbo ethnic extraction were killed. Late General Agunyi Ironsi who was the military Head of State at the time of this second coup d'état and of the Igbo ethnic nationality was more predisposed to a more centralized governance and administrative system. This was popularly known as the "the unification decree, decree 34" that was intended to unify and centralize the governance and politica; structure of the Nigerian state. In practical terms, this decree emplaced the Nigerian state on the path of unitary Nigerian state remained stillborn as he never lived to make it a reality following his killing in the second coup d'état in July 27 1966. The termination of Ironsi's regime and his killing in the coup d;etat marked the beginning of ethnic chauvinism body polity. For Johnson & Olaniyan (2017, p.1):

"In spite of the consistency of the Biafra agitation through successive administrations, there was a noticeable lull in the secessionist demands during the time of President Good luck Jonathan. The palpable lull in the agitation was, however, short-lived whilst assuming a frightening proportion since the advent of the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015."

Johnson and Olaniyan (2017,p.2) tended to have located the sudden resurgence in the Biafra agitation since the emergence of President Muhammadu Buhari's presidency within the primacy of an interplay of factors such as; the outcome of the 2015 general elections, the question of inclusion and representation; the unfinished nature of the Nigerian civil war, economic challenges, miscalculation both on the part of the Igbo people and indiscretion in the initial appointments made by President Muhammadu Buhari. The outcome of the

2015 general elections, for Johnson and Olaniyan (2017) fell short of the aspirations and expectations of the Biafra agitators whom are mostly of Igbo ethnic extraction. As pointed out by Johnson and Olaniyan (2017), the general expectation of the Biafra agitators and most Nigerians from South Eastern parts of the country was nothing short of Former President Good luck Jonathan's victory in the 2015 presidential elections, having voted him en-mass during the elections. It was no surprise that former President Good luck Jonathan won both in the South-East and South-South geopolitical zones of the country. However, against the backdrop of the Biafra secessionist agitators and the Easterners expectations, President Muhammadu Buhari won in the South-West, North-West, North-East and the North-Central zones of the country, thereby winning the presidential elections. This, among other factors, did not go down well with mostly the Igbo whom had wanted and voted for former president Goodluck Jonathan as the president.

The question of inclusion and representation of the Igbo equally came to play in the renewed agitation of the Biafra known as Independent People of Biafra known as Independent People of Biafra (IPOB). For so long, most especially since the killing of a military head of state of an Igbo origin, General Aguiyi Ironsi in 1966 through a bloody military coup, the Igbo ethnic has been unable to produce another a president or head of state for more than fifty years of the 70 years of Nigeria's existence as a sovereign state. The closest the Igbo had come to the Nigerian presidency was when Alex Ekwueme was elected the vice-president a joint presidential ticket with Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria in 1979. After the termination of the tenure of President Shehu Shagari and



Vice-president Alex Ekwueme though a military junta in 1983, no Nigerian of Igbo ethnic extraction had ever been elected to the presidency. This political exclusion guised as “the will of the majority in a democracy” resonates the visible exclusionary politics the Igbo ethnic nationality has been subjected since Nigeria’s civil war (Ekeh, 1996). Given the prevailing politics of ethnicity and diversity that the adoption of a federal system was designed to address in Nigeria officially since independence has remained constant in intergroup relations in Nigeria, and had become more prominent, assuming a dangerous point in the wake of the 2015 general elections.

Empirical Review

Several researches have been conducted to determine or establish the linkage between federalism and national intergration such as (Ojo, 2002; Oluwo, 1999; Averson, 2014; Boumo, 2014; Anthony, 2016; Olayiwola, 2016; Fossum & Jachtenfuchs, 2017; Johnson & Olaniyan, 2017; Olu-Adeyemi, 2017; Bello, 2018; Vincent, 2018; and Abeeb & Rukema, 2021), among others. The general thinking of these scholars is that the calls for restructuring in Nigeria accounts to the nature and character of power consolidation among the tiers systems, marginalization, coercive federal option and poor securitization of the lives and property of the people. Boumo (2014) tries to look at issues of agitation for creation of state in the face of “true federalism” in Nigeria. This study observes that, state creation has always been problematic, that every instances of the state creation in Nigeria has been greeted with internal rivalries and conflicts resulting to continuous ill feelings among some sections. The study sees the attempt as detrimental to unity and co-existence of the nation. Abeeb

and Rukema (2021) belief that Nigeria federal system has its inherent contradictions and challenges, therefore, the continued survival and existence of federal systems to a large extend depend on how best these problems can be jointly addressed by the federating units. Nigerian and Nigeria government should address her lingering challenges and problems for continuous harmonious existence rather than calling for restructuring. However, a number of issues have received relatively little scholarly attention, including the economic aspects of Nigerian federalism, population movements and the federal arrangement, language policies, federal ethnics and various critical governmental and non-governmental institutions. There is a need to establish institutions for the study of federalism in Nigeria and to reduce ethnic and ideological biases in research on Nigerian federalism. This study intends to fill the gap in existing body of literature.

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the synergy of systems theory and resource curse theory as a theoretical framework. The notion of system was originally developed by a biologist Ludwig von Bertalanfy, but was developed into a systematic framework and first applied to the study of political phenomena by David Easton in 1953(Olaniyi, 2001). David Easton published “The Political System” in 1953 with a claim that he was attempting to construct a theory to embrace all the social sciences. Easton thus selected the political system as the basic unit of analysis.

By definition, the political system is the system of interactions in any society through which binding and authoritative allocations are made (cited in Varma, 1982). The political system receives inputs (demands and supports) from the society and converts



them into outputs (authoritative policies and decisions). There is also a feedback mechanism, which returns some outputs back into the political system as inputs, thereby completing a complex cyclical operation.

Olaniyi (2001) disclosed that the political system is made up of various regulatory mechanisms to control demands and minimize over loading. Firstly, there is the structural mechanism and the gate-keepers. Secondly, there are cultural mechanisms. Thirdly, there are communication channels. And lastly, the conversion process itself also controls demands.

Applied to the purpose of this paper, the theory shows that the Nigerian federation does not exist in a vacuum, but in an environment saturated by diverse ethnic groups with different and sometimes conflicting interests to be achieved. The minority question as well the key recurrent issues that form the crux of this paper are inputs from the society which the political system is bound to respond to, but failed to effectively and holistically respond to. This has long –run implications for the survival and sustenance of the practice of federalism in Nigeria.

The reason why every ethnic group looks up to the institutions of the political system is not farfetched. The political system has the sole authority to allocate values in the society. The decision as to who gets what, when, and how are taken by the authority, which is ordinarily supposed to be fairly representative of all ethnic nationalities in the country. This is however, far from being the case in Nigeria where corruption and all forms of sharp practices reign supreme.

The Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba, and the Ibo as well as the numerous smaller ethnic groups compete for the limited available economic resources that the county is

blessed with to the point of violent confrontations leading to loss of innocent lives and valuable properties. The availability of these natural resources seems to be more of a curse than a blessing to Nigeria hence the application of Resource Curse Theory. The idea behind the ‘Resource Curse’ is that the abundance of mineral resources in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) tends to generate negative developmental outcomes, including poor performance, growth collapses, high-level of corruption, ineffective governance, and greater political violence. Natural resources, for most poor countries, are deemed to be more of a “curse” than a “blessing” (Anthony, 2016). The term resources curse was first used by Richard Auty in 1993 to describe how countries rich in mineral resources were unable to use that wealth to boost their economies and how these countries had lower economic growth than countries without an abundance of such natural resources.

Using the Resource Curse (also known as the paradox of plenty) as a guide to this study, it becomes obvious that the abundance of crude oil and many more natural resources have been a curse than a blessing to Nigeria. The country has failed to fully or optimally benefit from its resource wealth and successive governments/ administrations have also failed to effectively respond to the needs of its people, especially those of the minority. Youth restiveness and all other forms of social vices perpetrated by the minorities from the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria attest to the thesis of this theory. Hence, the continuous and persistent demand for resource control, local government autonomy, and restructuring as well as the issue of separatist agitations are all a derivative of the failure of the federal



government to utilize the wealth of the nation to develop its people, especially areas devastated by the production of these natural resources such as the Niger Delta region, which suffers endless pollution of their environment.

Methodology

This study adopts the historical, descriptive methodology from the perspective of content analysis. The background data for this study were obtained basically from secondary sources including text books, journal articles, official gazette, newspapers, internet sources and monograph. Similarly, the study relied on qualitative method of arriving in its logic. The promptness of this is not farfetched due largely on the nature of the agitations and counter agitations in Nigeria, a reflection on the state of lopsided federal practices ad principles. This is characterized by attendant unitary system being paraded as federal system of government. Thus, the accumulation of enormous powers by government at the center has called for devolution of powers to other tiers and levels of government. This could be achieved through the instrumentation of restructuring. The critical factors constituting politics of accommodation include bargaining, consensus, persuasion and compromise, both at the domestic and international scene. Most of these factors were neglected at the formative stage of the Nigerian polity. The matter is worsened by the interplay of ethno-regional imbalances and conflicts of uneven economic development, the heavy dependence on the governmental machinery for individual and group advancement, a weak attachment among the political elite to civic and consensual values as well as a fragile bond of nationhood.

Restructuring and Separatist Agitations: The Lamentation of Ethnic Minorities in Nigeria

Agitations by some ethnic groups for separation from the federal republic did not start with the present government. The three dominant ethnic nationalities in Nigeria had during the first republic, accused the British of imposing the federal system on Nigeria. For instance, Awolowo once said Nigeria is not a nation, but a mere geographic expression (Awolowo, 1947). In the same vein, Balewa also said Nigeria since its amalgamation in 1914 only existed as a country on paper; it is far from being united. Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country (Balewa 1947:208). It should however be noted that the British's decision to federate Nigeria was because of the peoples complex culture, diverse ethnic groups, plurality, and large size of the country. This was what Nnamdi Azikwe probably had in mind, when he said:

... the complete answer is the creation of a federal system of government which will concede the existence of all linguistic groups and accord them the right to co-exist on the basis of equality within a framework of political and constitutional warranties, that would protect their individual freedom under the rule of law and thus preserve and sustain the particular linguistic groups from extinction (cited in Ojo 2009:38).

Added to the separatist agitations is the issue of restructuring. The Nigeria federal structure is said to be imbalanced as the federal government seems to be much more powerful than all the states and local government areas put together. The calls for restructuring are becoming deafening as both the elite and masses have all joined in these calls. The rationales behind these calls is well known because most of the misdemeanor confronting the country is



linked one way or the other to the need for restructuring, for example, the mono-economic nature of our economy is a direct consequence of the unitary nature of our federal structure. If states have control over their resources, diversification of the economy will be done seamlessly, unemployment rate will go down drastically, and exchange rate to dollar will improve positively. The challenge in the electric power sector can also be linked to the need for restructuring, for years the federal government had been making efforts to improve power supply but results seem not commensurate to efforts. If the states are given the power to generate electric power supply, it is obvious there will be improvement in the power sector. This view was well captured by Akindele as he opined that:

what we need today is a non-centralized federal system in which state governments are politically virile, legislatively strong, financially resilient and indeed constituted into self-confident and self-assertive center of respect by the political loyalty from the citizens they serve and over whom they exercise authority (cited in Ojo 2009:53). The present federal structure can only offer what we currently have, which is a situation whereby state government cannot pay salary of their workers despite the several bailouts by the federal government.

Structural imbalance of the Nigeria State is yet another cog in the wheel of effective practice or operation of federalism in Nigeria. The Nigerian system, as we have today is grossly imbalanced structurally. This problem is actually connected with the history of lopsided nature of the Nigerian federal structure, with concomitant effects of recurrent problems. A cursory look at the way and manner regions were created during the embryonic stage of political development, and later States creation gives the Northern part of Nigeria an unfair advantage. This structural imbalance, Ojo (2002) maintains generated fear of domination among other ethnic groups in Nigeria, especially the so called minorities. Another problem area which is worth examining is the twin problem of domination and marginalization of some ethnic groups by the others. The Nigeria federation is best described as sitting on a time bomb due to the unending accusations and counter-accusations which have marred the relationships between and among the disparate component units of the federation. The South for instance is aggrieved by what it called political domination by the North. The table below shows that, in terms of political power at the centre, the North has been more favored. Out of 15 presidents that have so far ruled Nigeria, 10 were from the North while 5 from the south.

S/N	Dates	Names	States	Zones
1	1/10/1960-14/01/66	T. Balewa	Bauchi	North-East
2	15/01/66-29/07/66	J.T.U Ironsi	Abia	South-East
3	30/07/66-28/07/75	Y. Gowon	Plateau	North-Central
4	29/07/75-13/02/76	M. Muhammed	Kano	North-West
5	14/02/76-30/09/79	O. Obasanjo	Ogun	South-West
6	01/10/79-31/12/83	S. Shagari	Sokoto	North-West
7	31/12/83-25/08/85	M. Buhari	Katsina	North-West
8	27/08/85-26/08/93	I.B Babangida	Niger	North-Central
9	27/08/93-17/11/93	E. Shonekan	Ogun	South-West
10	18/11/93-08/06/98	Sani Abacha	Kano	North-West
11	09/06/98-28/05/1999	A.Abubakar	Niger	North-Central



12	29/05/99-29/05/2007	O. Obasanjo	Ogun	South-West
13	29/05/2007-05/05/2010	U.M. Yar Adua'a	Katsina	North-West
14	06/05/2010-29/05/2015	G. Jonathan	Bayelsa	South-South
15	29/05/2015-till Date	M. Buhari	Kastina	North-West

Source: OJO (2009: 55; Egwemi 2008:32 and update by the Author)

There is mutual suspicious and mistrust among the different sections of the nation. This is manifested in the fierce manner that positions in the country are contested for, and in the way elections are fought out among groups as no section wants to shift grounds due to this suspicion. The June 12 1993 issue is still very fresh in all our minds (Ajagun, 2004:6). Minority problems have continued to plague this nation from independence till date. This is as a result of the perceived domination of one section of the country over another. Between 1960 and 1964, political disaffection among the Tiv people in the Middle Belt area resulted in bloody disturbances and in early 1966, the opportunity for some little secessionist bid by the Igbo of the Eastern Region in 1967 was as a result of this perceived imbalance in the allocation of political power and resources. Also, secessionist bid was organized by the leadership of Isaac Adaka Boro for the creation of Delta People's Republic (Ajagun, 2004:6).

Currently in Nigeria, some of the critics as regard marginalization have held their position from the analysis of the appointment of the current Buhari led administration in the selection of Top government officials especially that of the appointment of his longtime political assistant, Engr. David Lawal as the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF and late Alhaji Abba Kyari as Chief of Staff from Adamawa and Borno states respectively. In a diagram depiction of the Buhari led administration appointment, Akinwumi (2019) gave a list showing the lopsidedness as below:

Table 2: Federal Appointment based on Geopolitical Zones Representation

SN	Geopolitical Zones	Total	Percentage
1	North-East	6	20%
2	North-West	13	43%
3	North-Central	3	10%
4	South-East	0	0%
5	South-West	3	10%
6	South-South	5	17%
	Total	30	100%

Source: Eme & Onuigbo, (2015). Retrieved from www.research.net

According to the table above, it shows that 25% of the appointments are from the south while the overwhelming 75% are from the north. Likewise, the North West geopolitical which happens to the president's geopolitical zone has the largest portion of 43%, while the South East for instance has no single appointee. This lopsidedness in the appointments has generated a lot of antagonism and ethnic wrath across the nation, some belief that the President is the most regionally unbalance President the country has ever had in the history of her federal appointment (Eme & Onuigbo, 2015). This corroborates the position of (Abutudu, 2011; Erunka, 2011; Salau & Hassan, 2011; Ifesinachi, 2018) that poor federal practices had engendered constant agitations for justice, consultation, opening of political space, re-negotiation of then Nigerian pacts and now restructuring.

In the Nigerian federal arrangement, the question that immediately arises is; how social justice can be facilitated and guaranteed, in a situation where the post-colonial ruling elites seem not to find use to



it in relation to constitutionalism as a principle of federalism. Section (14) sub-sections (2) and (3) of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria as amended 2011 on relation between government and the people provides that:

Firstly, federal republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principle of democracy and social justice.

Secondly, sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this constitution derives its power and authority.

Thirdly, the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government and;

Fourthly, the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.

From the above stand point, appointments, or the composition of the federal government and its agencies are to reflect the federal character principle and the need to promote unity and loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic: or other sectional groups in the government or in any of its agencies. In Nigeria today, the heads of the executive legislature and judiciary are all from the north and, the distribution of heads of ministries, agencies, and security chiefs from 2015 to----has been lopsided. It is unimaginable that out of the over fifteen heads of security agencies in Nigeria, thirteen are from the north and from a particular religious faith and only two from the south. The table 3 below explains the current situation of appointment of security agencies in Nigeria.

Name	Agency/Dept	Region	Religion
Major-General Lucky Irabor	Chief of Defense Staff	South-East	Christian
Major-General Farouk Yahaya wey	Chief of Army Staff	North-West	Muslim
Rear-Admiral A.Z Gambo	Chief of Naval Staff	North-West	Muslim
Air Vice Marshall I.O Amao	Chief of Air Staff	South-West	Muslim
Air Vice Marshall Mohammed S. Usman	Chief of Defense Intelligence	North-East	Muslim
Major-General Babagana Monguno (rtd.)	National Security Adviser	North-East	Muslim
Mohammed Babandede	Nigerian Immigration Service	North-West	Muslim
Abdullahi Gana	National Security & Civil Defense Corp	North-East	Muslim
Mohammadu			
Col. Hameed Ali (rtd).	Nigerian Custom Service	North-East	Muslim
Lima Alhaji Ibrahim	Nigerian Fire Service	North-West	Muslim
Yusuf Magaji Bichi	State Security Service	North-West	Muslim
Mohammed Abubakar Adamu	Nigerian Police Force	North-Central	Muslim

Source: Author (2021).

The implication of this is that, other ethnic groups, regions and religious groups have been made subservient to other privileged

groups. Consequently, are the rising tides of ethnic militants armed with the purpose of standing against the injustice for being



short-changed in the distribution and allocation of power and resources. This was intended with the submission of (Averson, 2014; John & Olaniya, 2017; Adeyemi, 2017; Bello, 2018 and Vincent, 2018) demands for equity and justice in the allocation of political space from minorities and marginalized groups have all made for a consistent and perennial stream of agitations for restructuring which suggests that the search for a national community has remained elusive in Nigeria.

The classical idea of a federal system lies in the equality of the federating coordinates in the federal arrangement. Anything shot of this is a parody and mockery of the spirit of federalism. This has been the situation in Nigeria since independence. The Nigerian federal system recognizes three levels of government as independent levels of government with their respective spheres of authorities.

It has been established that Nigeria has never been a federal state when compared against the backdrop of a federal system, as espoused by K.C Wheare. Resource control, fiscal federalism, independence and autonomy of the federating units in a federation to administer their own affairs without overbearing interference from the federal government at the center, state police, devolution of power and governance, among others, are a few of the distinctive attributes of a federal state that sets it apart from others. None of the aforementioned federalist ideals and practices is respected or practiced in Nigeria. Since independence, for instance, the issue of resource control has been one of the major parodies of federalism in Nigeria. No region or state had ever been allowed

Fiscal Federalism

Over the greater part of Nigeria's years of independence, it has practiced the allocative

principle of fiscal distribution probably because of the monolithic nature of its revenue source (Ekpo, 1999). In the current fiscal arrangement since the advent of the oil boom, the other tiers of governments depend heavily on the central government because resources are concentrated at the center based on the country's adoption of the allocative principle of fiscal federalism but more so due to the low level of economic development or activities at these lower levels of governance.

Curiously, this nature of fiscal arrangement has had serious impact on the capacity of lower tiers of governments to independently raise sufficient revenue to finance their development and this has tended to compromise their independence which has equally affected their growth and development. One major factor which has tended to influence this type of fiscal arrangement and the dependency syndrome is the uneven distribution of natural resources especially following the discovery of oil during which most other viable economic activities were abandoned. Of importance is the cost/and or ability of these layers of governments to profitably exploit their natural resource base which has led to the high dependency syndrome.

The resource exploitation for development does not only depend on physical endowment but is driven by the direction of world trade and the level of development of the society as well as the capacity of that level of government to profitable economic activities are likely to be more easily exploited. This most probably explains why petroleum (which has for several decades provided the needed financial support to drive Nigeria's growth and development initiatives) had been extensively exploited, in spite of the fact that the country has enormous deposits of gold, coal, tin,



common salt, aluminum, iron ore columbite kaolin Limestone amongst others. This is apart from the huge agricultural potential which the country enjoys for the production of both food crop and industrial raw material.

The above scenario essentially has created serious implication for both revenue generation and altered the fiscal arrangement between the different tiers of government. This is because based on fiscal laws or regulations, the bulk of revenue from oil is concentrated at the centre until recently when through persistent agitation, regions where oil is located in substantial quantity have obtained derivative concessions in which 13% of revenue accruable from oil is reserved for such region. This is in contrast to the fact that agriculture which hitherto was the main stay and the major revenue earner for the economy is practiced in all regions of the country-although largely neglected.

Based on current fiscal arrangement, different revenue sharing formulas have been adopted for the country touching on the principle of equality, development needs, access to development opportunities and the need for the promotion of national cohesion. This is in recognition of the fact that there is unequal natural resource endowment at the various regions of the country and the need to promote even development.

Unfortunately, this arrangement has not taken into cognizance the need:

Firstly, to promote fiscal independence by the regions,

Secondly, the need to address the environmental impact of resource exploitation,

Thirdly, the need to provide for future development and

Fourthly, the need to strike a delicate balance between present negative impact

and the marginal gains in areas where resources are being exploited.

A combination of these factors has principally laid the foundation for the near total dependence on the centre for the revenue sharing arrangement that is in existence at the moment to the detriment of tapping from the huge resources endowment that abounds in most parts of this country.

Using the Resource Curse (also known as the paradox of plenty) as a guide to this study, it becomes obvious that the abundance of crude oil and many more natural resources have been a curse than a blessing to Nigeria. The country has failed to fully or optimally benefit from its resource wealth and successive governments/ administrations have also failed to effectively respond to the needs of its people, especially those of the minority. Youth restiveness and all other forms of social vices perpetrated by the minorities from the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria attest to the thesis of this theory. Hence, the continuous and persistent demand for resource control, local government autonomy, and restructuring as well as the issue of separatist agitations are all a derivative of the failure of the federal government to utilize the wealth of the nation to develop its people, especially areas devastated by the production of these natural resources such as the Niger Delta region, which suffers endless pollution of their environment.

The major area of contention, disagreement and conflict in every federal political entity is usually financial or monetary (revenue) matter. Dunmoye (2001) identified four inter-related factors, which in his opinion have the capacity to ruin an otherwise viable federation, whether developed, developing or underdeveloped. They are as follows:



- i. The issue of political power sharing or representation, especially at the center;
- ii. The problem of equitable employment to members of all sections of all the federating units.
- iii. Location of industries or infrastructures and projects especially those funded by the federal Government; and
- iv. The sharing of what are regarded as federal resources, which is known in Nigeria as revenue allocation.

The above factors identified by Dunmoye (2001) are all related to the practice of federalism, especially in developing countries like Nigeria where the struggle for political power is like a do or die battle where winning is all important because it is zero-sum. Virtually everything is politicized in Nigeria. Political power is everything; it is not only the access to wealth but also the means to security and the only guarantor of general well-being (Ake, 2001). By all indications therefore political conditions in Nigeria are the greatest impediments to the sustainability of the federal system of government. The aforementioned factors constitute, in addition, to the issue of challenges of Nigerian federalism.

There is without a doubt that the level of dependence of the state on the federation account is heavy and this makes it highly vulnerable to shocks and movements in changes in the international oil markets. With the current adoption of the principle of derivation, those states that rely solely on receipts from oil will also suffer the more because less will be available for sharing eventually.

Findings

The Nigeria's restructuring debate through the convocations of the Sovereign National Conference and the National Confab had been informed by persistent demands for, and the need to re-invent a better and true

federal system with a view of correcting perceived structural and functional inequalities and deficits. It is germane to note that the reconciliation of the federating units is an attendant reason and yearning for application of the instrument of restructuring, which is aimed at correcting the perceived anomalies associated with Nigerian constitution of 1999, and the grave marginalization and inabilities of government at the center to devolve powers to the other tiers. As observed by (Averson, 2014; John & Olaniya, 2017; Adeyemi, 2017; Bello, 2018 and Vincent, 2018)

However, arising from the study, the findings gave significantly reveal that the nature of federalism and federal practices in Nigeria is more or less a feeding bottle system. The government at the center always keeps appropriating powers for itself. Worse still, the inabilities to consolidate on the powers for effective social engineering and national development has compounded and complicated the system. Also implicated is that Nigerian state has failed to foster social engineering and nation building thereby enhancing continuous agitations for restructuring.

The study shows that the failure of different tier of government in the country to discharge their responsibilities of good governance which is predicated on equitable political arrangement, transparency, administrative practices and accountability in public affairs as well as failure to encourage genuine power sharing has brought about dodgy rivalries between the federal government and the other natural resources tapped from the country. This defective federal structure has also brought about agitation from various interest groups who are bending on capturing the state and the benefit associated with it, as well as eases the emergence of violent ethnic



militia. As a result of the nature of the Nigeria federal arrangement nation building, stability and socio-economic development becomes a serious challenge. This corroborates the position of (Abutudu, 2011; Erunka, 2011; Salau & Hassan, 2011; Ifesinachi, 2018)

The study also shows Nigeria despite possessing significant natural resources endowment, being Africa's leading economy and most populous nation, Nigerians are neither happy nor content with the current political structure, the 1999 Constitution as amended and virtually all the institutional governance at the federal state and local levels. Today more powers had been concentrated at the centre manifested in a federal government assumed ever more powers and responsibilities, took the biggest chunk of national revenues (Now about 53 percent) at the detriment of other tiers. The state of national dissatisfaction for a variety of reasons amongst devolution of powers, to sub-national, fiscal federalism, citizenship matters, federating units, local government autonomy, resource control, power sharing, derivations principle has led to strident calls from virtually all segments of Nigeria for restructuring.

The study also shows aside the politics of exclusion and underrepresentation of the Igbo at the federal level in terms of accessibility and capacity to contest for and be elected into the presidency; appointments into federal institutions; and parliamentary representation in the National Assembly, the unfinished nature and business of the civil war continues to give more impetus to the secessionist agitations of the Igbo through the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) movement.

Recommendation

This section discusses the strategies and recommendations to address the agitations

and clamour for restructuring. We cannot over-emphasize the importance of a new beginning for Nigeria which must be based, inter alia, on the revisiting of political history of Nigeria which should therefore be the first item on the agenda for Nigeria at sixty. Given its historical development as a federal state, there is an additional condition that must be satisfied, if mutual trust and understanding are to be established and a sense of unity and oneness fostered. For us to be convinced that the cause of Nigeria's federalism will be well and truly advanced if we can experiment some modification in our federation.

Firstly, the light of the foregoing criteria, this study proposes the restructuring of Nigeria's federalism. Therefore, in restructuring the Nigeria polity we must abolish state structure (residual powers) we should operate a centre and local government, states should no longer exist in this arrangement. Based on this arrangement we will only have two tiers of government in the new federal structures. If we are to be honest to ourselves, states are parasitic in the federal system. We must put in place a structure and a system where all players have the opportunity to gain, indeed, a political arrangement that provides equality of opportunity for all citizens at the grassroots and thereby provide maximum opportunity for personal, community, regional and national development. The restructuring process must also include the restitution of genuine federalism.

Secondly, devolution of governmental power to other tiers. This implies that the federating states must not be mere administrative units but political units with separate powers properly defined in the constitution. The transfer of powers through the legal instrumentation of the constitution helps to reshape the much concentration of



power at the center by allowing the components units to exercise substantive power over its jurisdiction. Also, such devolution helps in the long run to build culture of state viability and sustainability.

Third, as the case may be, is the need to remodel the Nigerian constitution in line with the fundamental principles of federalism, not as tailored by the military. The redefinition and remodeling will take in to cognizance the diversities and social relations of production and material existence of life peculiar to Nigerian state. Also, modalities should be put in place for the enhancement and monitoring the abuse of principles of intergovernmentalism.

Conclusion

Federal structure is generally agreed to be the most efficacious instrument of conflict resolution in a multi-ethnic state; it has enormous strength in managing, containing and reducing ethnic conflict. However, the mere adoption of a federal system does not necessarily assure the successful management of inter-group conflict; a federal system can generate more problems than it resolves. In view of this, Nigeria has experienced difficulties in working out a suitable and broadly-acceptable division of power between the centre and the states. While the need for a strong centre in a divided society which lacks a unifying set of goals or ideology is self-evident, overcentralisation, as military federalism entails, has the danger of raising the stakes of contestation among groups for control of central power, thereby negating the dispersal of conflict. The study appreciated the system of government, federalism which Nigeria has been practicing as contained therein in the 1999 constitution such practice has over the decades triggered disaffection and clamour for restructuring. The findings of the study had revealed that the nature and

character of federal practice in Nigeria could be attributed to centripetal force at work and the component units had gone beyond the elastic limit to demand for restructuring of the federal system. The political elites that rule the country since independence manipulate the ethnic and primordial sentiments to achieve their goals within the practice of Nigerian federalism. They cause hatred in the minds of Nigerians and make them to see each other as enemies.

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