

RESTRUCTURING NIGERIA: A PANACEA FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Received: 06 Jun 2018

Accepted: 16 Oct 2018

Published: 26 Oct 2018

ABSTRACT

This study focused on “Restructuring Nigeria: A Panacea for development”. There has been constant quest for restructuring of the Nigerian federation in recent times. This call for restructuring is based on the perceived problems and ineffectiveness of the Nigerian system such as mass poverty, unemployment, insecurity, as well as growing restiveness and ethnic agitations such as that of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Equally, perceived problems of marginalization of some ethnic groups as well as structural deformities of the Nigerian federation such as inequities in the distribution of states and local governments amongst the six-geopolitical zones, the call for the devolution of powers from the centre to the states and the need for fiscal federalism necessitate the call for restructuring. Four objectives as well as four research questions were formulated to guide the study. The researcher employed content and documentary analysis as the design of this study. The historical and dialectical materialism theory of Karl Marx and the Elite theory of Vilfredo Pareto were utilized in developing the theoretical framework of this study. The findings of this study show that the problems which necessitated the quest for restructuring include over-concentration of power at the centre, the problems of minorities and uneven development, and perceived slow pace of development of the country given the available human, material and natural resources. Some recommendations/strategies for restructuring the country are proffered which include the need for devolution of powers away from the centre, practicing true fiscal federalism, the need for diversification of the nation’s economy, promoting competitive federalism, reducing corruption drastically across all levels of governance in the country as well as the need to enhance and enforce the autonomy of local governments in the country.

KEYWORDS: *Restructuring, Development*

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Nigeria is a multinational society coupled together by the British as part of the colonialist and imperialist conquest in the 19th century which history has dubbed as the “scramble for Africa”. The various communities thus coupled together in Nigeria were at various levels of societal development Olu, (2017). Some of them were entrenched empires such as the Kanem – Borno, Oyo (even though at that point it had passed its zenith); the Sokoto caliphate, Kwararafa (Jukun) empire, Benin Empire (that was reputed to have had diplomatic relationships with the Portuguese monarchy) etc. Most of the other Nigerian pre-colonial societies on the other hand, were in historical studies, dubbed as acephalous entities, which were non-centralized and lacking in any serious statecraft appurtenances (Yaqub, 2016). Among these, are the Igbo segmental society, the Tiv, The Ebir, and the other less centrally organized and smaller

communities where kinship relations largely formed the basis of authority?

In demographic terms also, the communities that came to comprise what is now known as Nigeria varied and are still varied in size. The big ones numbering in tens of millions of citizens such as the Hausa/Fulani (with not less than 67 million people (Yaqub, 2016). The Yoruba (with not less than 40 million and the Igbo (with not less than 32 million native speakers are arguably bigger in size individually than a select number of African independent states such as Mozambique, Ghana, Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali Malawi, Zambia, Senegal, Chad, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Rwanda, Tunisia, Somalia, Guinea, Benin Republic etc. Each of these countries has less than the population size of the Igbo ethnic group that has the least figure among the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria (Yaqub, 2016).

In one sense, the huge population size of each of these three largest ethnic groups might have made them feel, somewhat justifiably, that each of them plus several others with large population could, if the going gets tougher in Nigeria, jump out of the Nigerian boat and go it alone, just as the less endowed African countries, population wise, are somehow on-going autonomous entities, recognized diplomatically and accorded membership status in the United Nations system and other global institutions. In other words, it is being argued that there may be an element of psychology undergirding the political tone on the discourse on restructuring.

The motley communities in what became known as Nigeria were conquered one after the other and at different points in history by the British colonialists. The process started with the annexation of the Lagos colony in 1861 (Olusanya 1999 as cited in Ikime 2009). This process of occupation of the various communities, since it started from the coastal areas to the interior, culminated in the defeat of Sultan Attahiru Ahmadu in 1903, being the head of the historic Sokoto caliphate. Because of the paucity of administrative personnel as well as huge deficit in infrastructural facilities generally at the beginning of the colonial enterprise, the British colonial authorities consolidated the various administrative structures (controlled by the Royal Niger Company and other trading companies, especially in the oil Rivers Protectorate, the independent Lagos colony administration, etc) into two broad Protectorates by January 1st, 1909; the Northern Protectorate and the Southern Protectorate. By January 1st, 1914, the two Protectorates were furthermore merged, through a process proclaimed as the "Amalgamation of Nigeria" (Olusanya 1999 as cited in Ikime 2009). Although the country was amalgamated in 1914, the administrative structure was still largely divergent between the North and the South, despite the setting up of the Nigerian council. Indeed, serious administrative harmonization began to take shape only with the introduction of the Clifford constitution in 1922. Other constitutional landmarks that could be said to have impinged on the development of a nation-state included the Richards constitution of 1946; the Macpherson constitution of 1951; the Lyttleton constitution of 1954; the constitution of 1957; and the 1959 constitution that culminated into the Independence status of the country on October 1st, 1960 (Olusanya 1999 as cited in Ikime 2009).

Perhaps at this juncture, we may need to pause to reflect as follows: did it ever occur to Nigerians that Britain that introduced Federalism to the country was and still never a federal society? What practical experience did she therefore have to pass on to Nigerians? People have also talked about the "mistake of 1914".

(Bello 1965 as cited in Yaqub 2016) and that Nigeria "is a mere geographical expression" (Awolowo 1980 as cited in Yaqub 2016) without ever interrogating the perfidy of the 1946 to 1951 constitutional constructs that left one part of the country in both physical and population sizes predominant over the other two segments of the federation. Thus, the Nigerian federation was structurally deformed ab-initio. Federalism could have been theoretically accepted as a

panacea to any conceivable bottlenecks of governing multi-cultural Nigeria right from the period of the struggle for independence from the forties throughout the fifties, but Britain could not have been the best teacher for that purpose (Yaqub, 2016). Be that as it may, at independence and up to the demise of the first Republic in 1966, the principle of governance – i.e fiscal federalism – was regarded as having been somehow adhered to. The prominence given to the principle of derivation meant that the regions could retain up to 50% of the revenue generated within their spheres of influence. The practice of the principle of derivation did enable each region to embark on competitive development projects that led to the generation of more wealth that in turn, conducted to more revenue accruing to the regions. These sublime features of fiscal federalism were indeed the hallmarks of governance in the first Republic. Conversely, it could be argued that it is 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 recklessly and corruptly by the federal Government that combines with development issues such as economic backwardness, mass poverty, unemployment, lack of financial viability of many states, poor infrastructural development, high level of illiteracy, high level of maternal and infant mortality, low life expectancy, low access to water and sanitation as well as the issue of marginalization to fuel the agitation for restructuring. It is clearly being argued here that an un-restructured Nigeria is a country not ready to develop. This is the background to this study which seeks to examine restructuring as a panacea for national development.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria attained political independence fifty-eight years ago and till date remains one of the least developed countries in the world. Some of these development indices include gross deficits in critical infrastructure like power, railways, roads, water, health facilities etc. According to the UNDP (2014) over 45 percent of the Nigerian population is illiterate. Equally two-thirds of the country's population has no access to safe-drinking water and sanitation and one-third of Nigeria's population has no access to medical facilities (UNDP, 2014). This clearly shows that going by the UNDP HDI, Nigeria is one of the least developed countries in the world. This is a shameful paradox given the available natural and human resources. In a situation where 45 percent of the population is illiterate, how can any meaningful development take place. Little wonder, the country has a high incidence of infant and maternal mortality, low life expectancy and poor quality followership. With problems like mass poverty, unemployment, insecurity and economic backwardness which the country currently faces as well as issues of growing restiveness and ethnic agitations like that of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), as well as other groups in the Niger Delta, as well as the perceived structural deformity of the Nigerian federation where the North-West geo-political zone has seven states and all other zones have six states except the South-East Zone which has only five states. This makes some zones have more share of national resources than others.

All these have led to the call for restructuring of the Nigerian federation in recent times. Some people like the renowned lawyer, Femi-Falana and Atiku Abubakar, former Vice-President of Nigeria, believe that the present system is not working and that effective restructuring can enhance the socio-economic development of the entire country (Chukwu, 2016). This study examined the restructuring of Nigeria as a panacea or way-out for the country's development. This study also sought to explain the justification for restructuring Nigeria, look at past restructuring in Nigeria's development efforts, as well as the strategies for restructuring the Nigerian federation to enhance development. Also issues like the devolution of powers to reduce the concentration of power at the centre in order to enhance true

federalism will be highlighted as well as the need to promote fiscal federalism in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

- What are the past restructuring attempts in Nigeria's development efforts?
- What are the problems of Nigeria's development that necessitated the quest for restructuring?
- To what extent can we justify the call for restructuring the Nigerian system to enhance development?
- What are the strategies for restructuring the Nigerian federation to enhance development?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study focused on restructuring as a Panacea for Nigeria's development. The specific objectives include:

- To trace the past restructuring attempts in Nigeria's development efforts.
- To examine the problems of Nigeria's development that necessitated the quest for restructuring.
- To analyze the justification for restructuring the Nigerian system to enhance development.
- To determine the strategies for restructuring the Nigerian federation to enhance development.

The Significance of the Study

This will be discussed in two sub-headings namely theoretical and practical significances.

Theoretical Significance

This study will contribute to the growing literature on restructuring Nigeria as well as give clear strategies and suggestions on how this can be done to achieve national development.

Practical Significance

Nigeria's political policy makers will find this study very useful in formulating policies geared towards restructuring.

Operationalization of Concepts

Development

For the purpose of this study, development means a general improvement in the people's lives.

Federalism

For the purpose of this study, federalism is taken to mean the existence of two or more levels of government whose powers are defined by the constitution.

Restructuring

To simply put it, restructuring is the process of increasing or decreasing the number of component parts that make up a system and re-defining the inter-relationship between them in such a way that the entire system performs efficiently. However, restructuring, if not well planned and handled can lead to inefficiency or even system collapse (Okwu, 2017).

Unitary System

This refers to a political structure where power is concentrated at the centre with minor powers granted to the component parts by the constitution.

Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

Federalism and Political Restructuring: Meaning, Nature and Theoretical Base

Federalism refers to the mixed or compound mode of government, combining a general government (the central or 'federal' government) with sub regional governments in a single political system. Its distinctive feature, exemplified in the founding example of modern federalism of the United States of America under the Constitution of 1789, is a relationship of parity between the two levels of government established. It can thus be defined as a form of government in which there is a division of powers between two levels of government of equal status Olu (2017). The above position is well established by K.C Where; the globally acknowledged father of contemporary federal theories. (Where 1963 as cited in Olu 2017) defined federalism or federal government in his famous book, "Federal Government", as "the method of dividing power so that general and regional governments are each within a sphere coordinate and independent".

In fact, a common element of all definitions of federalism is the recognition of the existence of a central as well as other equally independent units of government. Federalism is distinguished from co-federalism, in which the general level of government is subordinate to the regional level, and from devolution within a unitary state, in which the regional level of government is subordinate to the general level. It represents the central form in the pathway of regional integration or separation, bounded on the less integrated side by co-federalism and on the more integrated side by devolution within a unitary state Olu (2017).

In a federation, the division of powers between federal and sub national governments is usually outlined in the constitution. Almost every country allows some degree of sub national self-government. In federations the right to self-government of the component states is often constitutionally entrenched. Component states often also possess their own constitutions which they may amend as they deem fit, although in the event of conflict the federal constitution usually takes precedence.

Where's formulation of federalism is been drawn correctly from the United States of America which is regarded by him (and accepted globally) as the archetype of Federal government. Since other formulations of federalism from other scholars are variations of his work, the basic tenets or elements of federalism according to K.C Where will be used as a template to determine Nigerian federalism and the extent to which Nigeria has fulfilled the basic tenets of federalism.

The basic tenets according to him are:

- There must be at least two levels of governments and there must be constitutional division of powers among the levels of governments.
- Each level of government must be co-ordinate and independent.
- Each level of government must be financially independent. He argued that this will afford each level of government the opportunity of performing its function without depending or appealing to the others for financial assistance.
- There must be Supreme Court of the independent judiciary. He argued that in terms of power sharing, there is likely to be conflict hence, there must be independent judiciary to resolve the case.
- In term of the amendment of the constitution, no levels of government should have undue power over the amendment process.
- Where maintained that, once a country is able to satisfy these conditions, such country is said to practice federalism.

The thrust of Where's conception is the emphasis on decentralisation, through the devolution of powers to different geographical level within the federal arrangement. This position is in line with the submission that the notion of decentralisation is far more important than as to whether it is a "particular political or constitutional order".

Other perspectives of Federalism also exist. Arguing from a Sociological perspective, William (2012) submits that: The essential nature of federalism is to be sought for not in the shading of legal and constitutional terminology but in forces economic, social, political and cultural that makes the outward forms of federalism necessary. The essence of federalism lies not in the constitutional or institutional structure but in the society itself... Federal government is a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected.

He went further to pinpoint the distinguishing characteristics of federalism which he located in the territorial demarcation of diversities. According to him: The diversities may be distributed among the members of a society in such a fashion that certain attitudes are found in particular territorial areas, or they may be scattered widely throughout the whole of the society. If they are grouped territorially, that is geographically, the result may be society that is federal if they are not grouped territorially then the society cannot be said to be federal, but in the former case only can this take the form of Federalism or federal government in the latter case it becomes functionalism, pluralism or some form of corporatism.

To Elazer (2016) the ideals of federalism flourish more, in an atmosphere that guarantees deliberative and consociation processes. He observes that: Federation can only exist where there is considerable tolerance of diversity and willingness to take political action through conciliation even when the power to act unilaterally is available. Elazer acknowledged diversity among the component units and believes that their coming together must be on the basis of their willingness and voluntarism rather than imposition of the arrangement on the people. Elazer also takes cognizance of the inevitability of strains and stresses in the group relation and therefore the need for compromise and reconciliation. In the view of Friedrich (2015) federalism emphasizes:... a process rather than a design... any particular design or pattern of competencies or jurisdiction is merely aphasia, a short run view of a continually evolving political reality... "if thus

understood as the process of federalizing it will become apparent that federation may be operating in both the direction of integration and differentiation” Friedrich (2015).

The significant thrust of Friedrich’s postulation is therefore predicated on the belief that federalism is a dynamic rather than a rigid process. As no Nation or state has a stagnant nature, but rather, all are regarded as neither unitary nor federal. It is believed that states belong to a spectrum which is at one end absolutely unitary and of the other absolutely federal. In this sense, the British unitary system has some elements of federalism while the American and Nigerian federal system have some attributes of unitarism.

The mere presence of a federal arrangement of governmental powers and political structures does not however, suggest that federalism has taken root. It must among other things, be able to guarantee and allow for the preservation of regional autonomy and the right to self-rule without foreclosing the possibilities of shared rule.

The moment the above condition is missing, as is the case with Nigeria where Federalism remains so only in name, the polity owes itself a duty to look inwards and restructure the praxis of federalism (politically, economically, structurally and functionally) to make it serve its intended purpose fully. Thus, the debate to restructure Nigeria or not is well beyond political rhetoric and ethnic diatribes.

According to (Amuwo, Agbaje, Suberu, and Herault 2010) "Political restructuring seems to be informed by the poor praxis of an admittedly formal federal system. In other words, the clamour for restructuring is more stringent, in countries with a federal form of government and perhaps also a federal constitution- but with a unitary practice”

The important factor that strengthens a state would therefore not necessarily be the existence of a constitution but the existence of a considerate and equitable political and economic relationship that exists to keep members of the union happy. The essence of restructuring a political union could therefore be hinged on governability.

Kolhi (2012) for instance considers restructuring as fallout of the desires of “how to create effective political institutions that can both accommodate diverse interests and provide effective government”. The aim therefore is to serve as a steering mechanism to properly give focus and locus to attempts at collective identity and distributive politics.

Apart from the above, restructuring is intended to lay a formal foundation for an impartial and an equitable sharing of the political space by the numerous ethnic nationalities that inhabit the federal states. By extension, the rights of both the majority and minority groups are catered for, thus hindering any group either based on geography or demography to dominate uncontrollably.

For the theoretical framework of this study, the elite theory of Vilfredo Pareto and the historical and dialectical materialism theory of Karl Marx were discussed while the elite theory was adopted. This is because these theories focus on who gets what in the society and who losses. This is the crux of political economy which focuses on the distribution of available resources in the political space.

Karl Marx’s Historical/Dialectical Materialism Theory

According to (Marx 1968 as cited in Ojobo 2005), historical events are the result of a continuous economic struggle between different classes of groups in a society and the struggle is a conflict between “the mode of production” and “the relations of production”. The mode of production conditions the social, political and intellectual life processes in

general. The mode of production refers ... to the way in which the means of production were owned and the social relations between men which resulted from their connections with the process of production. It also emphasizes “the importance of domination, exploitation, struggle and control between classes in any mode of production. Government and the state are instruments used to protect and promote the interest of those in control under capitalism – the bourgeoisie. The theory also emphasizes that the hierarchical structure of the society emanates from the established ways of organizing production and distribution in material and spiritual life, which ensures the unequal exploitation of nature and the results of human work by social classes and groups (Ojobo 2005).

Applying this theory to the analysis of our subject matter, it becomes a fact that the issue of restructuring is a fight between the haves – as it concerns resources and the have-nots. Some parts of the country refuse to accept restructuring for example some northern leaders believe that they may suffer when the southern part of this country are allowed to control their resources through restructuring. Not only that, the southern part of the country believe that the level of marginalization and low level of development in their land is anchored on the unitary federalism in practice in the Nigerian system.

The application of the historical materialism theory of Karl Marx is used here to explain how the Northern elites who are in control of power have dominated, controlled, shared and managed the Nigerian resources (especially crude oil resources) in the Southern parts of the country for their own advantage. It is the opinion of leaders of the Northern parts of the country that Nigeria should remain in the present structure; hence no need for restructuring. Not only that, the Southern parts of the country that are clamouring for restructuring as a panacea for enhancing development in Nigeria in general and in their regions in particular believe that when Nigeria implements federalism in its fullness or confederalism, such will have positive effects on Nigeria’s sustainable development, national integration and national transformation.

Elite Theory

The elite theory was propounded by Vilfredo Pareto in the early 20s and has been popularized by Gaetano Mosca, Roberts Michels, Karl Burnhaim, Wright Mills and Karl Marx to mention just a few people. The theory focused on the analysis of the political system in line with the domineering rule of political, economic and social elites in the society. The theory was employed because in the Nigerian system, the elites determine the political system, political structure and political arrangement in the entire system. Anything that will affect them and reduce their involvement or domination in political and economic decisions in most cases is not acceptable. This is as a result of the fact that the Nigerian business class, political class and high administrative classes have come to own, control and manage the means of production and distribution in the country.

According to Osi (2013), the main crux of elite theory is that in a society, there exists a minority of the population which takes the major political decisions in society. These elites may not be politicians in the general context of being directly involved in the policy making centres of government, either in executive or legislative capacity. He defined elites as including the wider circles of those who influence government decisions as well as those who formally decide policies. The important point of controversy is not that the elites take decision perse; but that they constitute the minority in the society and no matter what the majority does it can never control the minority elites.

The elites regard power as being cumulative. Power gives access to more power. Power becomes the ultima ratio and a means to obtain their social goods like wealth, economic influence, status and educational advantages for their children. Both wealth and educational opportunities will tend to maintain the elites domination in subsequent generations, converting it into a hereditary caste. This helps to increase the distance between the elites and other groups. This theory was employed because the nature of the Nigerian Federation today is an elite arrangement. The elites believe that the unitary federal system in practice in Nigeria favours them politically and economically. In this case, it becomes difficult and even impossible for the Nigerian elites to accept the quest for restructuring. They believe that restructuring arrangement will give power to the region/states and thereby making power more available/accessible to the grassroots where the majority of the masses belong.

For instance, majority of the serving governors, senators, ministers and other high ranking executive, legislative and judicial personnel will not accept the quest for restructuring. To them, the restructuring arrangement will not enable them to have high level of power (politically and economically) as they have at present. They believe that restructuring may disengage them from their powerful positions, and that accepting the restructuring arrangement may mean accepting to be ruled by the middle class or the masses who are highly marginalized in the present political/federal arrangements. Therefore, if the goals of development in Nigeria must be achieved, if the goals of sustainable growth and transformation must be achieved in Nigeria and if the goals of sustainable democracy and integration must be achieved in our system; the elites have to accept the present quest for restructuring so as to enhance Nigeria's development.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed content and documentary analysis. This is because the study is based on secondary data only. These secondary sources of data include textbooks, journal articles, periodicals, magazines and newspapers. The documentary sources include the 1999 Constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria. In this direction, the data analysis method employed is descriptive and qualitative in nature which focused on explaining and discussing the secondary data collected.

Past Restructuring Attempts in the Nigerian Federation

Okwu (2017) identified the following restructuring which have taken place in Nigeria.

Tafawa Balewa (1960-1965)

(Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe as Gov-General/ Ceremonial President)

a) Creation of Mid-Western Region from the then Western Region — Political Restructuring

General Aguiyi Ironsi: Jan 1966-July 1966(6 months)

- Abolished the federating regions by Decree 32. Suspended Federal and regional parliaments. Power became concentrated at the center (political restructuring).
- Cancelled Native Authority Police (Administrative restructure(ng) in favour of a federal police force
- Federal Government took over control of revenue from natural resources and taxes from regional governments. Shared national income among the regions (economic restructuring)

- Started unitary government with a strong center and weaker regions, to enhance military dictatorship (political restructuring).

General Yakubu Gowon (July 1966-August 1975)

- Creation of 12 states to replace four regions — (major political restructuring)
- Universal free primary education (educational restructuring)
- Started with 50% derivation payment to oil producing states, — (fiscal/e-restructuring) (This was later gradually reduced to 13% over a few years)
- Changed currency from pounds to Naira (monetary restructuring)
- Promulgated the indigenization decree (economic restructuring)
- NCE introduced (educational restructuring)
- NYSC introduced (socio-administrative restructuring)
- Takeover of schools owned by private or religious organizations (edu-restructuring)
- Created Ministry of Petroleum Resources (administrative restructuring)

General Murtala Mohammed (July 1975-Feb 1976)

- Started the process of relocating the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja (political / administrative restructuring).
- Started the process of drafting a new constitution for Nigeria (political restructuring).
- Created additional states (political restructuring).

General Olusegun Obasanjo (1st Reign)

- Finalized and approved the change from British parliamentary to American Present system as recommended by Nigerians through the 49-member constitution draft committee and endorsed by the constituent assembly (major political restructuring)
- Land Use Decree: Takeover of urban land from land owners by Government handing it over to State Governors (socio-economic restructuring)
- Strengthened and formalized an independent third tier of government — Local executive arm (chairmen/supervisory councilors) and legislative arm (councilors local government house of assemblies and making laws) — major political restructuring.
- Moved the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja in principle (Political/admin restructuring)
- Introduced the sharing of central revenue among 3 tiers of government (Federal, States & LGAs) — Fiscal restructuring
- Introduced free tuition in Federal Tertiary Institutions (Educational restructuring)

- OND and HND merged into one qualification (Educational restructuring)
- JAMB established (educational restructuring)
- Established the umbrella labour union NLC for junior workers. (Socio-economic restructuring)

Shehu Shagari (Oct 1979-Dec 1983)

- Introduced Minister of State portfolio — (Administrative restructuring)
- Introduced the 6-3-3-4 education system — (Educational restructuring)
- Reversed OND/HND merger.(educational de-structuring)
- Established Federal Character Principle in federal appointments (political restructuring)
- Cancelled Federal Scholarship scheme (Educational restructuring)
- Created Ministry of Science and Technology (administrative restructuring)

Major-General Buhari/Tunde Idiagbon

No major landmark decision or restructuring was done during their short tenure implemented only minor administrative changes such as war against indiscipline, bringing corrupt civil servants to book, introduced death penalty for drug trafficking, and implemented strict control of access to foreign exchange.

General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993)

- Liberalized access to foreign exchange by introducing auctions for foreign exchange (economic restructuring leading to 400 % devaluation of Naira within 24 hours)
- Released the determination of naira exchange rate to market forces rather than government forces (monetary restructuring)
- Finally cancelled derivation principle for oil producing areas
- Replaced derivation with the Creation of OMPADEC (now NNDC) so that government can directly develop the Niger Delta region (Fiscal/economic restructuring)
- Created Federal Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Commission (Administrative restructuring)
- Attempted to enforce 2-party system for Nigeria (failed political restructuring).
- Breaking of NITEL monopoly and creation of NCC thereby attracting private investment into telecoms (major economic restructuring)
- Breaking of NTA monopoly and creating of Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, private investment into broadcasting (socio-economic restructuring)
- Creation of Zayyad —led TCPC to privatize or commercialize government industry parastatals (fiscal and economic restructuring)

- Decrease the year of service for qualifying for pension from 15 to 10 years and from 10 to 5 years (administrative restructuring)
- Approved 100% of terminal salary as pension for army generals, permanent secretaries and university professors (Administrative restructuring).

Ernest Shonekan. August 1993-Nov 1993

No time to implement any restructuring during his 3 months tenure.

Abacha Nov 1993 to June 1998

- Created 6 additional states and additional local governments (political restructuring)
- Introduced value added tax (economic restructuring)

Gen Abdusalam Abubakar June 1998- May 1999

- Drafted a new constitution for Nigeria by modifying the 1979 constitution
- Removed local government autonomy through joint account with state government (fiscal restructuring)
- Licensed the first private university (Igbinedion University, Okada) (edu-restructuring)

General Olusegun Obasanjo (2nd Coming) (May 1999-May 2007)

- Restored 13% Derivation to oil producing areas by sponsoring an executive National Assembly bill (geo-fiscal restructuring). The same bill also extended to other solid minerals extracted in non-oil-producing areas.
- Created Ministry of Niger Delta (administrative restructuring)
- Started full and all-out privatization of Government parastatals (economic restructuring)
- Implemented full monetization of Federal Civil Servant's fringe benefits (e-restructuring)
- Started the contributory pension scheme for civil servants (administrative restructuring)
- Established EFCC (restructuring of security apparatus)
- Introduced 8-year tenure for Federal civil servants (Directors and above)
- Created Excess crude oil account (Fiscal restructuring)

Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua (May 2007-May 2010)

His short-lived reign did not allow him to implement any major restructuring.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (May 2010 - May 2015)

No major restructuring done during his 6-year reign. However, the government was in the process of restructuring as it organized the 2014 national CONFAB. The agreement and consensus of the CONFAB was handed over to President Mohammed Buhari for implementation. But, nothing has been done yet.

The Problems of Nigeria's Development that Necessitated the Quest for Restructuring

Division of powers between the central, state and local governments: The fact that the federal government usually exercises superior powers over the federating units remains a source of conflict and problem in the Nigeria federation which discourages nation building. Adedeji (2007) succinctly opines that a federation is a process of bringing about a dynamic equilibrium between the centrifugal and centripetal forces in a society and it entails continuous adjustments between the federal government and the government of the component units. The situation demands constant adjustment but the constitution is unimpressively rigid.

The problem(s) of National integration: it is pertinent to note that since amalgamation, the country has not quite functioned as one because of tribalism and ethnicity that are enemies of good nation building. "Tribalism is a term used in most post colonial African countries to denote animosity between members of different groups. By its very nature, tribalism is a radicalized construct. That is, it is a term that has its root in disunity and lack of oneness. Tribalism emerges only in situations where there are many tribes or tribesmen. This animosity among different tribes in Nigeria mars the federal system of government. It is also responsible for the constant calls for the dissolution of the federation. Another major problem of federalism in Nigeria is politics of "**Revenue Allocation**": There is no doubt that the struggle between the different levels of government and ethnic groups who are anxious to have the lion's share of the National wealth is a problem. It is imperative to note that since there has been no acceptable formula for the equitable sharing of the national wealth, the problem continues to be a nagging one. It is also worthy to note that different revenue commissions set up to look into this reoccurring problems shows how deep rooted the matter has been in Nigerian politics.

The problems of minorities and uneven development: The minorities in Nigeria continue to complain that the amalgamation was an imposition, that they were not consulted nor did they give their consent. The problem of the minorities stem from their fear that they will never be given a chance to lead. It is salient to point that the majority groups seem to have compounded the problems. Ibuluagbe (2007) observes that "the Ogonis issues are a symbol of what Nigeria does to her minorities, more especially the minorities in the oil bearing areas. Meanwhile, other parts of Nigeria are booming, thanks to Ogoni Oil.

Obiora (2008), identified the following problems:

The problem of satisfactory power division among the various levels of government: This is the major problem which Nigeria has been facing in her practice of federalism. There is no agreement among the various levels as to the clear line of demarcation between those issues considered to be of common interest and those considered to be of local interest.

The problem of effective safeguard against the possible encroachment on the sphere of influence by one level of government on those of others: In Nigeria, most formal institutions are deliberately subverted especially by the central authority for example, the Supreme Court which is supposed to be the most important institution to function as safeguard against such encroachment, is often manipulated especially through the use of certain inducements to some of the justices, by the central authorities to give judgment favorable to the central authorities against the component units.

The Problem of how to sufficiently Protect Smaller units against Dominance by the Larger Ones: Since the units are not equal or identical in size and population, the tendency is that the larger units have and indeed exercise predominant influence in legislation, which itself is the basics of governance.

The Problem of the Organization of the Relationship between the Centre and the Units: This is the centrality of federalism. In actual practice, there really does not exist such mutual independence in Nigeria. This is because some of those legislative subjects allotted to the different levels usually are such that their actual implementations create room for several contacts between the central government and the government of the components units.

Problems Associated with the Organization of the Relations Among the Components Units: In a federal system, the formal division of governmental powers is usually designed to guarantee mutual independence between the centre and the component units. This is somewhat problematic in application in Nigeria as powers are not adequately specified.

The Problem of Satisfactory and Acceptable Revenue Formula: This is one of the most critical and often recurrent problems in the Nigerian federation. The problem derives from the question as to how to devise a formula or revenue allocation system which will be satisfactory and acceptable by both the centre and the units thus this has over the years led to internal crises in the country

Justification for Restructuring of Nigeria's Federation to Enhance Development

There are many reasons to justify the call for restructuring. Some of these reasons include:

- **High Level of Poverty and Unemployment in Nigeria:** In the Nigerian system, the poverty and unemployment rates are too high. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (as at 2016), 110 million Nigerians are poor and 29% are unemployed. The reason for this is the emphasis on the federal government; hence the federating units (states and local governments) become ineffective and inactive to effectively make and implement policies that could alleviate poverty and unemployment.
- **Too Much Power at the Centre against the State/Local Governments:** The unitary nature of the Nigerian federalism concentrated power at the centre. This means that the federal government has more than 50% of resources accruing to the federation account leaving states and local government to less than 50%. The situation has made it possible that states and local governments are financially handicapped to perform their functions, thereby leaving them and rural areas underdeveloped; hence the need for restructuring.
- **The States and Local Governments Joint Account and its Implications:** There is need to abolish state and local government joint account to enhance Nigeria's development. The joint account system was brought into being through an act of the national assembly known as "allocation of revenues (federation accounts etc) act 1981 (Daily Trust, July, 27, 2006). The same act established what is today known as Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC), currently chaired by one Chief Olukayode Anjorin. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria also stipulated the legislative power over public funds, especially on SJLGA, in section 162, Sub-section 18. Specifically, section 5 8 of the constitution states:

The amount standing to the credit of local government councils in the federation account shall also be allocated to the states for the benefits of their local government councils on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the national assembly.

Each state shall maintain a specific account to be called “state joint local government account” to which shall be paid all allocations to the local government councils of the state from the federation account and from the government of the state.

Each state shall pay to the local government councils in its area of jurisdiction such proportion of its total revenue on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the national assembly.

The amount standing to the credit of local government councils of a state shall be distributed among the local government councils of the state on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the house of assembly of the state.

But decree No 160 of 1992, sub-section 5(2) specifically stated that the 10% of each state’s internally generated revenue payable to the local government councils in the state shall be distributed among the local governments in the state on such terms and in such manner as the state house of assembly may prescribe. Nevertheless, up till year 2000 when there was no joint account committees, local government councils picked up the cheques for their allocations from the federal pay offices (FPOS) in their respective states. These FPOS religiously kept records of all the allocations collected and the accountant General’s office still publishes such remittances/disbursements to states and local governments for public consumption at regular intervals. (Daily Trust, July 27, 2006).

Those provisions introducing the joint account system since 1981 had remained silent and unimplemented by the states due to the constant interruptions of the military in the political process. However, on resumption of civilian democracy from May 1999, some interest groups with obvious ulterior motives for the allocations prevailed on the state chief executives who adopted the sections of the 1999 constitution dealing on the state joint local government accounts and consequently set-up the joint account system in their respective states (This day July 21, 2006). The implication of joint account includes:

- The laws made by the State houses of Assembly to bring the State Joint Local government Account (SJLGA) into force are usually tilted to favour state executives thereby compounding the already distressed financial positions of the councils.
- The key officers of the Joint Account Committee set up by the State governors are state government representatives who function on the directives of the State Chief Executives with little or no control from the Council Chairmen who are the statutory owners of the fund as the chief accounting officers of their Local Governments.
- Most of the Local Government councils were not even represented in the Joint Account Allocation Committee (JAAC).
- The Council chairmen who are the chief accounting officers of their respective Local Governments were never briefed as to how much accrued to their councils monthly from the Federation Account before sharing.

- Substantial amounts of the allocations from FAAC to each of the Local Government Councils were deducted at source in the name of Joint projects or any other contrived reasons. (This Day, July 21, 2006).

Strategies for Restructuring the Nigerian Federation to Enhance Development

The major point to discuss in the restructuring of the Nigerian Federation to enhance development is going back to **regional system of government**. Nigeria already has six geopolitical zones. For that, it will be easier for the country's leadership, ethnic nationalities and citizens to agree and go back to regional system of government so as to enhance development in every region of the federation. This simply means quasi independence for the regions; hence the ethnic nationalities/regions should be allowed to make their distinct development/economic policies, harness and utilize resources within their environment, give some percentage (say may be 20%) of their revenue generated to the federal government. Going back to regional system of government will enhance development in Nigeria because:

It will help in Reducing the Power at the Center in Favour of the Region/State: When we restructure by reducing the power at the center, it promotes national development from the grassroot. We already have geo-political zones. Why don't we have say 6 or 8 regions from that template, enable the regions exercise the functions presently being exercised by the Federal Government in the various States and co-ordinate such functions and utilize economies of scale. Each region should be at liberty to create more states in their region as their constitution stipulates. Minority rights will be entrenched in the Federal Constitution to protect minorities in the regions and enable them evolve into States.

We do not need bi-cameral National assembly, the regional assembly can act as checks and balances on the unicameral National Assembly on issues and functions presently exercised by the present bi-cameral National Assembly chamber. We will reduce costs and also enable closer engagement with the electorate from the regions.

The military command after the civil war unitarised the country and diminished the percentage of the formula of derivation. For instance in 1946 the derivation formula for the regions which controlled their resources was 100 per cent, while in 1951 the British recommended 50 per cent derivation, whereas in 1953 the western region actually disbursed a 100 percent of resources they controlled (Obioro, 2008).

The 50 per cent derivation continued from 1960 at independence up to 1970 when Gen. Yakubu Gowon reduced the derivation formula to 45 percent and by 1975 it was reduced to 25 per cent. Nigerians should know that by the first coming of Gen. Buhari it had crashed to 15 percent and thereafter it moved to 13 percent. With the increase of states from 12 to 36 by the military class, and the accumulation of the legislative list to the central government, the Nigerian states today have become so pauperised as appendages that they cannot even pay the salaries of their workers let alone their gratuities and pensions.

Therefore, the Nigerian Unitary system of administration which we have now is not only an illegal constitutional contraption, but also an unworkable political system and a harbinger of a perverse, chaotic, political and economic conundrum. Under these unitary systems Nigerians are getting poorer and poorer. The issue of restructuring of Nigeria's political system is already partly documented in the 2014 Abuja Confab which has been endorsed by the federal executive council under former President Jonathan, and handed over to President Buhari.

- **Enhance Diversification of Nigeria's Economy:** It is the role of Nigeria's political leaders to diversify Nigeria's economy so that the country can earn revenue through other sources – such as agriculture, industrialization, solid minerals etc and not only oil sector. This is one way to recover from the present economic recession in Nigeria.
- **Promote Competitive Federalism in Nigeria:** The Nigerian political leaders have the function of promoting economic development in Nigeria by encouraging true/competitive federalism in the country. This entails allowing ethnic nationalities/states to harness the resources within their environment and give federal government some percentage. Also, there should be more devolution of powers from the centre to the states.
- **Promote Democratic Practices in the Country:** The practice of democracy promotes national development. Therefore, Nigeria's political leaders have the function to encourage, promote and sustain democratic practices so as to achieve national development in Nigeria.
- **Enhance Effective Policy Making and Implementation at the Regional/State Level:** Here, each region or state will know that it has no body to blame when its leaders refuse to pragmatically promote development policies. Nigeria has made numerous policies since independence aimed at enhancing economic development. But, the area of implementation has been problematic. Therefore, the political leaders should make policies and implement them so as to reduce unemployment in Nigeria, reduce poverty, encourage industrialization, and encourage national development. It will be the role of political leaders in the regional level in Nigeria to encourage industrialization and promote the export of industrial products as that will serve as avenue for economic/national development in the country.
- **Help in Reducing Corruption in Nigeria in General and Regional Levels in Particular:** Since every component unit will develop at its own pace, the political leaders at the regional level will understand the need to avoid corruption. Corruption is one of the basic problems of Nigeria's development. The country should be restructured by making sure that the system is strong to avoid corruption. The consequences of corruption on a nation's socio-political and economic development are myriad. The foremost effect of corruption is that it not only leads to a reduction in economic growth and development by lowering incentives to invest, it also leads to divestment in such economies. Serious investors are always wary of offering bribes before being allowed investment rights or operational licenses. This is due to the fact that there is no guarantee that greased officials may keep their side of the agreement, and with no official cover to redress in case of contract breach, the fleeced investor is on his own (Eppelle, 2006). Applied to the above is the fact that foreign investors are also prone to withdraw their capital from a country with high incidence of corruption because the risk involved in doing business in such nations sometimes far outweighs the benefits.

Granted that it has been argued that corruption provides both local and foreign investors the leverage to surmount bureaucratic impediments, yet the number of such successful deals is a far cry from the avalanche of investors that have been stripped of their hard earned money. Corruption also alters the pattern of government expenditure. Experience has shown that in highly corrupt countries, officials allocate government funds more into large and hard-to-manage projects, such as airports or highways than on social services like health and education. It has been a stumbling block to people enjoying the social fruits of good governance (Ibrahim, 2007).

Corruption contributes immensely to inhibition of economic performance; it negatively affects investment and economic growth, which is antithetical to national development. If corruption discourages investment, limits economic growth and alters the composition of government spending, it unconsciously hinders future economic growth and sustainable development (SelloTmam, 2009). Corruption contributes to the problem of mass poverty and renders millions of Nigerian citizens unemployed and uneducated. It is a truism that mass poverty has been a breeding ground for all forms of extremism in the frequent outbreak of ethno-religious violence in some parts of Nigeria (Obadan, 2008).

Enhance Autonomy at the Local Government Level: Autonomy in a federal system of government entails that each government tier enjoys a separate existence and independence from the control of other governments tiers (Nwabueze, 2007). In this sense, local government autonomy implies that a local government should exist as an independent entity in the sense of being able to exercise its own will in the conduct of its affairs from direction of another government. It also implies that the local governments possess the power to take decisions within the limits of the law that established it without being dictated to or influenced by external authorities like the state or the federal government.

In the specific case of Nigeria, local government autonomy entails that the local governments as federating units should not exist as an appendage of either the state or federal government (Abada, 2007). This means that local government autonomy is realized in a situation where it is not constitutionally bound to accept dictation or directive from another government tier (Adeyemo, 2008).

It is necessary to note that the two important aspects of the local government autonomy are the political/administrative/ autonomy and the financial autonomy. These aspects of the autonomy are envisaged to guarantee effective running of the local government and to enhance its ability to perform assigned constitutional functions. It is also important to state that there are other various issues in the political/administrative and financial autonomy like the freedom to recruit and manage their own staff, the freedom to generate revenue within their assigned sources and to determine and authorize their annual budgets. The focus of our discourse here will, however, specifically border only on the autonomy as it concerns the freedom of the local government to have direct access and full control of the statutory allocation from the federation account and its freedom to organize and determine its political and electoral affairs.

CONCLUSIONS

The Nigerian Unitary system of administration which we have now is not only an illegal constitutional contraption, but also an unworkable political system and a harbinger of a perverse, chaotic, political and economic conundrum. Under this unitary system Nigerians are getting poorer and poorer. In this direction, President Buhari administration should enhance restructuring of Nigeria's federalism so as to make it effective for desired development.

We conclude that there is a great need for restructuring so as to enhance Nigeria's development. It is a fact that we already have geo-political zones. Why don't we have say 6 or 8 regions from that template, enable the regions exercise the functions presently being exercised by the Federal Government in the various states and co-ordinate such functions and utilize economies of scale. Each region should be at liberty to create more states in their region as their constitution stipulates. When this is done, the numerous problems facing Nigeria today will be reduced significantly and there will be pragmatic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The restructuring pattern that Nigeria should tow will have to be one that transfers more power to the people. The needed restructuring should not only be in terms of fiscal relationship between the centre and the component parts (i.e the states) but also structurally to balance the locus of powers in terms of states per geo-political zone and also address the inequitable number of existing local governments.
- There is a dire need for devolution of powers from the centre to the six geo-political zones. The six zones should have full control of matters of health, education, industrial development policy, power, agriculture, transport infrastructure, local policing, revenue mobilization, mining, investment guarantees, local taxes and then leave the federal government in Abuja to decide only matters of national defence, foreign affairs, immigration, international cooperation, national security and others.
- There is a need to promote fiscal federalism by moving more resources to the states and local government.
- There is a need to guarantee the autonomy of local governments both politically and financially.
- The immunity clause for the President, Vice-President and Governors should be removed to encourage accountability.

These measures will help to empower people at different levels to develop according to their human and material resources and at their own pace. This will very likely unleash the energies and creativity of the people in giving expression to requirements for truer diversification of the national economy.

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