

FEDERALISM AND RESTRUCTURING IN NIGERIA: THE CONTENDING ISSUES AND REALITIES

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Abstract

This study carefully examined the practice of federalism in Nigeria against the observable variables which make restructuring imperative. It applied the conflict theory analysis which perceives material and socio-political deprivations as having the proclivity to crystallize in conflict between the federal and state governments. It found out that there is federal dominance and practices that are not compatible with the practice of true federalism in Nigeria and consequently recommendations which include the necessity to create additional states and allow the federating units to harness the resources in their areas and pay royalties to the federal government were made.

Keywords: Federalism, Restructuring, Ethnic Dominance, Structural Imbalance, Marginalization, Fiscal Federalism, Resource Control.

Introduction

Federalism is widely seen as an appropriate form of government in societies characterized with cultural diversity such as Nigeria. It is a governmental arrangement that recognizes levels of governments that exercise control over their constitutional spheres of authority. Wheare quoted in Uchendu (2004) avers that Federalism is “the method of dividing powers so that the general and regional governments are each within a sphere coordinate and independent” (p. 244). Federalism presupposes a structural arrangement that envelops the centripetal and centrifugal forces in a plural society and is confronted with the onerous task of reconciling the outcomes emanating from the dynamics of the forces. It is evident that in a

culturally differentiated society there are bound to be struggles and agitations in relation to how the governmental arrangement should best be structured. Jinadu (1979) explains that “federalism is usually viewed as a form of governmental and institutional structure deliberately designed by political architects to cope with the twin but difficult task of maintaining unity while also preserving diversity” (p.15).

Most social discourses and intellectual debates on the form of government that would be most favourable to Nigeria revolve around federalism. The point being made is that federalism is mostly seen as the form of governmental arrangement that should be applied in the Nigerian State. The adoption of the federal system in 1954 as a form of government for Nigeria cannot therefore be seen in any way as an error of judgment or a misguided decision.

Onwudiwe and Sklar (2005) writes that “federalism is almost an article of faith for Nigerian political thinkers, yet, debates about the form and nature of federalism in Nigeria feature an array of conflicting ideas that negate the possibility of a national consensus or orthodox viewpoint for the country as a whole” (p. 165). Indeed, the practice of federalism in Nigeria has engendered controversies which have given rise to ethnic agitations and demands for restructuring. The heights of the agitations have come in the form of agitation for the dissolution of the Nigerian state and recognition of Biafra as a sovereign state. This resulted in the civil war that lasted from 1967-1970 between the secessionist east and the federal side. This agitation has continued years after the war as groups such as the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have continued the agitation for the freedom of the South East from marginalization in the Nigerian state.

The oil producing states of the South-South Nigeria otherwise referred to as the Niger Delta people have made series of demands on the Nigerian state for restructuring which have boldly found expression in their demand for resource control. The Nigeria federal structure, abinitio made the north to have hegemonic influence over the country which has attracted the condemnation of other regions and resulted in an enduring acrimony. Beside, the foundational structural defect which engendered imbalance amongst the regions, the military takeover of the reins of powers which was dominated by the military officers of northern

origin played a great role in entrenching imbalances and structural problems that would long remain the bane of the Nigerian federalism. The military through its centralized and authoritarian rule emasculated all the powers of the component units and applied same to the advantage of the north over other regions. The long years of this despotic rule by the northern military oligarchs built structural tendencies that place the Nigerian state on a tinder box. Nwachukwu (2004) remarks that “the military ruled this country for the about thirty years. Hiding under the power of none legislative actions and decisions, they used the opportunity to pursue ethnic hegemony by establishing ethnic dominance through the concentration of government appointments, industries, contract awards, scholarships, huge loans, good roads etc. in some ethnic regions. This was made possible because their people are at the apex and in control of the subsequent military governments” (p.236). It is a truism that federalism as a form of government ought to be a product of and nourished by democracy. This is so because the division of powers among the component units should have constitutional backing which is an ingredient of democracy and a feature which authoritarian regimes are averse to. K.C. Wheare contends that “federalism demands forms of government which have the characteristics usually associated with democratic or free government” (Olufemi 2005, p. 70). Both in the republics and the juntas regimes in Nigeria, the issue of the nature and structure of the Nigerian federalism have been a lingering problem that have crystallized in the convening of conferences to address the divisive forces that have the tendency to destabilize the Nigerian state.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Nigerian state with its glaring characteristic of entrenched cultural cleavage and diversity came into existence as a single political entity following the amalgamation of the protectorate of northern Nigeria and the colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria in 1914 by Lord Lugard. While Lord Lugard, owing to his military background and socio-political orientation of his home country preferred the centralized form of administration for the country brought into existence without the expression of the will of the native people, the unfolding realities constrained the succeeding colonial administrations to bow to the dynamics of change which eventually culminated in the metamorphosis that resulted in the full introduction of federalism in 1954 by the Lyttleton constitution.

Federalism enjoyed a general acceptance by the nationalists from the different ethnic nationalities/regions as a form of government imbued with the desirable potential to guarantee freedom, progress and ensure unity while the diversity of the people is preserved. However, since its inception there has been criticisms from different federating units on the structural imbalances and tendencies that could undermine the unity of the Nigerian state. The structural weaknesses of the Nigerian federalism have become an Achilles heel predisposing the political system to various shocks championed and sustained by ethnic nationalism. These non nationalistic and negatively decentralizing tendencies have left cracks on the Nigerian state and the resolution of the numerous challenges generated by the Nigerian federal structure has therefore, become an onerous task and a storm every administration would deploy ingenuity in contending with least the political system will be rocked. These structural defects that have attracted the attention of the federating units are located basically at the political and economic spheres as these have the capacity to impact on all others including infrastructure. In view of the foregoing, the following basic questions are asked:

- What fundamental characteristics should the Nigerian federalism possess?
- Why has it been difficult for Nigeria to evolve a generally acceptable structure in its federal practice?
- What impact has ethnic variables had on the Nigerian federal experience?
- What are the options to be explored in the effort to address the lingering problems arising from resource distribution in Nigeria?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has the under-listed objectives:

- To have a critical analysis of the structural configuration of the Nigerian federalism in relation to powers and functions allotted to the tiers of government.
- To unveil the structural defects of the Nigerian federalism that have made it susceptible to criticisms.
- To bring to the limelight the causes of agitations by different ethnic nationalities.
- To take a survey of the Nigerian fiscal landscape with the intent to ascertain the extent of fairness that have guided the operation of the fiscal federalism.
- To ascertain the extent of the conformity of the federalist practice in Nigeria with the federalist principles.

- To determine whether there exists the need for restructuring in the Nigerian federalism.
- To make useful recommendations that would contribute to the development of the discourses and debate on the subject.

METHOD OF GATHERING DATA

This study relied on data extracted from text books and internet sources. However, frantic effort was made to cross match the sources of information in order to assure the validity of the conclusions arrived at in the discourse.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the conflict theory which is mostly associated with Karl Marx who perceived conflict from the materialist perspective. The ensuing conflict between the classes gives rise to the emergence of new historical epochs. Other exponents of conflict theory are Ludwig Gumplowicz and Lester F. Ward. An internet source states that:

Two early conflict theorists were the Polish-Austrian sociologist and political theorist Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838-1909) and the American sociologist and paleontologist Lester F. Ward (1841-1913). Although Ward and Gumplowicz developed their theories independently they had much in common and approached conflict from a comprehensive anthropological and evolutionary point of view as opposed to Marx's rather exclusive focus on economic factors.

The integration of both perspectives enables one to better appreciate the scenarios in the Nigerian federal experience. Dibia (2000) explicates that “conflict theory and ethnic competition constitutes radical approaches to social and political problems. They put the call for change on the public agenda and suggest that custom, practice and tradition instead of being useful to an orderly society may create its problems. They start with the assumption that individual needs and potentials should be fulfilled. Any situation that interferes with the desired fulfillment is therefore seen as a social problem which should be examined. According to Peter Ekeh (1974), Richard Sklar (1993) Martin Marger (1997), Milton Esman (1994) and Saxton and Kaufmann (1971), the emphasis on conflict theory is upon restructuring society so that it can better fulfill the needs of its members rather than upon

adapting the individual or group to the existing order” (p.169). In the Nigerian federal state with its attribute of diversity, suspicion and distrusts have characterized the politics. There is therefore, an enduring conflict necessitating incessant calls for restructuring on diverse dimensions of the national life.

RESULTS

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERALISM IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian state emerged from the assemblage of ethnic nationalities that for long existed as separate entities with dissimilar cultural and political orientations. These distinct native political systems came under the British suzerainty at different times and were later brought together without proper consideration of the differences in their culture and level of development by the British colonial administration in sheer need to achieve administrative convenience for the British at the expense of some sections of the emerging country. Dibia (2000) writes that:

In 1914 Lord Lugard amalgamated the Northern and Southern provinces which had sophisticated indigenous citizenship into one unit called Nigeria. This integration was made for administrative convenience for the colonial administration (p.175).

Dibia (2000) further cites Dokun Jagun (1993) as stating that “the genesis of today’s discord over the fate the Nigeria was sown in the 1914 arbitrary amalgamation as well as the error of block independence granted in 1960 to a geographical entity called Nigeria. Thus, the tissue culture for the propagation of the virus of conflict was prepared in 1914” (p. 175). Having been lumped together, the Nigerian state was confronted with the expedient political engineering that would ensure the adoption of a form of government that would suit the diverse elements in the political system.

The Nigerian federalism therefore, emerged as a child of necessity because the socio-political diversity of the political system made federalism the most feasible option that would guarantee unity in diversity. Evidently, Lord Lugard and the succeeding colonial administrations preferred a centralized administration for Nigeria. Their passion for the unitary system of government was manifest. Thus, Sir Hugh Clifford, Graham Thompson, and Herbert R. Palmer were all inclined to the unitarist philosophy. Howbeit, Sir Bernard

Bourdillon who assumed the reins of powers following the exit of Sir Donald Cameron in 1935 laid the foundation of federalism by creating provinces. Thus, out of the then protectorate of Southern Nigeria, the Western and Eastern provinces were created while the North was left intact. Alli (2003) unveils that:

The foundation for federalism laid by Bourdillon was to be given full expression by Sir Arthur Richards who succeeded him in the 1946 constitution. According to Crowther... one key element in this constitution, which took effect from 1st January, 1947 was the recognition of the two twin problems confronting Nigerian at the time. These were:

- (i) the need to promote the unity of nation and
- (ii) the need to provide adequately within that unity for the diverse elements which make up the country (p. 74)

The federal system as pointed out elsewhere received favourable consideration from the Nigerian people from diverse backgrounds and culture who saw in federalism the potency to safeguard Nigerian unity and ensure that the diversity of the country is preserved. Osadolor (1998) remarks that:

The two main objectives of Nigerian nationalism, namely self government and the attainment of national unity, explain the background to the development of the federal idea. Because of the differences among Nigerian people in terms of language, religion, custom and tradition, historical background and the different stages of their development, majority of Nigerian legislators, in contributing to debates favoured a federal system that would give the regions or provinces the possibility of maintaining that identity while remaining part of a unified state (p. 37).

Under Sir Arthur Richard, federalism received more boost through the promulgation of the Richard's constitution of 1946 which integrated Nigeria under one legislative Council, established regional councils and importantly created regions that replaced the provinces. Alli (2003) observed that the "emerging administrative structure in 1946 constitution was defective because a component unit, the northern region was allowed to be twice as big as the other two units combined" (p.76). Sir John Macpherson who succeeded Sir Arthur Richards and promulgated the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 advanced Nigeria further on the path of federalism. The central legislature was known as the House of Representatives and consisted of the Governor as the President, 6 ex-officio members, 136 members elected

through the Regional houses and 6 special members nominated by the Governor to represent the interests of communities that are not adequately represented. In the legislature consisting of 136 members the north alone elected 68 members which is half of the membership. This reflects a defective federal structure that has the propensity to engender conflicts that would endanger the unity of the country which is one of the reasons for opting for the federal system. Ojo (1985) writes that:

The regional imbalance with three main ethnic groups, the Hausas in the North, the Ibos in the East and the Yorubas in the West created undue fears, for the East and the West felt threatened by the preponderance of the population of the North, while the minorities also at the approach of independence did not feel sufficiently safe at the hands of the various Regional Governments once the paternalising hands of the British colonial administration were withdrawn. This arrangement violates one federal principle which John Stuart Mill had commented upon when he said of federalisms 'there should not be any one state so much more powerful than the rest as to be capable of having in strength with many of them combined. If there be such a one and only one, it will insist in being master of the joint deliberations. If there be two, they will be irresistible when they agree and whenever they differ everything will be decided by a struggle for ascendancy between the rivals' (p.13).

The foregoing structural imbalance in the Nigerian state which of course is a deviation from the structural principles and norm of federalism has remained the underlying and/or root cause of many problems in the Nigerian state. Thus, even with the introduction of full fledged federalism in 1954 following the introduction of the Lyttleton Constitution, the structural imbalance persisted and was carried over to independence and/or post colonial administration. Despite the balkanization of the regions through state creation, the foremost structural composition of the Nigerian federalism has continued to reflect on the present events beaming lights of conflict between ethnic dominance and marginalization. It is imperative to point out that the early years of the Nigerian federalism was characterized by the presence of strong regional governments and a centre that was relatively weak. Ekpe (2002) notes that:

From 1954 to 1966... the Regional Governments were then very powerful as they controlled substantial portions of the national resources and wealth as well as experienced crops of civil servants. Whereas Local Government within the

period under discourse were creatures of the Regional Governments, which had power to create, control and abolish them at will (p. 143)

As it were on January 15th 1966, the military ousted the civilian administration in a coup and assumed the reins of power. This upturned the Nigerian federalism and resulted in the emergence of the centralized federal arrangement where almost all powers were arrogated to the centre in a manner characteristic of the military command culture.

THE MILITARY AND THE NIGERIAN FEDERALISM

The Nigerian state started the practice of federalism fully in 1954 and six years later in 1960 the colonial powers granted the country independence. However, the fledgling state was soon engulfed in political upheavals which climaxed with the Western regional crises of 1965. The foregoing was believed to have been one of the factors that prompted the military takeover of power in a coup that claimed the lives of the political leaders of the Northern and Western regions. This first coup which took place on 15th January, 1966 was led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and the failed coup brought General J.T.U Aguiyi Ironsi an Igbo man to power. General Ironsi who assumed the reins of power following the coup quickly started driving the state towards centralization as he introduced the unification decree No. 34 of 1966 which sought to make Nigeria a unitary state. Ironsi's decision to tilt towards more unification in an environment where the other major ethnic groups felt that their elites had been cleared from the political scene to the advantage of the Igbo ethnic group was faulty and that eventually contributed to his downfall. Alli (2003) explains vividly that:

When the military seized power in Nigeria on 15th January 1966, the character of the Nigerian federalism was to be fundamentally damaged. The ascendancy of the military in national politics signaled the total loss of legitimacy by the political class. General Aguiyi Ironsi who became the new Head of State in the aftermath of the failed coup d'état began a process that was to transform the relatively loose regionalized federal arrangement of Nigeria into one with a strong center. He took the first wrong step when he promulgated the rather radical Decree No. 34 of May 1966 otherwise known as the unification Decree, which abolished the regions and federalism and introduced a unitary form of government (p. 80).

The military officers of northern origin saw the coup of 15th January, 1966 as a ploy by the Igbo military officers to enthrone Igbo ascendancy hence a counter coup was plotted by the

northern officers on 29th July 1966, which culminated in the killing of General Ironsi and the emergence of General Yakubu Gowon as the new military Head of State. Gowon reinstated federalism by reversing the Decree 34 through the constitution (suspension and modification) Decree No. 9 of 1966. The military ascendancy to political power evidently culminated in the decimation of some governmental arrangements and structures and therefore centralization which is akin to the military command culture gained prominence in the Nigerian political system even with the reinstatement of federalism. Ihonvbere (2003) asserts that:

It will not be wrong to conclude that the military has practically ruined the political future of Nigeria. Of course, it is still possible to correct the terrible legacies of military brutality, mismanagement, corruption and negative politicking. With the first intervention in politics in 1966, the military not only set the basis for eroding all structures and features of federalism but also began to build new authoritarian structures and attitudes derived from its grossly undemocratic, intolerant and commandist nature and structure (p. 199)

The Gowon administration was inundated with severe challenges that threatened the existence of the country as one sovereign nation. The prevailing situation which included the marginalization and massacre of the Igbos became a big threat to the existence of the federal state. On 30th May 1967, Col. Odumegwu Emeka Ojukwu, the military Governor of the Eastern Region who resented Gowon's assumption of the office of the military Head of State on the premise that he was not the most senior military officer declared the Eastern region a sovereign state with the appellation 'Biafra'. It is imperative to point out that prior to the declaration, Gowon tried to counter the situation by creating twelve states out of the existing four regions on 27th May 1967. This structural rearrangement was aimed at making Col. Ojukwu loose grip of the solidarity in the Eastern region as the region was restructured into three states with two states being given to the minorities in the then Eastern region viz Rivers and South Eastern States. East Central State was the only core Igbo state.

The act of state creation was a strategy of making the component units of the Nigerian federalism weak and enthrone a form of federalism with a strong centre contrary to what existed prior to the time. Elaigwu (1979) explains that:

The very act of creating twelve states by the military was an act of state-building i.e. strengthening the authority and the scope of the authority of the federal centre. In addition, given Nigeria's political history, it is most unlikely that any sub-national unit would challenge the process of state building by seceding or threatening to secede from the country (pp. 169-170).

State creation from the genesis became an instrument to engender more structural imbalance and create ethnic dominance and superiority. The series of creation of states by various succeeding military administrations under the northern leadership ended up creating a federal state now consisting of thirty six states (36) with nineteen (19) created out of the former northern region alone.

Nwokedi (2009) states that:

The military which ruled the country for a greater part of her sovereign existence as an independent nation were solely responsible for dismantling the old 4 regional structure and arbitrarily breaking them into smaller states. The Gowon Regime began by breaking the four (4) regions into 12 states. The Muhammad/Obasanjo regime that took over power from him in 1976, split the 12 states into 19 states. This was followed by the Babangida and Abacha regimes which between 1984 and 1990 carved the country into the existing 36 states with a federal capital territory (p. 83).

The first phase of the military interregnum which started on 15th January 1966 ended in 1979 and the Nigerian second republic commenced on 1st October 1979 under the leadership of the President Alhaji Shehu Shagari. In the second republic, the American Presidential system was adopted instead of the British cabinet system that was practiced in the first republic.

However, the military could not allow the new experience to thrive for long and grow to maturity as General Muhammadu Buhari overthrew the government on 31st December 1983 accusing the government of maladministration and corruption. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari states that:

The Nigerian people watched helplessly while over the succeeding four year period of the first term of the defunct administration most of the governments of the federation failed to provide even the minimum good government (Obikeze & Obi, 2003 p. 187).

The second phase of the military interregnum in politics of the country reckoned the emergence of Generals Buhari Babangida, Abacha and Abdulsallam Abubakar. The tyrannical rule assumed a more destructive dimension and character during this period. The General Ibrahim Babangida's administration which overthrew the seemingly tyrannical administration of General Buhari organized a transition programme, set up democratic structures at all levels of governance but eventually annulled the presidential election conducted on the 12th of June 1993 which was won by Bashorun MKO Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) instead of Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC), an Hausa man. The election was adjudged both in the domestic and international scenes to be free and fair and indeed till date, the June 12, 1993 election has stood out as the best election Nigeria has ever conducted. Ibrahim (2003) writes that:

Nigeria's political climate has worsened due to the refusal of the military to hand over power to a democratically elected civilian administration. It may be recalled that after a lot of procrastination by government and determined protest against another postponement of elections by the people, presidential election were finally held on 12th June 1993. The candidate of the Social Democratic Party, M.K.O Abiola a southerner and Yoruba won neatly in an election that was surprisingly generally considered free and fair. General Babangida however annulled the elections and tried to initiate yet another round of 'political crafting', but there was so much mass protests against the cancellation that he had to leave power in haste and handover to an incompetent and powerless civilian without any mandate, creating basis for yet another coup d'état in November 1993 by his former second in command and another northerner General Abacha (p. 134).

The General Sani Abacha's administration emerged by overthrowing the Interim National Government under the leadership of Chief Ernest Shonekan, which General Babangida set up and handed over power to Gen. Abacha's regime which was the most autocratic and dehumanizing phase in the Nigerian history. It exhibited crass absolutism and suffocation of human rights. Terror was elevated to an art of state craft. Alli (2003) asserts that:

Abacha's rule was not only the most authoritarian in Nigeria's history, it was the most brutal. Under Abacha's rule the centralizing tendency in Nigeria federalism was carried to absurd levels... He also destroyed national institutions undermining national solidarity. At the international level, his style of governance brought the nation to disrepute and isolation. Nigeria became a pariah nation. (p. 84).

General Abdulsallam Abubakar became the military Head of State following the sudden demise of General Abacha on June 8, 1998. He made haste and handed over to a civilian government under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo. The birth of the fourth republic on 29th May 1999 came with various challenges in the Nigerian federalism. The centralization tendencies of the military were also reflected in the constitution the military handed over to the nation and the issues of revenue allocation and fiscal federalism have remain deep structural issues threatening the Nigerian federal experience.

DERIVATION PRINCIPLE AND FISCAL FEDERALISM IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian state runs a federal system that consists of three tiers of government ever since the Local Government was recognized as a tier of government following the Local Government reform of 1976. Thus, the three tiers of government have constitutionally assigned functions and powers. In view of the foregoing, assignment of tax powers and allocation of federally collected revenue becomes a crucial issue concerning the three levels of government. Bello-Imam (2004) explains that "Fiscal federalism is an offshoot of federalism. It refers to the statutorily defined financial transactions between the different tiers of government within a federation" (p. 21) Fiscal federalism in Nigeria has been inundated with challenges and this had culminated in the creation of different revenue allocation commissions, which came up with diverse recommendations. Howbeit, various revenue allocation principles have been recommended for vertical and horizontal distribution of

revenue between the tiers of government but the derivation principle has been consistent but with varying emphasis. It has fluctuated from 100% it was at a time in Nigeria to a very insignificant proportion before being fixed at not less than 13% by the 1999 constitution.

Ndebbio (2004) points out that:

Nigeria's practice of fiscal federalism over the years has shown that the principle of derivation has continuously come under vertical revenue sharing arrangement and as such all revenues accrue to the federal government. To assign 1-3 percent of petroleum revenue to derivation as done before May 1999 is grossly unfair and inequitable to the beneficiaries of the fund who incidentally are the people in the minority states of the South-South zone (p.122).

This has inevitably resulted in an undying call for restructuring, which climaxed at the demand for resource control by the Niger Delta people. Still commenting on the demphasization of derivation in Nigeria's fiscal federalism. Okilo notes in Ugoh (2011) that "it has continued to be deliberately suppressed since crude oil became the mainstay of the country's wealth. A nation that recognized 100 percent derivation as the basis for revenue allocation in 1950 but reduced it to 50 percent at independence in 1960 to 45 percent in 1970; 20 percent in 1975; 15 percent in 1982 and 13 percent in 1992 as crude oil became the main source of national revenue signified the drawback of the nation" (pp. 131-132). The vertical distribution of revenue in Nigeria has for long been characterized by federal dominance. The assignment of tax powers has also shared the same characteristics. The table below is very illustrative.

Table: Vertical Revenue Allocation of the Federation Account, 1980-92 (Percentage)

	1 Okigbo Commission (Recommendations) 1979/80	2 Government White Paper on (1)	3 1981 Act	4 Decree No. 36 of 1984	5 Revenue Commission's Report 1989 (Danjuma)	6 AFRC Approval of (5) January 1990	7 AFRC January 1990	8 AFRC June 1992
1. Federal government	53.0	55.0	55.0	55.0	47.0	50.0	50.0	48.5
2. State governments	30.0	30.0	30.5	32.5	30.0	30.0	25.0	24.0
3. Local governments	10.0	8.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	15.0	20.0	20.0
4. Special funds	7.0	7.0	4.5	2.5	8.0	5.0	5.0	7.5
Development of the FCT	2.5	2.5			1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Development of mineral producing areas	2.0	1.5	1.5	1.5 ^a	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.0
General ecological problems	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
Revenue equalization	1.5							
Mineral producing states (Derivation)		2.0	2.0	2.0 ^b	2.0 ^c	1.0	1.0	1.0
Stabilization					0.5		0.5	0.5
Savings					2.0			
Development of non-oil mineral producing areas					0.5 ^d			

Sources: Ndebbio (2004) *The Element and Practice of Fiscal Federalism in Nigeria* in Taiwo I.D. and Fajigbensi A.A. *fiscal Federalism and Democratic Governance in Nigeria* p. 119

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

It is evident that the Nigerian federalism has structural characteristics that have made it prone to attacks by diverse elements in the political system. The politics of state creation smacks of an effort to enthrone ethnic hegemony as the federation was abinitio structured to favour the north who consolidated on the foregoing, using the instrumentality of military leadership. The result makes it glaring that military rule affected the growth of federalism adversely as it culminated in centralization tendencies which wrested powers from the sub-national governments and made the center more powerful. The ascendancy of the military in government was used to build ethnic hegemony as the military leaders were all of the northern extraction except for General Olusegun Obasanjo who took over power following the assassination of General Murtala Muhammed in a coup d'état.

The Nigerian fiscal federalism also envelops a lot of critical problems. The center appropriates a lion share of the revenue from the federation account, thereby making the center too powerful. The demphasization of derivation as a principle of sharing revenue is at the root of the call for resource control by the people of Niger Delta. There is therefore, the need for the Nigerian federalism to be restructured to reflect true federalism instead of the present structure that is characterized by a strong center and weak federating units. There is no gain saying that the imbalance arising from state creation and allocation of resources to the federating units need to be remedied in order to have a federalism that will meet the need of the people and engender development. The present form of federalism has the tendency to discourage states from striving to be self sustaining rather it builds the culture of dependency on federal allocations.

The Nigerian federalism obviously lacks the desirable characteristic of fairness hence ethnic factors have continued to guide national decisions. There is no fairness in state and local government creation as well as in the distribution of the federally collected revenues. The achievement of a generally acceptable federal practice has glaringly been hampered by ethnicity. Ethnic variables have been instrumental in the direction of national decisions, hence ethnic loyalties have been given premium over national considerations. The existential condition of Nigeria makes it imperative for the country to be restructured to reflect the experience before the military usurpation of political power. The foregoing period reflects

and approximates true federalism and has the capacity to guarantee the achievement of the twin objectives of unity and preservation of the diversity of the people.

CONCLUSION

The Nigerian federalism is inundated with the challenges of structural imbalances which have made the system fall short of achieving the goal of engendering unity while the diversity of the people is preserved. The Nigerian federalism therefore, needs to adapt to its ecology which would help the country to remodel its federalism in a way that will guarantee that the federating units develop at their own pace anchoring on the mobilization of resources from their geographical enclave. This will engender healthy competition and reduce friction and conflicts as each federating unit will become more inwards looking in relation to revenue generation. The foregoing will not only guarantee the development of the federating units but will also ensure systemic development of the Nigerian nation. The foregoing will invariably heal the country of the wound of centralization which has made the centre too powerful at the detriment of the federating units.

The structural imbalance in state creation need to be urgently addressed as that would always evoke the feeling of marginalization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are therefore made:

- The federating units should be made to harness and collect revenues from the mineral resources in their area and pay an agree royalty to the federal government which should not exceed 30%.
- That one additional state should be created for all the geopolitical zones to bring the number of states to seven for each geopolitical zone while two additional states should be created for the south east to make it seven also.
- That the federal government should set aside part of the royalties for balancing development considering the fact that the resources and revenue base of the states vary.

- The security architecture should be restructured so that the State Governors should have firm grip of the security matters of their respective domains. By extension there should be regional or state police as is the case with other developed climes.
- The position of the President should be rotational among the six geo-political regions with single tenure of five years.
- Lastly, more powers should be devolved to the local governments as this enable this level of government create and bring enabling environment that help to curb the restiveness among the youths.

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