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## Restructuring, Insecurity and the Challenges of Development in Nigeria

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v21i4.9>

### Abstract

*The macabre of violence orchestrated by high degree of ethnic colouration and religious intolerance gave credence to this research topic. Overtime the Nigeria nation has been besieged by different altercations that have consequently retarded the pace of progress and development of the country. The study which adopted the frustration aggression theory and using the secondary data as a source submits that economic dissatisfaction arising from politics of exclusion, religious bias, leadership problem, insurgency among others have conspicuously created division among people who have agreed under one federating unit to live as one have rather consistently been denied their fair share of the "national cake". Consequently, this has led to bottled up anger, frustration and some level of disenchantment. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to interrogate-the nature and dimension of the Nigerian security situation and its slow pace development. The study concluded that the agitations for fair treatment, equal representation, effective governance are basic and necessary ingredients of restructuring that could help guarantee a peaceful co-existence devoid of rancour and acrimony. The study therefore among other things recommended that true federalism, good governance, justice would guarantee security and development in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Restructuring, Insecurity, Development, Underdevelopment

## **Introduction**

Recently, the Nigerian society has been faced with a lot of problems that inevitably suggest the need for restructuring. The idea behind the agitation of the crusaders and intellectual pundits arise from the fact that a lot of injustice, oppression, abuse of law among others abound in society. Added to the above is the fact that negative attitude of those entrusted with the responsibility of governance has consequently brought about some level of insecurity in our national polity as the centre can no longer hold. And as such, development that is supposed to be the rallying point of all suffers negative consequences. In a society that has agreed to carry out its duties and obligations under one political arrangement call a federal system, should be able to adopt some level of fair treatment to all. But, the lopsidedness of the whole arrangement makes some segments of the society to be onlookers while others are busy accumulating what constitutionally belongs to all.

In a situation like this things are bound to fall apart and the centre will no longer hold, (Achebe, 1958:67). The Nigerian society has been so polarized that the degree of patriotism and loyalty has become a mockery and the desire to safeguard the national sovereignty that is expected of a nation is almost non existence. The resultant effect again is that human capital accumulation for economic and social development suffers. To eliminate poverty is the overriding objective of development policy but for Nigeria that has remained a distant dream. The number of people living in poverty rose from 60 percent in 1990 to 70 percent in 2013 (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2014). The point in emphasis is that there is something fundamentally wrong with a federating unit such as ours where the national government vis-a-vis some highly politicized states may be doing comparatively better than others because of obvious ethnic and religious factors just to mention a few. It is on this premise that the agitators of restructuring and those clamouring for a better political

arrangement where some of these injustices can be effectively addressed, so that problem of insecurity and poor development which has become the aftermath effect of this over glaring political lopsidedness can be corrected is welcomed. Scholars like .... Akpotor (2007) have argued quite reasonably from their perspective that federalism is essentially a bargaining process. According to him, the factors that account for the emergence of the federal states are not to be found in a legal document but rather in the factors that propel the leaders of various groups to enter into bargaining process to form a union. Unfortunately, there seems to be the abuse of the principle or process. In the words of Njoku (2007) the problem of inter-ethnic conflicts arises from unhealthy inter-ethnic competition for scarce resources, sustained inter-ethnic suspicion and hatred emanating from the past hostile intergroup relations and the manipulations of vicious political leaders, all tend to pose serious threat to inter-ethnic harmony and stable internal security of the country. He further mentioned that the growing incidence of ethnic nationalism and tribal parochialism tends to ignite social insecurity in some parts when the federal system actually kicked off the different regions (North, South and East) operated with the greatest of ease and autonomy in the efficient distribution of the resources meant for the regions.

The anti federal characteristics that define federal state relations in Nigeria according to Natufe (2006) are replicated in state-local government relations across the country where a local government council is considered a division of Governor's office. In fact, the Chairman of a local government (equivalent to Mayor in North America) held his seat at the mercy of his state governor. These levels of dependency akin to a unitary system hinder the practice of federalism and thus compromise good governance in the polity.

It is thus, this lack of fair representation in governance anchored on religious bias, ethnic consciousness and poor governance that has polarized the national unity today which consequently has

resulted in insecurity of lives and property and poor development as almost everyone appears to be in a hurry to collect what belongs to all by whatever means possible.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

**Restructuring:** Restructuring could mean different things to people. In the context of this paper, it implies a redefinition and evaluation of institutions of governance, leadership, among others. It is the reorientation of the people, structure of governance geared towards a peaceful and egalitarian society-devoid of injustice, hatred and total dislike for one another. In the words of Ibok, Owanko and Sunday (2018), restructuring implies damages and change connotes a departure from the old order to a new one. Restructuring can therefore mean fundamental change in the building block of a nation's educational system; change in the social, economic infrastructural and political landscape of a nation.

**Insecurity:** Insecurity is a challenging situation where life and property are threatened by people with guns, cutlasses, explosives, among others. The idea here is to make life unsafe. Socio-economic activities are brought to a standstill because of the overwhelming presence of the perpetrators of such crime. Insecurity within this concept may simply be described as a situation that prevails when human and material property are threatened by a combination of man made forces to disrupt, truncate or completely mar the realization of set objectives (Momoh, 2010).

**Development:** Development connotes the process of advancement, increase in growth usually from a poor unstable state to a progressive and matured stage. It is the process of improvement on the socio-economic condition of the people over a period of time. According to Okowa (1996), development comes from handwork, discipline,

commitment, skills and the intelligent utilization of the faculties of man in a sustained manner over a fairly long period of time. In line with the above assertion, Obi (2006), sees development as a social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capital income and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization.

**Underdevelopment:** underdevelopment is the opposite of development. It is a concept that is associated with backwardness. It emphasizes the absence of technology and innovativeness. It is a condition of poverty and persistent struggle to pursue the socio-economic conditions of life anchored on stagnation and retrogression. Thus, disease, poverty, high death rate among others are basic characteristics or distorting features of underdevelopment. Underdevelopment will be used here to relate to a condition of dependence-one in which the activities of a given society are subjected to the overriding control of an external power over which it can exert little direct influence.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The violent display and unending altercations between and among people who have supposedly agreed to live together calls for the adoption of this theory. The frustration aggression theory is centred on the argument that individual or group of persons could resort to violence settling disputes when they are being persistently frustrated in their seeming efforts to achieve their goals. It is imperative to acknowledge that the principle of frustration aggression theory is the gap that exists between peoples expectations and what they actually get. And so, it is logical to argue that if the socio-economic and political expectations of a people are being frustrated repeatedly, it may give cause to aggression, which consequently may be expressed

violently through gangsterism, insurgency, invasion, killing, maiming, raping and other terrible means. These deprivations could be advanced to mean the evolution of indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB), Niger Delta Militia groups, movement for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB) among others.

It is these agitations by the aforementioned groups which consequently have made the polity very ungovernable that have galvanized the call for restructuring. According to Akpotor (2012) that once expectation does not meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions. Unfortunately, this is the situation with the Nigeria political system where some persons have been consistently and obviously denied their share of the “national cake”. Consequently, the only available means to seek for what is theirs is to result to violent struggle by whatever means possible.

The situation, especially in Nigeria, speaks to us of disappointed hopes and squandered opportunities and of state that has been tottering on the edge of a cliff (Ekekwe, 2015). This position is corroborated by Nwaorgu (2015).

The state of affairs significantly overcharged the \_ system and brought intense pressure on institutional structures for decision making, demanding that they facilitate the process of creating security value in favour of the public. The security domain in the face of prevailing situation had become totally violated by incessant violent crimes and dare devil criminals. This explains among other things, the reason for birth of Bakassi Boys. However, through overzealousness in their operations they quickly attracted negative local and international attention.

So, this theory seek to address situation where people are consistently and repeatedly being denied what is their share of what belongs to all. The aftermath effect of such unjust and unreasonable action is

frustration, bottled up anger and inevitable display of violence as it is the case in many parts of Nigeria.

### **Restructuring and the Challenges of Insecurity**

Recently, the degree of violence and destruction of lives and property has become an issue to contend with in our national polity. When an emerging nation such as ours given the degree of competition globally experiences such macabre of violence ranging from occultic groups, social violence, economic violence, religion as well as political violence then such society is doomed and its possibility of meeting up its socio-economic goals like other sovereign states is near zero. Unfortunately, this has been the situation with our own country Nigeria for sometime now. What then would have necessitated this unbridled and unpalatable situation that have launched the state into this political quagmire and hullabaloo? The paper examined the following reasons;

Religion fundamentally is a race to worship God, the creator of heaven and earth. And so, in doing this there are basically two religions, the Christian and the Muslim that are involved in pursuing this goal of felicitating with the Almighty, primarily to address their different spiritualities or desires. Unfortunately, the pursuit of this seeming goal that should help to position our society in the most humane and tolerable manner has rather created uproar, crises of different magnitude. Thus, fanning the embers of disunity and insecurity of lives and property. Our society is a perfect example that displays a high level of religious intolerance between Moslem and Christian race. Many worshippers of the two religions have become victims of their unbearable activities. For instance, it was reported that more than 200 people were killed in two days of clashes in Kano during the Osama Bin Laden in October 2001 (Onu and Darambah, 2001:1). The point to note here is that religion in this country has done more harm than good to the peaceful co-existence of the

country. People have lost their lives over the superiority of religion. The unity of Nigeria is at stake because of the desperation to worship. Another contending problem is ethnic conflict as well as inter-ethnic conflict. Nigeria as a country exposes her subjects to different conflicts which consequently has made living in Nigeria a distasteful and unpleasant one. Very few ethnic groups in Nigeria live in harmony. This disharmony is created out of desperation for power or want of a particular interest with very little or no regard for the other ethnic group. This ugly trend has led us to a situation where we make “hate speeches” and give “quit notices” to each other because of selfish interest and desire. Often, these actions are followed by threat to life and property. Ball and Dagger (1995) acknowledge that;

Nigeria's heterogeneous character is evident in the diversity of its ethnic and religious groups. These diversities have often constituted a source of conflict within the entity. Perhaps cognizance of the fact that, religion represents a political force capable of pushing in different directions (P.253).

Resurgence of militant groups is another challenge that has given rise to insecurity for which there is the fundamental need for restructuring. Leadership failure is primarily responsible for this unhealthy practice that has shaken the foundation of this country and its unity. The elites in a bid to satisfy their yearnings and aspirations in policy decisions making often take decision on programmes that will enhance and sustain their personal interest. So/it is this selfish display of powers by some of the ruling class that gives evidence to the emergence of ethnic militia in different parts of the federation. The Financial Standard Editorial opinion (2004:11) suggests that the emergence of ethnic militias can be linked to "the deliberate manipulation of the ethnic factors by the elite as a means of acquiring preeminence, especially in socio-political circles. The fact remains that the proliferations of these ethnic militia groups perhaps in a bid to fight for what is constitutionally theirs show that so many things



appear to be wrong with the practice of Nigerian federalism, hence the need for restructuring.

Another very noticeable problem that has increased insecurity in Nigeria is the proliferation of arms and ammunition. The violent display of the use of weapons by some segments of the society leaves one with the impression that there are no laws in this country. The degree of the violation of these laws by some recalcitrant elements leaves much to be desired. There is hardly any section of the country where there is no such reckless abuse of law. More regrettable is Northern Nigeria where the Fulani Herdsmen now have the monopoly of violence to unleash pains on innocent law-abiding citizens. Yet, nothing is done about perpetrators of such heinous crimes. It is this conspicuous display of powers without punitive measures taken against such perpetrators that make the crusader of restructuring calls for it. This is because the free display of these ammunitions is too unprecedented. The 2003 edition of the Small Arms Survey Report by a Geneva based organization revealed that about 30 million light weapons were in circulation in sub-Saharan Africa and that there was one weapon for every 20 persons (Njoku, 2005:255).

It is as a result of this seeming bias of some sections-of the federation that seems to be getting away by their actions in almost all strata of governance with some of these perpetrators having the support of the power that be, inevitably provokes the need for restructuring in order to interrogate the nature and dimension of some of these aforementioned contending forces that have posed challenges to the Nigerian security system and development in general.

### **Restructuring and the Challenges of Development**

The quest for restructuring in recent time is borne out of the fact that injustice, oppression, denial, unfair and unequal representation among others have become compelling issues in our national polity that needs to be redressed. The only available weapon is the restructuring.

Before delving into the nitty-gritty of the sub-topic in question, there is the need to do justice to the interpretation of the word, 'Restructure'. The term, "Restructure" connotes to redefine and to reassess an existing structure or process in order to bring or lead an entire system to where it can promote change and peace. The idea therefore is to re-evaluate the system in order to achieve some positive results that will benefit the whole. According to Atiku (2017), it means effecting changes to the current federal structure to bring closer to what the founding leaders erect in order to address the very issues and challenges that led them to opt for a less centralized government.

It is restructuring when fair representation, justice, tolerance and true federalism become the guiding principles of a federating units that have agreed to live together. It calls for restructuring when some parts of the federating units are secluded and denied through unfair and unequal representation of the national share of all. The agitation by Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of Movement for the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is not far from the aforementioned facts. A situation where some sections of the country are perpetually being denied political leadership yet we claim to be practicing true federalism is not only wicked but barbaric. Religion, ethnicity, politics and other related variables have made the affectiveness of true federalism a very difficult and morbid one. Again, it has distorted our national unity as a people and destroyed the love of humanity. Above all, it has increased insecurity and brought about underdevelopment.

Except some of the aforementioned issues that call for restructuring are addressed, we may just as a nation be pretending to live as one and therefore, the problem of insecurity and underdevelopment will keep embarrassing us. Can there be peace and tranquility in a nation where a section wants to assume leadership right over others consistently such as the Norths are doing now by some hook or crook means in the name of election? According to

Alapiki (2010), how can there be, when we have managed to fabricate an endless war between regional, ethnic, religious and communal groups? When most of us encounter what answers to the state only as a predatory force on the rampage, when those who are supposed to defend us have turned their arms against us and never grant us any respect from exploitation? Corroborating the above Lawan (2006:55) argues that, “Nigerian political elite have demonstrated high level of insensitivity and arrogance. Similarly, they have exploited the conditions of the people in respect of poverty and illiteracy to manipulate the masses towards ethnic and religious violence”.

The demonstration of manipulation of the masses by the elite has always been manifested when it comes to the issues of sharing of resources and the capture of political power in Nigeria. Based on this, the elite usually resort to the use of religion, region or ethnic background to campaign against their opponents. Today, certain negative tendencies have been enstrained in the minds of the people and different issues of national significance in Nigerian are interpreted from religious and ethnic perspectives (Chibuzo and Ogaba, 2014).

### **Restructuring, Insecurity and the Challenges of Development**

The threat to lives and property by the overwhelming ethnic militia, proliferation of arms and ammunition, lopsidedness of the country political arrangement, emergence of militant groups, contending forces of ethnic and inter-ethnic conflicts, among others have increased insecurity in the land and consequently affects development drastically. These are clear evidences to acknowledge that all is not well with the country. And if we must give peace a chance, then restructuring is the possible alternative to resolve this imbroglio or political impasse.

Restructuring is an attempt to re-evaluate and redefine the structural arrangement of a system. It is the repositioning of the

institution of governance in order to promote some semblance of peace, justice and egalitarian society. Over time, the process of managing the affairs of the country by a privilege few in the name of election has been questioned very vigorously by the advocates of restructuring. For instance, leadership over a long period of time has been the full responsibility of the Northerners who have been in full grip of the country compare to other ethnic nationalities that constitute the membership of Nigeria. And so, it is fundamentally wrong if one section of a generality of Nigeria assumes the political leadership of a country with all the attendant valuables or benefits going to one end (the North) with very little or nothing to justify the presence of the other ethnic nationalities. The only alternative therefore is if peace and justice must reign in a highly controversial society like ours restructure must be considered so that there can be equal representation and fairness. Election of candidates into leadership position is not born out of clear ideology but on proximity, ethnic factor, region, religious factors and such other variables. As Alapiki (2010) rightly acknowledged;

Thus, in the era preceding independence, and mainly in the post independence era, there is enough evidence to support the argument that electoral behaviour in Nigeria was not grinded by ideology, party programme or equality of candidates, but by a political calculus based on ethnic geopolitics. (P.142).

That is to say, electoral behaviour was influenced by the need to assume power at all costs, either singly or by a fluid conglomeration of power bloc for the purpose of lighting the "war" to win the right to rule and share out the anticipated booty and perquisites of office (Oyidiran, 1990). So, it is worrisome to know that a country can develop with variable such as this. It is this questionable means of attaining political leadership that has endangered development in Nigeria. As it stands, nothing seems to be working. The economy is in shamble as everyone seems to be in a

hurry to no-where. The level of patriotism is so low that nobody wants to sacrifice his time for anybody. Davis (1962) sums up this view in his assertion that, “The person who must concentrate all his energies merely on staying alive is in no position to concern himself actively or passively with policy decisions or their implementation” (P.26).

The further implication of this unhealthy practice is its negative impact on our country developmentally. For instance, the issue of corruption where some citizens have to be bribed before casting their votes is worrisome. Leadership in Africa must endeavour to come to terms with facts concerning corruption to spot the need for its outright eradication (Igwe, 2010).

So, it is this glaring actions by some persons in our national polity in conscious and deliberate abuse of the process while others stand to watch with its attendant negative effects on the country's development that have provoked the urgent call for restructuring. The idea is to interrogate the contending forces that have triggered insecurity and resulted in poor development in Nigeria. It is therefore pertinent to address some of these salient issues through restructuring in order to promote a healthy society devoid of rancour and acrimony.

## **Conclusion**

Having identified some of the lingering factors that have seemingly hindered the progress of an emerging state such as ours, it becomes clear foe. That the only alternative to the existing political impasse anchored on poor governance, injustice, reckless and unguarded acquisition of what belongs to all by a privileged few is restructuring. This is because a political system where the laws are recklessly abused and the doers seem to be getting away with it coupled with other murderous actions with others standing akimbo to watch as if the perpetrators were above the law calls for immediate evaluation of the system. The point to note here is that the leadership process,

ethnic consciousness, religious intolerance, arms proliferations, terrorism and other negative vices have very recently made the system ungovernable and unworkable. Therefore, the inevitable and compelling alternative is restructuring. According to Ekekwe (2009), if Nigeria is to move away from the disorganized economy and crude politics that oppress its citizens, it would be very necessary to carry out extensive political reforms that will help the majority of the people to choose their leaders and relate meaningfully to state institutions. These returns would have to be accompanied with reorientation programmes that will help the citizens become conscious of their economic and political rights.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the foregoing discussion the following recommendations will be necessary.

1. An effective leadership devoid of biases, religious coloration and ethnic consciousness.
2. The practice of true federalism with each state not being influenced by the actions and activities of the central government.
3. Restructuring of the federation with all the federating units, representatives and advocates of restructuring having a robust discussion on the aggrieved issues.
4. Things capable of enhancing the quality of good relationship among all should be encouraged. For instance, 'hate speeches' and quit notices should be completely disregarded.
5. Elected officials should be those that have been tested over time and are capable of delivering good governance.

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