

THE DOCTRINE OF FEDERALISM AND THE CLAMOUR FOR RESTRUCTURING OF NIGERIA FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Ebiziem, Jude Ebiziem

Department of Political Science,
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri
Nigeria.

E-mail: mbanoguesthouse@yahoo.com

+2348035077757

Onyemere, Fineboy Ezenwoko

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

foechii@yahoo.com

+2348025172269

ABSTRACT

The paper “the doctrine of federalism and the clamour for restructuring of Nigeria for good governance” draws our attention to the recent agitations by various groups on the path of true federalism and good governance in Nigeria. The broad objectives of this paper is to examine the Nigeria structure of federalism in recent time and identify the factors affecting incessant agitations, and determine the process of restructuring Nigeria for good governance. The paper reviewed relevant related literature and adopted K.C Wheare’s theory of federalism, as its theoretical framework, while its methods of research were basically descriptive and historical designs. The qualitative data were mostly generated largely from the documentary sources. The paper revealed among others, that the calls for restructuring is borne out of some perceived levels of injustice, inequality and discontentment, witnessed by Nigeria society as a result of bad leadership and faulty federalism which has brought myriads of socio-political and economic problems and has resulted to incessant fallouts between various regions, ethnic groups and federal government. The paper recommends inter alia; that although, Nigeria is a federation, there is need for central government and the federating units to understand their differences, build consensus and adopt measures that would accommodate all and enhance good governance. Indeed, such mechanisms and implementation would improve the structural imbalance; promote nation-building, douse the tension and check the apparent threat to national unity.

Keywords: Federalism; Federations; Restructuring; Good Governance; Nation-building.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Historically, following the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates on January 1, 1914 under the watchful eye of colonial Britain, two personalities were important in this exercise namely Lord Fredrick Lugard the Governor General, who can be described as the surgeon who performed the merger and Flora Shaw (Late wife of Lugard), former correspondent of the London Taxonomist that suggested the name-Nigeria. In fact, by this action, the British brought together the diverse peoples and cultures of Nigeria under one polity. As the winds of change unleashed by the outcome of the second world war and the independence of India spurred agitations for self-government, Nigeria debated, under the British tutelage, the political structure of a future, free Nigeria, those who wanted federalism won the argument (Rufia, 2017; Brown 2013; Obialor et al, 2017).

Furthermore, the 1950's saw the emergence of three regions, Northern, Eastern and Western, with elected Nigeria's leaders with limited powers of self-rule. In the pre-independence debates, the leaders of the Western and Northern regions were especially insistent on a loose federation with strong regions. This eventually prevailed at the independence in 1960, and was reaffirmed of 1963. Available historical records indicates that the peoples of the smaller ethnic groups in the North, West and East largely accepted and supported the federalist consensus and they expected its logic to extend in the creation of new regions for them, or special arrangement to accommodate their interest (Rufai, 2017).

Again, in 1963, the mid-west was carved out of the western region as the fourth region. Fundamentally, each of these regions had a written Constitution, emblem and official representation in London. Equally, they had significant powers, and were authorized to raise the revenues needed to fund themselves and contribute to the central government. It is important to stress that each of these regions competed to do their best for their respective peoples both in education, health, agriculture, industrial estates and social services based on their comparative advantages. In fact, some of them tried to build the physical infrastructure needed for a modern economy.

Indeed, it is important to highlight that most of the enduring institutions in Nigeria were built by these regional governments, hence the understandable nostalgia in some quarters for the currently-dysfunctional federal structure of Nigeria to revert to the regions of old. Therefore, Nigeria version of federalism was necessitated by its colonial heritage resulting from series of constitutional fireworks.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite possessing significant natural resources endowment, being Africa's leading economy and most populous nation, Nigerians are neither happy nor content with the current political structure, the 1999 Constitution as amended and virtually all the institutional governance at the federal state and local levels. Today, more powers had been concentrated at the centre manifested in a federal government assumed ever more powers and responsibilities, took the biggest chunk of national revenues (Now about 53percent) at the detriment of other tiers. The state of national dissatisfaction for a variety of reasons amongst

devolution of powers, to sub-national, fiscal federalism, citizenship matters, federating units, local government autonomy, resource control, power sharing, derivations principle has led to strident calls from virtually all segments of Nigeria for restructuring.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To identify the factors affecting the agitations for restructuring.
- ii. To examine the benefits of restructuring Nigeria.
- iii. To ascertain the possible ways of restructuring Nigeria for true federalism.
- iv. To identify possible ways of strengthening stability in a restructured Nigeria.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the factors affecting the agitations for restructuring?
- ii. What are the benefits of restructuring Nigeria?
- iii. Have successive governments embarked on true federalism structured?
- iv. What are the prospects of a strengthening stability in a restructured Nigeria?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help the researchers to have insight into the various factors that have led to the serious agitation by regions and ethnic groups in the country. The perceived level of injustice and inequality witnessed by some regions and ethnic groups that have led to serious agitations for the calls for restructuring; thus enable the researchers to proffer solutions the resulting problem in Nigeria. it will be of immense benefit to the government since it highlighted the challenges on issues which will enable the government to make appropriate adjustments that would douse the tensions and check the threat to national unity, while serving as a valuable tool for future research. The study will assist all the stakeholders in Nigeria to appreciate the need for the widening of the political space through integration and accommodation of the views and opinions that will enhance true federalism.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL EXPLICATION

The study will examine the following concepts that inform our discussion on the subject matter:

- a) Federalism
- b) Federation
- c) Federal System of Government
- d) Good Governance
- e) Understanding Restructuring

Federalism

According to Kenneth Clinton Wheare, federalism as a federal principle is, “the method of dividing powers so that the general regional governments are each, within a sphere, coordinated and independent” (Wheare, 1953, p. 11). To William H. Riker, federalism it is a

“political organization in which the activities of government are divided between regional governments and a central government in such a way that each kind of government has some activities on which it makes final decisions” (Riker, 1975, p. 101). W. Awa sees it “as the coming together of different (sometimes also distinct) political units under a single political umbrella, a central authority (government) that faithfully represents the whole and acts on behalf of the whole in such areas as external affairs, which are in a sort of social contract agreed to be to the mutual interest of the different constituent unit” (Awa, 1976, p. 1). To O. B Nwabueze, “federalism is an arrangement whereby powers of government within a country are shared between a national (nationwide) government and a number of regionalized (i.e., territorially localized) governments in such a way that each exists as a government separately and independently from the others, operating directly on persons and property within its territorial area, with a will of its own, and its own apparatus for the conduct of its affairs and with an authority in some matters exclusive of all others” (Nwabueze, 1983, p. 1). S.E Oyovbaire says “Federalism is about power, its allocation and administration, power being defined as the outcome of interaction between the levels of government. This is with regard to the process by which each level obtains claims over resources” (Oyovbaire, 1985, p. 7). To Daniel J. Elazar, federalism is “a comprehensive system of political relationships which has to do with the combination of self-rule and shared within a matrix of constitutional dispersed powers” (Elazar 1987a, p. 1). Similarly, Ronald L. Watt submits that federalism is when “there are two (or more) levels of government which combine elements of *shared-rule* through common institutions and *regional self-rule* for the governments of the constituent units” (Watts, 1996, p.7, Olumide, 2017 P. 3).

Federalism is all about “the need for an orderly arrangement of relationship among different tiers of government in a nation” (Aliff, 2015, p. 72). It is an “institutional arrangement in which (a) public authority is divided between state governments and a central government, (b) each level of government has some issues on which it makes final decisions, and (c) a high federal court adjudicates disputes concerning federalism’ (Kelemen 2003, p. 185). Ostensibly, federalism “is a means of establishing national order without sacrificing the freedom of the component parts” (Anyebe, 2015, p. 15). Or as A. Marzui puts it, it is “an institutionalization of compromise relationship (Marzui, 1971, p.300).

Federation

A federation “is a union comprising a number of potential self governing states or regions united by a central government” (Akeninor, 2007, p. 41). Simply put, a “federation is a specific organizational form which includes structures, institution, procedures and techniques. It is a tangible institutional reality. And it can be distinguished from other forms of state relatively clearly” (Burgress, 2000, p. 25).

A country may become federal or regionalized in two ways: either a number of independent units come together to form a federal state or a centralized state decides to give some powers to its constituents regions (Fabre, 2009, p.3). These two ways are what Rokkan and Urwin preferably chose to call *Organic* and *Mechanic* federalism (Rokkan and Urwin, 1982, p. 11). But basically, the two ways are known as “aggregation” and “disaggregation”

federalism respectively. By aggregation, nations that are desirous of forming a federation, willingly come together to unanimously agree on the treaty that formerly establishes the federation, having surrendered part of their sovereignty to the government at the centre. The representatives of the 13 former colonies of Great Britain who came together in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to draft and ratify the 1787 constitution of the United State of America remains a classic example of federation by aggregation. A federation by disaggregation is common among countries practicing the unitary system of government. This occurs when a unitary State devolves power from the centre to component units. More often than not, the decision to do so is informed by the threat of secession from separatist movements and the agitation of minority groups. To Alfred Stepan, the manner in which federations have emerged are not two but three in number – i) *coming together* – ‘coming together’ and ‘aggregation’ are comparatively the same. It is when by agreement voluntarily opt to be an autonomous part of a federation without losing their identity e.g. United States of America, Switzerland and Australia ii) *holding together* – a federation created by ‘holding together’ equally is similar to those by disaggregation. It is resorted to by multiethnic unitary States in order to keep the country united as a democracy by devolving power from the centre to the regions – Spain (1978), Belgium (1993) and lastly iii) *putting together* - unlike the first and second, a federation created by ‘putting together’ is undemocratic. Here, multinational groups are coerced into forming the federation. It is also characterized by the concentration of State power at the centre. Communist U.S.S.R remains a good example of ‘putting together’ federation before her collapse in 1991 (Stepan, 1999, p.22-23 cited in Olumide, 2017; P. 4).

Federal System of Government

The federal system of government is a democratic form of government that divides sovereignty between at least two levels of government – the central and regional governments. In a federal of government, the constitution which is written and rigid, is supreme. Also peculiar about this form of government is the existence of a bi-cameral legislature and that it can be practiced either under the presidential or parliamentary system of government.

Looking at a definition of a federal system of government, it is “where the political territory is divided up into units endowed with their own governments, and these territories, or states, are unified under a common government” (Bednar, 2011, p.4). Put in another way, it is when “the constitutional authority to make laws and to tax is divided between a national government and some number of regional governments. Neither the national government acting alone nor the regional governments acting together have the authority to alter the powers of the other level of government. They are co-ordinate and independent in their separate constitutional spheres” (Brooks, 1996, p. 119). A federal system of government therefore is a form of government where “sovereignty is shared and powers divided between two or more levels of government each of which enjoys a direct relationship with the people” (Hueglin and Fenn2006, p. 32-33). However, there are certain conditions that must be met for federalism to thrive. They are:

1. An independent country with a central government that has the institutionalized power to govern the whole country;
2. The country is divided into separate geographical regions which have their own institutions of government to govern in their particular regions;
3. The power to govern is distributed between central and regional governments;
4. The distribution of power between the central and regional governments is set out in a constitution and is rigidly entrenched by the constitution so that it cannot be amended by the central government or any region or regions;
5. The constitution contains rules to determine any conflict of authority between the centre and the regions. In most constitutions, the general rule is that the law of the central government will prevail;
6. The distribution of powers between the central and regional governments is interpreted and policed by a judicial authority. The judicial authority has the constitutional power to make binding decisions about the validity of legislation and government actions, or where there is a conflict of the laws of the central and regional governments (cited in Evans, 2010, p. 19, Olumide, 2017; P. 5).

Good Governance

Governance is another contested concept in this discourse. There is plethora of views by scholars and development institution on what the concept connotes. The World Bank (1991) views governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development. Governance therefore demands that state operators deploy state resources in a manner that ensures material advancement for the people. According to Egwu (2005) one of the areas rocking the post-colonial African state is the prevalence of unaccountable government. Hyden and Bratton (1991) refer to governance as “the conscious management of regime structure with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of the public sphere”.

The United Nations Development Programme (1997) conceives governance as:

... the totality of the exercise of authority in the management of a country’s affairs comprising complex mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights and mediate their differences.

Salam (2009)

Governance entails the procedure through which governments are selected, monitored, held accountable, and replaced; it is government’s ability to judiciously manage resources well and formulate, implement as well as enforce good policies and regulations; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interaction between them.

Good governance reflects the need for judicious management of resources in such a way that improves the lives of the general well-being of those in the society. According to Akambi (2004). “Good governance is the capacity of a government to sustain social peace, guarantee law and order, promote conditions needed for generating economic growth and ascertain a minimum level of social security”. Nowhere in the world can development take place without good governance. (World Bank, 2005) stated that good governance is hinged on the capacity to exercise power and to make sound decision over a period of time in economic, social and environmental areas.

The recent social uprising and calls for restructuring in Nigeria has showed that good governance is seriously needed to get us out of this quagmire we find ourselves as a nation. For the purpose of this paper let’s distinguish between “governance” and “good governance”. Governance is the “use of power in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (World Bank, 1992). The (UNDP, 1997) identifies four (4) types of governance. The first is **economic governance**. This includes the process of decision making that directly or indirectly affects a country’s activities or its relationship with other economies. Economic governance has a major influence on societal issue such as equity, poverty and equality of life. The second is **political governance**. It refers to decision-making and policy implementation of a legitimate and authoritative state. The state should consist of separate legislative, executive and judicial branches; represent the interest of a pluralist-policy; and allow citizens to freely elect their representatives. The third type is **administrative governance**. It is a system of policy implementation carried out through an effective, independent and open public sector. The fourth is **systematic governance**. It deals with the processes and structures of society that guide political and socio-economic relationships to protect cultural and religious beliefs and values, and to create and maintain an environment of health, freedom, security and with the opportunity to exercise personal capabilities that led to a better life for all people.

In spite of the divergence of views on governance, they all emphasize public accountability and rule of law as the foremost principles of good governance.

Understanding Restructuring

It is the act of re-organizing the legal, ownership, operational or other structure for the purpose of making it more manageable or better organized for its present needs. Restructuring in this context is corporate restructuring which means constitution that will support good governance, respect for citizen, equity and equality (Folajoba, 2017; www.coe.int/democracy-goodgovernance).

To some scholars restructuring connotes a deliberate and planned change (Hallinga, 1997; Lam 1997; Denharh and Denhart, 2002). To them, any intervention which fails to produce fundamental change in the public is not restructuring. To this end, restructuring is a systematic intervention aimed at improving the structure, operations system and procedures to enable its transformation as a multifaceted agent of change, and as a veritable instrument of social cohesion and socio-economic development (Nkwede, 2013).

The concept restructuring is a process, in the case of a nation-state, that requires its citizens to take a closer look at the national edifice or, better still, the state of the nation with regard to how to address structural deformities, if any. Be that as it may, whatever may be structured deformities of the Nigerian nation-state would have to be put in their proper historical perspectives by looking, first, at the structure used for governance in a multinational society; and, secondly, the constitutional provisions underlying that structure (Yaqub, 2016).

Obasanjo (2000) aptly captured the essence and rationale for restructuring in Nigeria thus;

At certain epoch, with history of a people, they must pause, reflect, take stock and resolve to do some things differently or to undertake certain projects that would make a significant difference in their lives such institution, relationships, policies and programmes and the identifications of negative coalitions, contractions, challenges and crises points that have mediated the ability to make progresses. If they tell themselves the truth, they also have the courage and sense of mission to map out viable solutions to problems.

Nwankwo (2016) restructuring simply means divesting the central government of certain powers and limiting its area of influence to such issues as fiscal policies, military defence, foreign policy, immigration and national election. Restructuring does not mean merging of states, as some people would prefer. Rather, it is a thorough going process that allows each region to control its resources and pay royalties to the central government.

Taking all together, restructuring implies devolution of more powers to the states, and the local governments so that they can deliver public goods to the generality of the Nigeria citizens.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework which this work anchored is K.C Wheare's legal-institutional theory of federalism. Kenneth Clinton Wheare an Anglo-Saxon scholar and writer, is regarded as dean and doyen of classical federalism having elevated the status of federalism to theory. In other words, discussion on contemporary federalism usually starts with K.C Wheare's postulations on the concept (Amani, Lechem and Nwoko, 2017). The major assumption of this theory is that a federal government is an "association of states, which has been formed for certain common purposes but in which the member states retain large measure of their original independence" (Wheare, 1953, p. 1).

The theory took a step further by identifying the desire of nations as a necessary condition before a federal can be formed. Quoting him verbatim, Wheare said:

“It would seem that federal government is appropriate for a group of state or communities if, at one and the same time, they desire to be united under a single independent general government for some purpose and to be organized under independent regional governments for others. Or, to put it shortly, they must desire, to be united, but not unitary (Wheare, 1953, p. 36).

Again, he further asserted fourteen years later that:

“federalism is an appropriate form of government to offer communities or states of distinct, differing nationality who wish to form a common government and to behave as one people for some purpose, but wish to remain independent and in particular, to retain their nationality in all their aspects” (Wheare, 1967, p. 35)

Applying this theory to the Nigerian federal system of arrangement is imperative and germane because the clamour for restructuring is to ensure that there is need for an orderly and structural arrangement of relationships among different tiers of government in the country for peaceful co-existence of the federating units.

Simply put, federalism means establishing national order without sacrificing the freedom of the component part. If the system do not allow the component units to operate, two important things may happen, first is that there might be instability and the second is that there might be discontent amongst the citizenry as presently witnessed. The two are intertwined. It is therefore very useful to realize the relevance of K.C Wheare’s theory of federalism in the handling of Nigeria for good governance. Therefore, failure to treat the components tiers as such could send frustration through their veins, disenchantment and inability to perform and hence dissatisfaction amongst the populace.

2.3 CAN RESTRUCTURING FOSTER UNITY AND INTEGRATION? (CONTENT ANALYSIS DEBATES)

There are arguments for and against restructuring of the nation. We shall carefully examine the views of protagonists and antagonists on the issue.

Among the proponents of restructuring in Nigeria is the former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar who had consistently stressed the need for the re-arrangement. Delivering a key note address at a youth forum organized by a conglomeration of civil society groups under the auspices of “play forum” emphasized that the present federal structure is a faulty, unitary federalism structure which was a creation of a prolonged military rule. He stated that it is good that all the representations of the ethnic groups continue to live together.

Also, writing under the title Nigeria structure breeds corruption, Atiku stated that the present structure needed a rejig as it has become breeding ground for corruption. According to him, the structure that emerged at time of military rule and sustained by oil economy with enduring features of excessive centralization, corruption, oil dependency and low

productivity. He stated that restructuring is critical as it will give federating units greater autonomy to decide on their priorities and peculiar challenges (Obongo, 2018; p.6).

Equally, Nigeria is like a bewildered couple who have gotten their marriage license after a lavish wedding; yet neither of them really understands the meaning of marriage or their roles as husband and wife in it. Legally, they are married but functionally, their union is a crippled one. This couple will be at loggerheads until somehow, someday, they forge an agreement on the type of income they want and what are their respective duties in making that home come into existence. In other words, Nigeria must give our legal marriage its proper functional underpinning (Tinub, 2017).

According to Nwabueze (2017), the object of re-structuring for which there is a widespread clamour among Nigerians, is not to break up the country or to enable agitators to secede from its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Far from that, the object is, by reforming the governmental structures and attuning them to the needs and wishes of the people, to ensure that the immense diversity of ethnic nationalities comprised in the state will continue to co-exist together in peace, prosperity and progress as citizens of the one country united by common interests, common aspirations and a common destiny. The clamour for Re-structuring must therefore be seen as a clamour for the setting up of appropriate platforms or fora to renegotiate suitable governmental structures for the pursuit and realization of our common needs for development, good governance and national transformation.

He posited that, the clamour for re-structuring is more than a clamour for the reform of our governmental structures. This is only its primary focus. In its wider, more fundamental focus, it is a call for Nigeria to “make a new beginning” under a new Constitution approved and adopted by the people at a Referendum, a new politico-legal order that will cleanse the country of the rottenness that pervades it and enable to “chart a road map for its destiny or what has been referred to as re-structuring of the mind”. This aspect of re-structuring, which is as necessary as its primary focus, will need to be led by a president, as the elected leader of the people, imbued with an ardour for national transformation.

He further stated that, the governmental structure that needs particularly to be reformed by re-structuring is our federal system. Federalism is commonly agreed to be a compelling necessity for the maintenance of peace, stability and development of Nigeria as one country. The 1960/1963 Constitutions of Nigeria established a federal system with three (later four) Regions each invested with sufficient autonomy to govern itself in matters that concerned it alone – internal self-government – without undue control by, or interference from, the centre, thus giving each Region the impetus and incentives to develop optimally in healthy competition with the others. The federal system under the two Constitutions (1960 and 1963) may fairly be described as a model of true federalism. (Nwabueze, 2017, p. 16-17).

Arguing from the angle of government, Mohammed, (2017) argues that the Federal Government restructuring means devolution of power. Restructuring, means for the Federal Government a system whereby government’s policies and programmes can reach everybody at the grassroots. For us, restructuring means ability that will allow you to deliver and in our

own way, we have started. The Acting president then issued an order to the police that they should start implementing community policing; that is one aspect of restructuring that we believe will deliver better criminal justice. We as a government we took at our constitution as it is today and we follow strictly what the constitution says, and in applying the constitution we look at practical ways of reaching to people. The constitution is the grundnorm today, that is the basis of our being together and you cannot as a government do anything that is contrary to that Constitution because that is the supreme law of the country. So, even when you talk about restructuring you may need to amend certain provisions of the constitution, and we all know how cumbersome is to do that. (Mohammed, 2017; p. 44)

Supporting the calls for restructuring, Musa (2017), posited that we have been together for 100 years and that means Nigeria has lived for 100 years, and you cannot underestimate the sacrifices everybody made within the period. During the 100 years, we achieved something; we also lost something. It is possible we achieved more than we lost and it can be the inverse. Whatever it is, there are so many challenges which make it imperative for us to review our past and present in order to bring about peace, unity, progress and even development.

He further argued that, restructuring means arranging things differently to bring about more efficiency and more achievements. That is the reason for restructuring. We not only want restructuring simply because now is the time, but also it is the right time for the Igbo man to become the president. What will the Igbos achieve for us? We have had presidents from the North. What have the presidents done for the north? The north is still 40 years backward compared with the south in education and development. We had president from the South-West; what did he do for the South-West much more than the ordinary people have been able to do for themselves? Travel from Lagos to Ibadan through the road and you will see that in spite of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo being the president of Nigeria and a Yoruba, what did he achieve for the Yorubas compared to the other parts of the country? For instance, if you go to Ibadan, will you see anything remarkable different from the underdevelopment you can see in Kano? None! Except you want to deceive yourself. We recently had a president from the most marginalized side of Nigeria – the Niger Delta. What achievement can we see that can be directly related to Goodluck Jonathan's presidency in the Niger Delta? And if we're not careful, the same thing would be repeated if we bring about a president of Igbo extraction, no matter how legitimate it is. If we are not careful, we will end up with an Igbo president who might even be worse for Igbo land than the ones from Hausa, Yoruba and Ijaw. (Musa, 2017; p. 8-9).

According to Rufai (2017) Nigeria federation has been dysfunctional and more unitary than federal and not delivering public goods to the generality of our people. The state of national dissatisfaction for a variety of reasons and motives has led to strident calls from virtually all segments of Nigeria society for political constitutional and fiscal reform using various words and phrases restructuring true federalism, devolution, resource control regionalist, self determination (Rufai, 2017).

Contributing on the restructuring issue, Ofonagora (2017) observed that the need to re-negotiate Nigeria and run a post colonial government, different from what the country was bequeathed by its colonial masters. Emphasizing on the imperative of restructuring the Nigeria for Greater Stability, Unity and Peace, Ofonagoro stated that his assertion is not invitation to secession, better not talking how to break Nigeria but to make Nigeria better. He raised the issue the creation of state police as part of the restructuring needed in Nigeria. He stressed that there is need to negotiate how to run a post-colonial government different from what colonial masters left us (Ofonagoro, 2017, P. 2-20).

Ezeife, (2017) highlighted that, “Restructuring Nigeria”, is to go back to that “Agreed Nigeria”, as in the Independence constitutions of the regions and the federal government, then fuse it with recommendations of the 2014 National Conference, and rebuild Nigeria. I led this call of going back to “Agreed Nigeria” and you simply cannot avoid it and expect things to work. Let me show you the slight difference. The conference recommended 18 new states bringing to 54 the total number of states in Nigeria; plus Abuja, the question is, can we have 54 federating units including Abuja? Is there any way to engineer such a creation such that it works? You can’t have 54 federating units in Nigeria and make them to work; nor is it feasible to have 54 states seeking cooperation among themselves, on their own volition. I don’t think it can work. Therefore, it makes sense to even go back to the regional or zonal government, or call it anything you like. We have used the zones for many decades; we can transform the current six geopolitical ones into federating units, but this is where the greatest care is needed. What then do we do? Some people don’t like idea of returning to the regional arrangement because to them, it means going back to Egypt. But, what do we do?

Ezeife, submitted let the states in every zone, new and old, negotiate their own new constitutions based on the independence Regional Government constitutions. They will craft it in such a way as to minimize tension and then submit it to a body to be constituted by the government. All the ingredients are there in the Independence Constitution; the 2014 National Conference recommendations and so on. They can now put it all together and give us a restructured Nigeria. That is the difference. (Ezeife, 2017, p. 7)

This argument of Ezife was also advanced by Panter Brick (1980:117-137) who posited that the prices of bringing government nearer to the people would ensure that states would have direct access to resources, thereby lessening the contentiousness resource allocation and the intensity of hostility among the various ethnic sub-nationalities.

In her own perspective a great woman activist who was an associate of the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Okwor, advocated for restructuring across region, resource control and devolution of powers in the country. According to her, we need to restructure if we want to be together. We need to go back to the regions and develop at our own pace In fact, resource control is the key. Let each region use its own resource as it favours them.

Writing under the title “The way forward to a Greater Future”, Asiodu observes that, Nigeria however restructured should remain one sovereign entity. Nigeria should be organized as an effective Federation. The Exclusive Federation List, may be revised to

include only subjects essential to the functioning of an effective Federation. Such a list should include: External Affairs, International Agreements, Defence, The Armed Forces, Immigration, Currency and Monetary Policy, Customs and Excise, International and Inter-State Trade and Investment, Aviation, Oil, Gas and Solid Minerals, Inter-State Railways and Highways, Ports, Federal Police, Interpol Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, Supreme Court and Federal Judiciary. It is not practicable to regroup States so as to make the six (6) zones the federating units in lieu of States. Zones should remain fora for consultations and the basis for applying the principle of rotation in selection of the president and other office holders by political parties (Asiodu, 2017, p. 19).

According to Abdullahi, (2017) all these agitation for restructuring started when there was no true government. We have been failing Nigerians, the elites before us like Late Barduna, Chief Awolowo, Azikiwe and others risked their lives, worked and died for Nigeria under the arrangement that was not forced. The elites should stop pretending that tough times are over and Nigeria's unity is settled (Abdullahi, 2017, P. 42-43).

According to IBB (2017), he strongly believes that Nigeria is in dire need of restructuring. "Restructuring has become a national appeal whose time has come. He strongly advocates for devolution of powers that more responsibilities be given to the States, while the Federal Government is to oversee our foreign policy, defence and economy". He agrees that "restructuring and devolution of powers will certainly not provide answers to our challenges". All the same; "The talk to have the country restructured means Nigerians are agreed on our unity in diversity". No part of the utterance is fit for the dustbin of history. Every word of it is heavy, weighty and enduring (Babangida, 2017, P.32).

Corroborating with the views of other statesman on restructuring, the former Head of State General Gowon has urged the federal government to listen to the agitations of the people as regards restructuring of the country and create a true federalism which would enable Nigerians enjoy durable peace and stability. He reiterated that power has been over concentrated at the centre and called for devolution of power to the federating units leaving the federal government with vital aspects like defence, foreign affairs among others. He further stated that Nigeria must create a suitable federal system in a multicultural, multiethnic and multi religious country and only federal system can work (Gowon, 2017; P. 40).

From the political economy point of view, it is generally believed that the agitations for restructuring of the country is to ensure that states and local government become a veritable source of socio-economic opportunities and political patronage for sectional elites and communities (Adetoye, 2016:27).

According to All Progressive Congress (APC) Committee on true federalism report submitted to the leadership of the party, the committee observed and identified twenty four (24) items and areas to be restructured to include exploitation and revenue sharing of reforms accruing from minerals, amendments of the petroleum Act, the land use Act, manager of State, State police, denudation principles, fiscal federation, local government autonomy, devolution of powers, power sharing and rotation, order adjustment, conduct of referendum

among others. While receiving the report, the National Chairman of the Party, Chief Odigie Obyegun stated that the report deals with the most fundamental issues and challenges that beset the nation (Economy, February 2018, p. 35 from www.theeconomyng.com).

2.4 SYNTHESIS OF THE DISCOURSE

The totality of the scholars view and extant literatures on restructuring can be examined from both protagonists and antagonists perspective to include restructuring as the devolution of power to federating unit. Many of the items on the exclusive list would have to be transferred to the concurrent list. And the federal government would be left with defence, foreign affairs, immigration and such like. Secondly, it must comprise the adoption of proper fiscal federalism. The federating units would control their resources and pay taxes to the center. The federating units must have meaningful autonomy. Only the control of the resources can yield that.

Again, since many of the states are literally moribund, a forward looking restructuring must entail a third rearrangement; a merger of states to make regions viable for federating units. The capacity of the federating units to be self sustaining and cultural affinity must be the important considerations in the delineation of regions.

Equally, the other components of restructuring could be worked out during the deliberation. Fears must be assuaged and compromises struck. Many observers believe the presidential system of government is too expensive. The truth is that the presidential system of government can be run more cost effective. If the option of the parliamentary system is to be explored, the culture of wastefulness and vanity must still be dismantled. Unicameral legislature could save costs.

What is more, the major benefit of a restructured federation along the lines espouse above will be peace. Devolution of powers and true fiscal federalism would enhance autonomy and subdue feelings of alienation. But there would be development and much more. There would be a greatly enhanced and focused vigilance against corruption and theft of public resources. The ethnic sentiments that have stood against proper identification and criminalization of theft of public resources will be reduced. Ethnic championship by thieving politicians will no longer earn them sanctification. These ills can't be completely eradicated. Sectionalism will exist even in the region. Political bitterness will not disappear after restructuring. Latent prejudices will come to the fore. Fundamentally restructuring would enhance healthy competition amongst the regions. Regions who fail to institute good governance would witness massive emigration, capital flight and greater improvement. The days when leaders hid behind religious fervors to win votes and remain folk heroes would be gone. Leaders would foist servitude on their people would run the risk of dangerous uprisings sparked by contrast. People would look across and witness prosperity in well managed regions and channel their venom appropriately. Ethnic rivalry could prove useful. It will foster inter regional competition.

In its bid to achieve unity among its diverse population, Nigeria had experimented with a number of devices in form of policies like quota system, geo-political zoning of political

offices and other appointments, federal character, unity schools, NYSC, MAMSER/NOA among others. The question now is: has the country achieved the desired integration? Again, viewed from comparative perspective, Nigeria's state creation experiences have been quite dramatic. In the first place, unlike in most other federations where reorganizations of state boundaries have usually been followed by a period of fairly stable consensus on the state structure (Dean, 1986), Nigeria's state creation exercises have tended to be cyclical and self-perpetuating, with each reorganization merely provoking pressures for further reforms (Suberu, 1995).

Although, the North has been hesitant about restructuring, the Sultan of Sokoto has shown political maturity. He supports restructuring because the peace of the country depends on it. Emir of Kano laments the poverty and illiteracy of the North. But he knows restructuring would enhance political accountability. However, a majority of the leaders of Northern Nigeria remain in perpetual dread of a restructured federation. The fears of the north are not genuine. Atiku Abubakar says that northern elite who fear a restructured federation, with more autonomy for federating units, are lazy.

Many northern elites claim patriotism for their stand against restructuring. They suggest that the devolution of powers could be the prelude to balkanization. The truth is that a Nigeria where equity and fairness reign will be more attractive to all regions than secession into tiny countries. The ultimate panaceas against separation are fairness and equity and not the sanctity of any constitution.

The North has a very large youthful population. The North has an abundance of arable land. The North has a heavy stock of solid minerals. The death of oil is imminent. The northern regions therefore, should be in the forefront of the demands for fiscal federalism. Devolution of powers would allow the north greater freedom at some cultural homogeneity they have always sought. The northern regions could be the greatest beneficiaries of a restructured federation.

3.1 FINDINGS

The study observed that conditions necessitated for Nigeria adoption of federalism ranges from economic advantage, security, territorial contiguity, cultural diversity and indeed shared problems. In other words, Nigeria federalism is a system of government about self rule and shared value where these autonomous units identity is preserved. This implies that federalism could promote economic development and more importantly, unity in diversity. However, the prolonged military regimes in Nigeria altered the political trajectory and placed the country with lopsidedness in terms of structural configuration.

In fact, the precarious state of the Nation gave the North, 19 States with 413 Local Governments, while the South, has 17 States with 331 Local Governments. Simply put, the system did not give patriotic fire in the people as agitations continue to arise periodically.

The assertion of Gowon (2017), IBB (2017; Atiku; 2017, Nwabueze, 2017; Rufai, 2017; Onyegun, 2018; Musa, 2017; and Ezife, 2017 among others captured the state of chaos

and despair that characterized the country presently and has resulted to series of agitations, violence and crisis in Nigeria supported this findings.

The implication is that confidence which is the necessary cutting edge in democracy and governance is completely lacking in Nigeria polity, these fundamental issues and challenges that beset the nation must be tackled.

4.1 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ascertaining the doctrine for federalism and the clamour of restructuring of Nigeria for good governance has been the main focus of this study. This is because the call for restructuring is fundamentally borne out of some perceived levels of injustice and inequality currently witnessed by some states, local government as a result of faulty federalism. To scientifically undertake the above purposes, this study traversed conceptualizations, theoretical framework, content analysis debates and discussed dominant issues in Nigeria federalism that calls for restructuring. These issues bordered on unitary structured federalism as a result of prolonged military regimes, fiscal federalism, resource control, power devolution, local government autonomy among others. The study took a deep look into the challenges that beset the nation. These structural problems arose from domineering relationships between the federal government and the components units as a result of faulty federalism in Nigeria.

4.2 RECOMMENDATION

- i. There is need to improve the present federation which has been dysfunctional, more unitary and not delivery public goods to the generality of Nigerians by adopting the restructuring calls.
- ii. The state of national dissatisfaction arising from economic stress and political uncertainty with localized violent conflicts could be controlled if true federalism principles are entrenched in the constitution.
- iii. There is need for Nigerians to advance, discuss and adjust the exclusive list, thus, promote and enhance nation-building.
- iv. Finally, it is an acceptable fact that Nigerians appreciate and cherish unity in diversity through a fairer meritocratic system, social justice and indeed structural rebalancing.

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