

RESTRUCTURING AND REFORMING NIGERIAN FEDERALISM: THE CRUX OF THE MOMENT

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Abstract

Restructuring has become the latest word in the political landscape with political and non political actors pushing forward their ideas of the word that was not too long ago, an anathema to many state actors. Federalism is the preferred form of government based on its integrative capability to approximate the heterogeneous political life of multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic societies. The practice of federalism has remained a foreboding nightmare due to the skewed nature of federal practice in Nigeria, this has led to serious contestations among the constituent nationalities thus resulting in endless tinkering and attempts to dissolution. The problem with Nigeria is how to secure an efficient central government that would help preserve national unity while allowing free scope for the diversities of the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual constituent units. There have been protagonists and antagonists of true federal state because it is assumed that one group or the other stands to gain more. If quest for equity is to create its dynamics and if the dynamics are inclusive enough, the country is likely to create bases for consensus, amity, and cooperation that shall conduce to healthy and sustainable development of the country and her people as well as, possibly, democratic politics. If the dynamics are negative, regardless of the ratios affected and their nature or distribution, the results shall be none other than accusations and counter-accusations as well as anarchy, at the most its extreme. It is this latter outcome that was harvested within the first decade of the country's independence. The country has witnessed a civil war that threatened its territorial integrity and this has averted disintegration. The paper will investigate among others the concept of restructuring and reforming, the outcome of restructuring generally as the condition for sustaining the nation-state. The restructuring can at the point of success make the country assume its rightful place in the comity of nations. The long awaited crux of the moment will shelve its long-awaited collapse that is in the imagination of the doomsayers some years ago. However, the paper utilized secondary sources of data to drive home restructuring in Nigeria as the recognition that exist state institutions, particularly at the center, are inadequate to apprehend and resolve emerging challenges. The ability of Nigeria's post-civil war federalism to prevent state disintegration or large-scale ethno-violent movements will die a natural death considerably. The center would not hold much except the polity undergoes political, economic, structural and functional restructuring.

KEYWORDS: Restructuring; protagonists; antagonists; federalism; marginalization and sub units

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's current political and constitutional status quo is evidently unsustainable and the cries of marginalization, secession, true federalism and sharia; as well as abject socio-economic poverty, unemployment, rural neglect, decrepit infrastructure and urban slums, militancy, insurgency and widespread insecurity being experienced all over Nigeria are symptoms of the nation's critical dysfunctionality. The status quo is not an option and the nation must heed calls for restructuring or else serious problems may lie in the horizon. There must be restructuring in Nigeria to re-establish the principles of federalism as our founding fathers freely decided in the negotiations that led to independence. The federal ideal was subverted by the military as they sought to transform Nigeria into a unitary state which now undermines Nigeria's unity, stability and development. Many have come to agree that the danger facing the development in Nigeria is not necessarily corruption, but lack of national cohesion and sense of belonging among its citizens. Most Nigerians owe their loyalty to the north or south, their ethnic nationalities; many politicians gain the undue advantage to fan the embers of north and south dichotomy, ethnic or religious affiliations to achieve their selfish desire. The danger inherent is that consolidating nationalism in disguise of federalism threatens the federal system in Nigeria (Agbaje, 2018).

The character of Nigerian leaders are nationalists in the day and ethnicism by night, as they only advocate federalism in name, but actually worked to accrue advantage to their ethnic units. Restructuring has acquired widespread usage particularly in Nigeria's public space within three years of Buhari administration (www.sunnewsonline.com). It should be noted that this is not the first time restructuring have found their ways into national consciousness and reckoning. Between now and then, much water has passed under the bridge as far as nation building is concerned. Some groups openly canvass for disintegration in the country, as its peoples cannot stay together; everyone is worried about likely consequences (Sharma, 2012). The consequence is that various nationalities inhabiting Nigeria have not wiled into a nation in which all of them would have a stake rather it provided an environment for mutual suspicion and distrust among disparate groups in Nigeria (Bello, 2012, Adetiba, 2013). It has been noted that the chorus of restructuring has been sang when resource control was in vogue; to achieve the same objective as the current debate. The only difference this time is that resource control captured the imagination for the people of oil producing states in Niger Delta, but this time around restructuring is pitting the elite of north and south, as may be segmented to represent the South-East; South-South and South-West geo-political zones on the firing line. The paper will clarify restructuring as instruments of association for various communities into a nation-state and specify the positive factors of the federal set up that might have been compromised; this will give rise to the clamour for restructuring. The election year of 2015 was the year American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and some of its operatives predicted that Nigeria would disintegrate. A succeeding section shall be devoted to underscore the positive and negative outcomes of restructuring, should restructuring gather momentum beyond the feature of open and credible democratic discourse in the public space of a polity.

Conceptual Analysis

Restructuring

Restructuring can mean a whole gamut of concepts depending on the perspective from which one looks at the word. In Nigeria, the whole system has gone out of control, so restructuring here is generic in that all the basic system elements will be affected. Reforms, reviews and reorganization will be undertaken in the diverse framework of political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal subsystems comprising the system. Restructuring in political hermeneutics is a growth and development strategy used to reframe the power perspectives of the institutions and levels of government (federal, state and local). Restructuring is a political term which denotes true devolution and decentralization to states which allows regional growth, development and stability (Obaze, 2015). Restructuring has become a political language subject to several political interpretations based on the interests on the subject matter. What the Biafrans understand as restructuring is different from that of Oduduwas. The former primarily hinged on self determination rights and the latter clamouring for regional states with less control at the centre. The diverse opinions about this term have clogged the wheels of the vehicle of achieving a true federal state in Nigeria. In the true sense, Nigeria's federalism has been battered by series of coups and counter coups and this has caused myriads of political instability and thus ushered Nigerians to an era of unitarism (Bello, 2017).

Restructuring means effecting changes to our current federal structure to bring it closer to what our founding leaders erected in order to address the very issues and challenges that led them to opt for a less centralized system. It means devolution of more powers to the federating units with the accompanying resources, and it would involve greater control by the federating units of the resources in their areas. By implication, it is the reduction of powers and roles of the federal government so that it focuses only on those matters best handled by the centre such as defence, immigration, customs and excise, foreign policy, aviation as well as setting and enforcing national standards on such matters as education, health and safety (Atiku, 2017).

Restructuring could be traced to the root word to structure, from which the prefix “re” was added to become “restructure. The word “structure” is defined as that which is constructed; a combination of related parts, as a building or machine.” Structure has its biological, geological, chemical, social (societal) connotations. In the case of a nation-state, restructuring requires its citizens to take a closer look at the national edifice or better still the state of the nation with regard on how to address structural deformities (Bello, 2017).

Restructuring is the process of increasing or decreasing the number of component parts that makes up a system and re-defining the inter-relationship between them in such a way that the entire system performs more efficiently. However, restructuring, if not well planned and handled can lead to system collapse. The first thing that comes to the mind of people when they hear restructuring is political restructuring such as creating more states or merging of states or LGA, resource control, regional autonomy, power devolution. However, there are many dimensions to restructuring, some of which include political restructuring, economic restructuring, educational restructuring, social restructuring, accounting restructuring, administrative restructuring, restructure of security apparatus. Since there are many dimensions to restructuring, anybody agitating for it should tell Nigerians the exact type or types of restructuring he or she wants (**Ikemitang, 2017**).

2. FEDERALISM

Federalism entails true devolution of power as obtainable in the United States of America. The states should be self sustaining and reliable and not a system as we have here where a state cannot exist without depending on federal allocation. That cannot in the real sense be called a Federal state. It is this political hypocrisy that has launched Nigeria to the present states of developmental comatose. Toyo (2001) assert that no federalism is false rather all are true; the concept of true federalism undermines the theories underpinning federalism, this constitutes true federalism. Kapur (1986) defined federalism as a dual government where powers are divided and distributed by the constitution between central, regional or state governments, such powers are original and derived. The component units are coordinate independent authorities within their allotted sphere of jurisdiction he further assert that it is imperative that the component units must be left with adequate economic resources to perform the functions assigned to them satisfactorily without being dependent of the doles of the national government. Babalawe (1988), states that the responsibilities are distributed in such a manner as to protect the existence of authority of both levels of polity each of which is independent within its own sphere. Federalism refers to the doctrine which advocates and promotes the form of organization of a state in which power is dispersed or decentralized by contract as a means of safeguarding local identities and individual liberties. Federalism describes the structure of a state; designates its political process and political culture. It is pertinent to note that Nigeria’s federal experience principle of definition and description can no longer hold. This is because the central government has usurped the powers formally exercised by the regional governments. Friedrich (1963) view federalism as a union of group united by one or more common objectives but retaining their distinctive group being for other purposes. It unites without destroying themselves that are uniting and it is meant to strengthen them in their group relations. Assessing Nigeria’s federalism as a cosmetic one,

The attainment of true federalism will introduce the principle of resource control and encourage early development of other natural resources of local and international relevance in Nigeria. It empowers states to make inputs into how natural resources found in their areas should be exploited and how revenue accruing there from should be shared. All the states are potential beneficiaries, since there is no state that is not blessed with a natural resource. The two basic reasons for the erosion of true federalism was characterized the Nigerian nation in the first republic before the onslaught of the military in 1966. The visionary development of federalism specifically from 1954 to 1965 ended with the gunshots of the early harmattan morning of January 15, 1966, which eliminated some of the founding fathers of federalism in Nigeria, and killed the federalism itself. The defenders of true federalism argued that states are feeble not because they lack the resources and

manpower that would make them strong economically and administratively, but fiscal and legislative relationships between them and federal government render them feeble (Ndu 2003).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework for this paper is anchored on elite theory as propounded by theorist like Higley (1980), Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Robert Michels (1876-1936). Mosca emphasized the ways in which minorities out-organize and outwit large majorities. He posits that political classes Mosca's term for political elites usually have a certain material, intellectual, or even moral superiority over those they govern (1923-1939). Pareto postulated that in societies with truly unrestricted social mobility, elites would consist of the most talented and deserving individuals. But in actual societies, elites are those adopt at using the two modes of political rule, force and persuasion that enjoy important advantages like inherited wealth and family connections (1915-1935). Pareto sketched alternating types of governing elites, which he likened to lions and foxes. Elite' oligarchies according to Michels originated from organizations who were in dire need for leaders and experts that could operate them efficiently. In the same vein, the core tenets of elitism are deceptively simple, due to their strategic positions and resources under their control, they affect political outcomes regularly and substantially (Higley and Burton 2006).

Jan (2012) explains that elites have the power that the majority of people or non-elites lack, and they make systematic use of their power in democratic and non- democratic politics. However, while power is portrayed by elitists as concentrated in elite hands and exercised in the top-down manner, even in the modern democratic regimes, the elite perspective does not dismiss non-elites as powerless. This is because elites are always constrained by non-elite orientations and preferences which the elite members have to shape and cultivate to sustain their rule, even if they act in an autonomous way. Higley and Burton cited in Jan (2012) reminds us that power-holders must cultivate mass support and frame their appeals to accord with the interests and political orientations of non-elites. It is in agreement with Agbodike cited in Okolo (2014) that federalism has been manipulated and channeled to serve the overall interest of the petty bourgeoisies ruling class. Elitism represents the interests of the few minorities Guaba, (2004), Agarwal, (2006) and Chaturvedi, (2006) explain that those who champion the principle and policies are indirect benefactor hence it is another form of expanding their solid-political and economic empire. Nigeria today wallow in the blind alley of development, it is obvious that the elite's roles in national development is trapped and caged by ethnicity. Ethnic movements are created and use by the elites to further their own special interests which a times constitute interests of the emerging social classes. This elite's class depend on the state devices to increase their benefits from the society. Part of the ethnic scheme in federalism are the mechanism through which the political elite maintain power and exercises influences. The idea and discussions of this paper are tailored on the assumptions of elite theory.

4. THE STRUCTURE OF NIGERIA FEDERALISM BEFORE THE JINGLE OF RESTRUCTURING

Most of the calls for restructuring had been from individuals and groups from the southern part of Nigeria, especially South South geo-political zone. Others from the North probably think that the agitation is because the south controls the major mineral resources that constitute the bulk of Nigeria's wealth. There is a wide spectrum of agitators both for and against. Agitators from the south are unanimously in support of restructuring while those from the north have divergent views. The Nigerian federalism is very sick, unbalanced and lopsided especially in terms of centralizing power (Obaze, 2015).

4.1 Structurally Imbalanced and Morbid Federation

Nigeria as presently constituted does not accommodate differing interests, circumstances and diversities of the constituent groups. This has made effort in securing peace and stability of the country, and its survival against the forces of division and conflict in a diverse and heterogeneous society like Nigeria to remain elusive. In terms of land mass, the Northern Region then had 71 percent, Western Region 8.5 percent, Eastern Region 8.3 percent and the Mid-Western Region 4.6 percent (Egwaikhide, and Suberu, (2004). The table below captures the current structural coloration of Nigeria:

Table 4.1: The Structure of Nigeria’s Present Political Economy NORTH & SOUTH

Number of States	19
North East	6
North West	7
North Central	6
Number of States	17
South East	5
South-South	6
South West	6
Number of Local Governments 419	Number of Local Governments 57
House of Representatives	191
North East	48
North West	92
North Central	49
House of Representatives	169
South East	43
South-South	55
South West	71
Number of Senators 57	Number of Senators 51
Federal Allocation	56%
States	57%
Local Governments	55%
Federal Allocation	44%
States	43%
Local Government	45%
Contribution to Major Revenue Sources	14%
Oil and Gas	0.0%
Value Added Tax	28%
Contribution to Major Revenue Sources	86%
Oil and Gas	100%
Value Added Tax	72%
FCT’s contribution of	20% is inclusive

Source: Ministry of Finance and Office of the Accountant General of the Federation.

The above analysis shows that there is political and economic imbalance, this structural imbalance in the political ecology of Nigeria cannot guarantee peace, stability, progress and economic development. There are obvious inequalities in the number of states, local governments, Senators, House of Representatives and federally allocated revenues. This was skewed to favour the Northern block; the Southern block contributes 86 percent of the revenues used in running the present political architecture. For instance, North receives an average of 56 percent of federally allocated revenues against 44 percent receipts for the South which contributes an average of 86 percent of the revenues. The reasons for the continued militancy and other regional agitations from the South is not far fetch as the region believes that they are massively short-changed by the current structure of Nigeria and this has decelerated national development. The inequality between the North and South has made it impossible for the South to control political power at the centre, given the ethno-regional politics of the country, without power concession from the North. It is common that no one becomes the President of Nigeria without

the support and blessings of the Caliphate. These inequalities being promoted by current political and economic structures are anti-thetic to federal stability and national development.

4.2 Feeding Bottle Federalism A situation where the existential of the federating states and the federal government is dependent on sharing oil rent monthly is far from being an ideal situation that stimulates economic growth as well as sustainable development. Babalola (2017); quote that unrepentant supporter and crusader for restructuring of the country argue that we have as federal government is indeed a unitary government where states only go for begging of money at the end of every month and no development of any kind is taking place. Governance in Nigeria has been turned into beggarly affair where all states depend on federal allocation for survival. This rent seeking tendencies have led to states jettisoning all forms of viable revenue generation in wait for free federal allocations, under the Joint Account Allocation Committee (JAAC).

4.3 Weak Institutions and Systemic Corruption

Systemic corruption, dishonesty, social injustice and lack of integrity have been institutionalized, accepted and accommodated as a norm in our society. According to Okowa (1994), Nigerians are so dishonest, lazy and weak, we allowed dishonesty to grow deep that most people are not ready to work, everyone wants to get rich systemic corruption defines a situation in which corruption has been institutionalized to a level of structural parameter. The nature of institutionalized corruption and dishonesty is evident across every breadth of Nigeria; be it in business activities, religion, politics, public and private sector and even personal relationships. An opportunity to serve in public office in Nigeria makes one to become super-rich through selfish accumulation of wealth and brazen embezzlement. The entire population no longer frowns at looters and dishonest people rather they are being celebrated to all the members of the society including the religious bodies. Some scholars like Okowa (1994) and Ndiyo (2008) believes that corruption is the major obstacle to Nigeria's quest for development. It has deformed every aspect of our life and human existence; the economic and social losses cannot be appropriately quantified. Their position is corroborated by some statistical evidence. For instance, a survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics between June 2015 and May 2016, revealed that Nigerians paid about N400 billion or \$4.6 billion as bribes in 2016 to public officials. The survey evaluates the quality and integrity of public services in Nigeria (NBS, 2017). It is major deformities which have inadvertently entrenched by Nigeria's distorted political economy.

The federal structure of Nigeria is believed to be a bad marriage that all dislike but dare not leave, and that there are possibilities that could disrupt the precarious equilibrium in Abuja (Ogbe, 2011). The instability and tension in Nigerian federation doubt over its adaptability in solving Nigeria's plurality problems. In its structural and political context, Nigeria's federalism may be likened to a biological cell capable of dividing and reproducing itself this has continued to witness continuous splitting of units (Dent, 1995). In 1954, it began as a federation of three regions but by 1964, it became four with the creation of mid western region from the then western region. By 1967, the federal structure was subdivided into 12 states while in 1976 it was split into 19 states. By 1989, it became a federation of 21 states, to increase 30 by 1991 and 1996 it had become a federation of 36 states. The creation of more states has always been accompanied by the creation of more local government areas. From 301 in 1976, the country boasts of 774 local government councils. Nigeria's federal structure is predicated on three-tier administrative structure federal, state and local governments. It is not a misnomer to have a federation, more than two tiers of government in order to cope with the diversities; the continued structural division has not produced a satisfactory component units. This is so because every attempt at states and local government creation will increase agitations (Muhammad, 2007).

Power distribution is a volatile issue which if not properly handled could lead to various forms of crises which are bound to crop up. Nigeria has not been forthright applying this principle to the letter and the result of this has heighten ethnic tension, mutual mistrust among ethnic groups, minority problem, and clamour to answer the national question (Uhunmwuangho and Ekp, 2011). According to Ojo (1989), this unequal sharing of power, Nigeria is transformed from a political community to an administered state. The political community is characterized by consociational values, while an administered state is absolute subjugation to an absolute centralized authority where there is disregard for consociational political relationship. Every level in federal arrangement derives its powers from the constitution and these rights, power and authority are justifiable when any level can seek redress against an infringement of these constitutionally stated rights and authority. In Nigeria, the powers and functions of each level of government are spelt out in 2nd schedule of the 1999 amended Constitution. The legislative lists are exclusive legislative and concurrent legislative list. The former is a subject

in whom the federal government can administer laws, while the latter deals with matters over which the federal and state governments have legislative powers (Ola, 1995).

Nigeria has a unique problem of achieving solidarity in action and purpose in the midst of hundreds of ethnic nationalities each exerting both centrifugal and centripetal forces on the central issue of the nation, bound in freedom, peace and unity where justice reigns (Ojo, 2002). This uniqueness creates “unique problems unknown to the experience of other peoples in the world (Onwujeogwu, 1995). It is not surprising that these ethnic groups are always in conflict and competition for scarce resources. This is unexpected especially among ethnically defined constituencies (William, 1980). The reason is that ethnic groups are in keen competition for the strategic resources of their respective societies. This is the case in Nigeria and other plural and segmented polities. This is so because ethnic groups are socio-cultural entities consider themselves culturally, linguistically or socially distinct from each other and their relations in potentially antagonistic terms (Cox, 1970). This is because the people feel left out in the scheme of things see it as a necessity to rely with their ethnic groups for a level ground in competing with others for resources against dominant ethnic groups, these escalate confrontation among the groups. Ethnic politics has become the order of the day as an alignment with one’s ethnic group is easy access to resources (Uhunmwangho and Epelle, 2007).

The abandonment of true federalism in Nigeria has led to the marginalization of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where the bulk of the country’s wealth is produced through the exploration and exploitation of crude oil as colossus of Nigeria’s economic base. The people of this region have been agitating for fair share of the country’s wealth, the bulk of which comes from their region. This quasi model of federalism has not addressed the socio economic and developmental needs of these people in spite of their unquantifiable contribution towards the development of the entire nation. The situation in Niger Delta region does not place Nigeria among nations operating a federal system of government. In an ideal federation, the states are semi-autonomous, independent at the centre. The states have control of the resources found in their areas, but pay royalty to central government such as defence, foreign affairs and customs among others are controlled by the government at the centre. Observers of Nigeria’s federalism states that the underlying principles of federalism have been ignored by successive Nigerian governments, efforts made earlier to implement the policy of fiscal federalism based on the principles of derivation. The 1960 and 1963 constitutions granted greater fiscal autonomy to the regions and empowered them to compete with one another. The current movement to better the people of Niger Delta region has brought to the demand for resource control and this has been misunderstood.

Ndu (2003) gave two basic reasons for the erosion of true federalism which characterized the Nigerian nation in the first republic before the onslaught of the military in 1966. One of the reasons he gave was the collapse of the first republic when the military intervened in January 1966 and this intervention marked the end of true federalism in Nigeria. The visionary development of federalism specifically from 1954 to 1965 ended with gunshots of early morning of January 15, 1966, which eliminated some founding fathers of federalism in Nigeria and killed federalism itself. The federal form which survived that military onslaught the basis which the country precariously persisted as an entity has never regained its true essence. There are two interrelated developments that accounted for the demise of true federalism in Nigeria. The coup and the eventual threat to unity followed by secession and civil war were traumatic events that called for centralized authority pull things back in one fold. There has been the professional practice of unified command which soldiers are familiar with. The centralized federalism in Nigeria is one of the disruptive heritages of military rule in Nigeria. The true federalism miles away in Nigeria because most states in Nigeria are feeble, particularly in their extractive capability and can hardly perform as federating units. Ndu (2003) with other defenders of true federalism argued that states are feeble not because they lack the resources and manpower that would make them strong economically and administratively, but the fiscal and legislative relationships between them and federal government render them feeble.

Unnecessary skepticism, negative thoughts about federal system and non ideological commitment to its maintenance constitute another plague on the practice of federalism in Nigeria. Ramphal (1979) captures that for a federation to resist failure, the leaders and their followers must feel federal, they must be moved to think of themselves as one people with one common, self-interest, capable, where necessary, over-riding most other considerations of small interests the good any must be consciously subordinated or compatible with the good for all. This then is tantamount to an ideological commitment not to federation only as a means but an end, as good form its own sake, for the sake of answering the summons of history. The call for a national conference to address the national question is perhaps the strongest evidence but still not well with Nigerian federalism. The advocacy of political autonomy is a strong marker of over-patronizing a section of the federation.

Agbu (2004) believes that the contestation over federalism in Nigeria has manifested itself not only in the quest for access and control over political but also as access to federally generated revenue. Nigeria's is not a healthy federalism as it has long been plagued by infection from the viruses of anti-federalism. Ajagun (2004) posits that we better be true to admit this union of which is bound to burst at the seams if left untended. David-West (2001), assert that it stands, federalism in Nigeria is described as a federalism façade being manipulated for self-serving ends.

4.4 Protagonists and Antagonists of Restructuring in Nigeria on Whose Interest

It is obvious that the debate is largely between the southern protagonists who largely bay for restructuring and the northern antagonists who are apparently largely, on the other hand, opposed to restructuring. There is no doubt that the restructure advocates are few and localized to some sections of the country.. Some of them have held public offices; others are still serving while some never held public office. There are notorious armchair critics and non-conformists among them. Some of the advocates are fairly well off in the society. They cannot be accused of acting on selfish grounds or for material gains. But it is quite apparent that they are out to promote the main, sectional interests and agenda that could erode the pillars of our national unity. Some of them promote their views with all the force at their disposal. Others threaten to unleash unimaginable calamity on the nation if their largely narrow and untenable wishes are not granted within a time, ignoring the undeniable fact that nation-building is a continuous project.

There are those who joined the bandwagon in calling for restructuring without knowing the full import of what the concept and content of restructuring entails. For instance one episode under the Obasanjo administration when some students took to the streets in demonstration, shouting, "Ali Must Go" Non students joined them innocently to echo "Ali Must Go" without knowing what the students were protesting against. The restructure advocates essentially anchor their arguments on certain misgivings and perceptions in form and style of governance. They perceive intolerable imbalance in the federal structure, as currently constituted; imbalance in appointments and imbalance in the distribution of resources. They perceive the system of governance in practice as unitary, contrary to their yearnings for federalism (Elaigwu, 1998, Usman, 2017).

Ekpo (2004) observed that protagonists of resource control began to push forward the argument that Nigeria cannot be a federation when the elements of federalism are lacking, such as state police, control of natural resources by the federating units. The semblance of a federation in Nigeria is the 36 states; otherwise the country is to all intents and purposes a unitary state. The government at the centre is stronger than the states, with the latter depending on allocations from the former for survival. The protagonists of true federalism argue that if the regions of the 1st republic had control agricultural products produced in their areas, and got 50 percent derivation from whatever accrued to the federation account as revenue, why then should the case be different when it comes to the Niger Delta region. The people of Niger Delta find it unacceptable that the practice of resource control was jettisoned, while derivation was drastically reduced.

Some have asked: what is the meaning of the word restructuring? The answer to, the meaning is restructuring the 1999 Constitution. The 1999 Constitution is largely system documentation. The 1999 Constitution is not achieving the goals and objectives marshaled out in its chapter two, sections 13, 14, 15 to 24. For instance, the government recorded dismal performance over the last 50 years in its attempt to achieve fundamental obligations in section 13 of the 1999 Constitution. The overt failure of government under section 14 (b) of the 1999 Constitution is responsible for the catastrophic quit order given to Ndigbo by 16 Northern Youth Groups. Their threat has not been rescinded. If implemented by 1st October, 2017 there will either be a coup or the IPOB will achieve Biafra without going to war. The issue of a coup arises when the system is not peacefully restructured before it gets out of control (FRN, 1999). When a system is not achieving the goals and objectives it is supposed to achieve, it is overhauled, examined and analyzed to identify its dysfunctional elements. This enables an alternative system to be designed and implemented. This will enable us to reorganize the political economic, social, technological, ecological, educational and legal subsystems. In an interview granted to Professor ABC. Nwosu that there is too much power at the centre; the federal government has too much power, responsibility, money and much waste. Is there anybody who has not seen that the federal government has too much power, and much responsibility? Is there anybody who does not see that over 60 to 70 per cent spent on recurrent expenditure is wrong? Is there anybody who does not see that the federal government has over 800 parastatals and that is wrong? Is there anybody does not see that having over 42 ministries is wrong? When asked why people are asking for restructuring, he asserts that the structure we have is anti-development unjust and unfair. He believes in school of thought that regards restructuring as devolution of power than regionalization of Nigeria. Nwankwo () defines restructuring process as the reinvention of the 1963 constitution

constitutionalizing the six geo-political zones as federating units and devolving considerable powers to the regions (Daily Sun.). Restructuring does not mean the merging of states as some people prefer. It is a thorough process that allows each region to control its resources and pay royalties to the central government. It is anchored on the principle of each according to their needs. Restructuring will help to stem the tide of restiveness and resolve the questions of citizenship, religion, resource control, and fiscal federalism in many parts of the country. On the side of the antagonists to the argument on restructuring has made the print media in particular the platform to pitch the Northerners against the Southerners, the perception has been created that restructuring is aimed at compromising the historical and natural advantage embedded in the region. Some see it as an attempt to divide the country in which Northern region shall be the worse for it.

Another important aspect of restructuring we need in Nigeria today is that of our mindset. There are certain unproven statements and beliefs that have found a permanent residence in the heart of Nigerian adults example corruption cannot be eradicated, we can never have correct census, if you don't bribe you cannot get a contract, if you don't bribe voters you cannot win elections, merit alone cannot get you job or promotion. They paint the picture that Nigeria is an impossible country and the worst place on earth to live in. Unfortunately, young men and women today are growing up with the same orientation and belief that if you don't know a big man somewhere likes senator or minister you cannot secure employment, win a contract in a ministry or get admission into a tertiary institution. Also, if you don't join the corruption train, you can never be rich, or make it. We need to re-orientate our mindset. No amount of political or economic restructuring can bring any meaningful progress unless we first restructure and re-orientate our mindset, change our value system and develop sound character. One of my icons and example of a perfect leader in Nigeria today is Lamido Sanusi, state that having embarked on a one-man, anti-establishment crusade to re-orientate the mindset of northerners, to free them from shackles of unprogressive tradition and misapplication of religious tenets. The younger generations know that religion is not against scientific education or skills acquisition. If the tempo is sustained and other emirs join his crusade, the north in ten years may close the educational gap and become the richest part of Nigeria. His crusade needs to be replicated in every part of Nigeria to implement a positive change in the mindset of Nigerians. This is the key to our future and the foundation on which other forms of restructuring can be built (Sagay, 2004).

4.5 The Perception of Restructuring before and After 1999 Constitution

Some advocates of restructuring propose a return to the 1963 Constitution. They justify that it was the only constitution in the nation's history that was freely negotiated by our revered civilian political leaders. The three regions and later four, created by that constitution performed wonderfully as units of development under the political and administrative structure. There is no doubt that the regions recorded unmatched developments within the short time they were in operative. The restructuring advocates that all the subsequent constitutions were handed down by the military. They emphasize that the current 1999 Constitution was a product of the military, a carryover of the unitary system of governance imposed by military governance. They call for a re-enactment of true federalism and true fiscal federalism like in 1960s which left the regions with sufficient resources to perform. The current 36 States of the federation get more money than the former regions (). It was similar agitations like the current clamour to restructure that brought balkanization of Nigeria into states to redress perceived imbalance that now jeopardize the existence of Nigeria as a country. The nationalists could not contemplate such a suicidal act and sacrificed their individual ambitions to sustain the unity of the country. In their anxiety to bury the ghost of regionalism permanently and shun the revival of regionalism under any guise, they were not prepared to tolerate the existence of the residual "common services" after the abolition of the regions. The regional assets were shared to the last kobo, sometimes after much acrimony among the successor states. It is unrealistic to prescribe that the structure of Nigeria from 1963 to date, let alone of the future. Nigeria undergoes a lot of irreversible metamorphosis from 1963 to date and the population size has increased. The contribution of agricultural commodities to revenue of the component units has drastically changed (Kuforiji, 2017). What remained relatively fixed is the Nigeria territory, less ceded Bakassi. The socio-cultural and political dynamics inflicted permanent changes, the structure and practices of that era cannot be super-imposed on the existing structure. It is in realization of the impracticality of returning to the 1963 structure and malfunction of the current state structure that some floated the idea of current geo-political zones as the federating units. The idea was canvassed and rejected in the constitutional discussions prior to the promulgation of the 1999 Constitution. It should be recalled that Nigerians were jubilant and hailed the creation of their states. It is unbelievable that the present constituted states would give up their hard-earned freedom and subordinate themselves to the former regional capitals. The struggle for a would-be capital of the proposed sub-federating units is another issue that must be anticipated. Can Nigeria afford more rounds of squabbles and expenses to site and build new capitals for the proposed sub-federating units? There is serious

concern about the economic viability and sustainability of the existing states, many interest groups still clamour for creation of more states, no matter what. There is need for the two extreme groups those calling for balkanization versus those demanding for sub-federating entities to reconcile their views.

The 1999 Constitution reflect on the totality of all the efforts and experiences Nigeria gained and harnessed at constitution making since the amalgamation in 1914. At least there were seven consecutive constitutions drawn up in Nigeria prior to the 1999 constitution. Many Nigerians testify that they participated in several constituent assemblies, the discussions preceded on the promulgation of the different constitutions by the military, as a matter of formality. The centre has turned out to be too powerful, the current call for devolution of powers and redistribution of resources. It cannot be denied that the powerful centre is the outcome of intense agitations by Nigerians of the 1960s that regions were too powerful and imbalanced should be balkanized. The agitations were implemented to grant self-determination to some communities and preserve the unity of Nigeria. This is not possible with unending revisionism and the constant undermining of its constitutions and institutions. Kolawole (2017) remarked that we are unable to reach anything close to a national consensus on the way forward. Some just take the opposite direction out of ignorance, some out of mass hysteria, political reasons, cheap publicity, hardened ideologies and no reason (Thisday, November 12, 2017).

Certainly, the evils of corruption, greed, selfishness, impunity and mismanagement of public funds which have plagued the nation for years are not structurally induced. They arise from human weakness and poor compliance with rules on regulations. It is not a structural matter that disposal of litigations in courts is prolonged in Nigeria relative to the swiftness with similar cases are disposed of in courts in other countries. Electoral malpractices are not structurally induced but due to non observance of the rules. While one may not want to invoke the adage, A bad workman blames his tools, it should be re-assert that the solution to Nigeria's socio-economic and political problems lies more in a much-needed change of attitude in governance by the operators than restructuring the country.

5. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

It is of no use to put a new wine in an old bottle, it is disheartening that we are in a country where we patch structures that are not working. There is no point modifying a constitution that does not reflect the wishes of the people, we the people cannot in any way be taken to reflect consent among Nigerians of a constitution stained with military undertones and imposed rather than adopted. The National assembly under the present dispensation has spiced up this anomaly by legitimizing what is known as illegitimate under the guise of alteration and modification. Until we have a country where the constitution reflects the true intents of the citizens, it is rather not prophetic that days of political stability are still far off. In the light of this, the country needs a new order and a realm where we are governed the way we want and not the way we are taught. We did not firmly and solemnly resolve to follow the present constitution. Thus, we cannot expect a commendable result from same. Our democracy has been terrorized by all shades and manners of ethnic bias, nepotism and tainted estimation of class and society. Thus, restructuring under this present constitution will not prove effective as it has been baptized with anomalies. There is unity in our diversity; this has become a cliché in the country. The need for restructuring amounts that all regions need to have autonomous powers on issues like health, education rather than the current structure that purports heavy reliance on the federal government. The present over-centralization does not present the true will of the people. There is need to consider the ideals that bind us as a country and forge ahead. It is ridiculously for the current administration to trash away the 2014 Abuja confab report where the issue of restructuring was addressed. Politicians will always remain a politicians, the citizens should not be stampeded in the cross fight. This is not a time to restructure APC or PDP but time to restructure our country.

It is the opinion of many Nigerians that the ideals of our country can only be upheld if it reflects the desires of the people. This is a time when a regional government will bring people closer to government vice versa and usher a system where states become viable and self sustaining. Policing, education, health should be made state affairs and not national matters exclusively. It is time to introduce a new constitution to reflect our unity in diversity and not a political slang and comic sentence let's have a system where accountability is in order and public officials are by law and not morals be made to realize that they belong to the public and answerable to them.

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