

Restructuring of Nigerian Federation: Insights on Political, Security and Education

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Abstract: The study examined restructuring of Nigerian federation taking cognize of the insights on political, security and education. Restructuring is posited as the reconfiguration of the country and devolution of powers, resources to the constituent units. This study discusses restructuring of Nigeria's federation with insights on political, security and educational restructuring as dimensions for true federalism. The methodology used include secondary data sources that was analysed using content analysis. The findings shows that there is need for re-configuration of the country and devolution of powers to the constituent units in order to improve the political, security and education fortunes of Nigeria. The paper submits that too much powers are concentrated in the federal government, while the state government has usurps that power of local government which is supposed to cater for the grassroots. The study recommends among others that the constitutions should be amended to make way for the devolution of powers, empowerment of the state and local government.

Keywords: Federalism, Politics, Education, State Government, Local Government, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of this political dispensation known as "fourth republic" in 1999, numerous pressure groups and ethnic regions have been clamouring for resources control, equal distributions of natural resources and equal political representation in Nigeria. The call for restructuring have geared up multiplicity of descriptions and ideas on how to achieve a long-desired "true" federalism, that will reflect egalitarian society with high sense of belonging in all geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Conversely, there is no doubt that Nigeria's present structure need restructuring in some aspects of our national wellbeing. However, the willingness and processes remain bigger challenged to the various arms of government. Babalola and Onapajo (2019) posits restructuring as reconfiguration of the federal structure in order to allowed for more material opportunities and equitable distribution of power. In the definition of Najakku (2016) affirmed restructuring as the re-organization and re-arrangement of the system of resource control and distributions by the various levels of governments and regions for fostering national unity and development. While, Ahmed, Norafidah and Knocks (2017) claimed that restructuring could be seen as re-configuration of the country and devolution of powers to the

constituent units as it is practiced in western countries. Similarly, restructuring is a process of re-formation of component parts that makes up a country and re-defining the inter-relationship of the citizens for efficiency in performance and service delivery. The researcher is of the opinion that, the basic structures in restructuring requires a country to practice true federalism that includes, political system with a written constitution in which there is consistency in power sharing with a government consisting of federal government, state governments and local government.

The word federalism is a Latin word "foedus" which connote or interpreted as an alliance or a union where regions agree to create a common union with its own identity and integrity, but at the same time the different parts will keep their own identities and integrities (Wheare, 1964). However, scholars do not agree on a sole definition for federalism (Avbuere, 2019: Akindele, Olaopa & Obiyan, 2002). It has been perceived as a governmental structure that consists of at least two to three constituent parts that are not solely independent, but bound together to form a sovereignty known as a nation. It is a social science concept in which a group of people are bound together by treaty with a governing representative as president or prime-minister (Wheare, 1964). The term is also used to describe a system of government in which sovereignty is constitutionally divided between a central governing authority and legitimate units such as states and local government. Akindele, Olaopa and Obiyan (2002) claimed that federalism is the system in which the power sharing to governed is between national and state governments, creating what is mostly called a federation. More so, the researcher posit federalism as a system of sharing powers so that the federal government, state government and local government are independently governing the people within constitutional sovereignty and laws. Therefore, federalism is a structure of government in which sovereignty and powers are constitutionally divided between a central authority and other states with their local government areas (Dan-Azumi, Jega & Egwu, 2019). Although in most cases such powers might be shared with a stronger centre. The main structures required for a country to prudently practice true federalism include a political system in which there is power sharing under a written constitution with a government comprising of at

minimum two to three levels of government such as: federal government, state government and local governments (Avbuere, 2019). It is important to note that each levels of governments receives financial resources allocations for their capital projects, recurrent expenditure, other specific needs and development. Avbuere (2019) claimed that the essence of restructuring hinges on greater harnessing of essential natural resources, foster stability and rapid development of the regions at its own pace.

Obidimma and Obidimma (2015) posits federation as independent regions or states coming together to form a central government to whom certain powers are given, while states still retain most of their powers. Fundamentally, it implies a separation of powers and jurisdictions between two or three levels of government. Bin (2011) see the concept of federation as constitutional sovereignty characterized by a union of self-governing regions or states, united by entrenched constitution to form central government. In Nigerian context, this means that Nigerian constitution can only be amended by 2/3 majority votes of National assembly and all the various 36 states assemblies. Bin (2011) further clarifies that, the form of government with constitutional structure found in a federation is known as federalism. Conversely, the researcher stressed that, there are many essential features of federalism which cut across several jurisdictions such as: a supreme constitution for sovereignty, a democratically elected leader, national symbol, the parliament (the law makers), power sharing between the federal government, state and local government. Moreover, the judiciary which comprises of a Supreme Court, high courts and other lower courts are very essential in rule of law and interpreting the law for dispute resolution in the federation (Obidimma & Obidimma, 2015). More appropriately, there are many dimensions to restructuring such as: economic, agricultural, transportation, natural resources, financial revenue, taxation, civil services restructure many others.

To this end, the objective of this study is to contribute to the restructure debate of the Nigerian federation, particularly looking at the politics, security and education.

II. METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

This paper utilizes secondary sources of data for the research; this includes relevant books, periodicals, internet sources, journals, newspapers reports, government releases, and pronouncements. These data were analyzed through text mining and content analysis.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Political Restructuring

In the view of the researcher, political restructuring will promote transformational and visionary leader that will sincerely delivers good governance and generally improves the life of citizens. Conversely, it is appropriate to stressed that the era of military rule in Nigeria had almost erased the doctrines of federalism as the nation was governed as a unitary state in line with military rules and provisions, which

means power is centralized to the military head of state. The researcher further posits military era in Nigeria to have display a system of federalism by name, but wherein the regions and states have no clear independence, rather, they are solely dependents of the federal government. In contrast to the advent of democracy to this moment in Nigeria, the researcher affirmed the current scenario of federalism in Nigeria as the situation where the 36 states and 774 local government councils are still largely depending on the federal government for survival. The implication is that, there will be lack of access to resources control in various states in Nigeria. Likewise, there will be very little development of standard basic amenities as presently experienced in many states in Nation.

Constitution is a key factor that act as catalyst in a nation that practices true federalism. Constitution is the fundamental laws to which a particular nation is governed (Abah & Nwokwu, 2017). It is geared on principles of rule of law, regulations, customs and conventions to which a country is administered. It is appropriate to stressed that a federation being an assembly of states with ethno-regional groups can only be established through a lasting union enshrined in the constitution.

However, Federalism in Nigeria has been able to bring all the different ethnic nationalities together over the years. But unfortunately, it has not been able to keep these regions together without various agitations (Epelle & Nweke, 2019). Meanwhile, many ethnic nationalities in different regions in Nigeria appears to be living together despondently, over the years due to perceived social injustices. In an attempt to liberate them from this phenomenal, the call for political restructuring became expedient (Epelle & Nweke, 2019). In the definition of Ahmed, Norafidah & Knocks (2017) political restructuring is posited as political re-configuration of the country and devolution of powers to the constituent units as it is practiced in the developed nations.

In the context of Nigeria as a federation, restructure is required when there are fundamental laws binding separation of power between federal government, states and local government in the structural arrangement of a political system (Epelle & Nweke, 2019). More appropriately, this is when power and authority arrangement of a country is obviously skewed in favour of the federal government to the detriment of many states and local government areas. Dabo (2015) asserted that Nigeria is a federal state as a result of British conquest of various regions that is now made up the federation known as Nigeria. Awortu and N-ue (2018) rightly affirmed this when they observed that, the persistent and recurring intense struggles and widespread protests by various ethnic regions is traceable to lack of true federalism.

Conversely, the researcher noted that, the present system of Nigeria's federalism is a scenario where the federating units are agents of survival on federal government. The implication therefore is that instead of operating as co-equals, the federation is run as a unitary state against the tenets of

federalism (Wheare, 1964). This has led to series of political logjam, constitutional crises, litigations and economic instability of Nigeria as a nation. The researchers strongly stressed that there should be a constitutional amendment process that will completely overhaul the political system through which a true federalism can be achieved. These will be a solution to numerous ethnic groups struggling for resource control and power.

Meanwhile, the political restructuring in Nigeria is long overdue. In view of the descriptions above in addressing the political needs of all Nigerians, the researcher recommended the following:

1. The political system of Nigeria should be structured so as to meet the regional needs of true federalism and mutual integration of the citizens.
2. The Nigerian public institutions and establishments should be strengthened for effective service delivery to the citizens.
3. The democratic process should devoid of money politics and promotes the country into an egalitarian society.
4. The Nigerian constitution should be amended in consonance to the tenants of true federalism as a foundation to the democratic process in the country.
5. There should be an enactment of law enshrine in the constitution that permits seasonal national conference and discuss that will lead to constitutional review for national integration and good governance in Nigeria.
6. Equality, merits and transparency should be the federal character principles in employment and other public endeavours in Nigeria.
7. There should be an amendment to the constitution that empowered State Governments to have right to explore other minor resources within their states and remit taxes to the Federal Government.
8. The derivatives formula of sharing proceeds from mineral resources between State and Federal Government should be amended to suit principles of true federalism.
9. There should be higher level of rule of law that affirmed the right of citizens.
10. There should be amendment in the constitution that will allow Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct all Local Government election nation-wide.

Security Restructuring

Nigeria is presently confronted with security challenges ranging from insurgency, kidnappings, cattle rustling and armed banditry. The rate of insecurity is alarming and affect all the regions in Nigeria. The recent abduction of 333 students of Government Science Secondary School Kankara in Katsina State, affirmed the need for proper restructuring of security system in Nigeria (KSG, 2020). However, insecurity is not peculiar to Nigeria only, it is a phenomenal in the continent of Africa especially in the west, central and east

Africa (Amnesty International, 2019). According Amnesty International Report of (2019) confirmed that, many lives were lost as a result of armed banditry attacks, kidnapping and cattle rustling in Nigeria. Also, it also appears that security challenges are visible in most regions in Nigeria, but predominantly in north east, north central, part of the north-west and south-south regions of Nigeria (Dutse & Olowoselu, 2020; Obarisiagbon & Akintoye, 2019). Insecurity is largely posited as the absence of security in a state or nation. Constitutionally, the fundamental role of government is to protect life and properties of every individual in Nigeria through its security agencies, which include the armed forces and Nigerian police. Conversely, the present security challenges confronting the nation is termed as internal security. Meanwhile Nigerian Police is solely responsible to provide internal security to Nigerians (NOA, 2019). The researcher critically observed the Nigerian Police Force and outlined the following recommendations for effective policing in Nigeria:

1. Confidentiality is essential during information gathering from the public to the Police Force. This process will ensure effectiveness of policing system.
2. Crime investigation unit should be more efficient through the introduction of ICT detecting and intelligent equipment for effective investigation and policing.
3. The Police Force should be more professional during interface with the public, especially during patrol, investigation, arrest, stop and search checking points.
4. Seasonally, there should be a regular test on the psychological level of police men and women that are involved in combat fight against terrorism, banditry and crime in the nation.
5. There should be provisions of good salary package, life insurance, medical insurance, good pension scheme, working condition, free education for police children.
6. This should be transparency in the areas of budgets and finances of the force.
7. Adequate funding is needed for the entire operation of the Nigerian Police Force.
8. There is urgent need for building of befitting barracks and renovation of existing Police housing in the barracks.
9. The selection and recruitment process in to the force should be based on merit with high level of transparency.
10. Promotion of officers and order rank should also be based on achievement and merit. This will ensure confidence and high performance in the system. The curriculum in the training colleges should be overall with modern policing system.

Educational Restructuring

Education is the bedrock of modern societies and is the key to nation development. The role of Education in the development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. Education has been

identified as the fulcrum that drives the socio-economic development and unite the society (Olowoselu & Dutse, 2020). Nation that is more concern in the development of education sector, needs to restructure their education sector with proper funding on educational resources. This is to the fact that, education is the intellectual capacity center of any nation and the catalyst that propels the economic growth and development (Tiamiyu & Babalola, 2013). Likewise, it is posited that education enables individuals, groups and countries to explore and develop their physical and social environments for the satisfaction of their needs (Alemika (2015). Education is the key to modernization in the nation. The call for educational restructuring in Nigeria is a call for educational development that will create meaningful impact on the citizens.

However, what is needed in restructuring Nigeria's education sector is adequate budgeting and proper funding to the benchmark of 26% of UNESCO standard. The inadequacies in education hinges on education budget such as generation of fund, allocation fund and use of this budgeted fund for educational resources and purposes (Fabunmi, 2019). In addition, there should be effective improvement in service delivery interns of management of education fund from the regulator both from Federal and States Ministry of Education". It's on record that western nations of the world restructured their educational sectors, which in turn led to their unique economic growth and industrial development (Fabunmi, 2019). The researcher stressed that restructuring of education in a nation will enhance the citizens to have access to quality education. Also, there will be reduction in crime rate and the nation will be at peace.

Funding Of Education

Conversely, adequate budgetary allocations with proper funding of education is the key to restructuring of the education sector in Nigeria. The researchers stressed that no meaningful impact of restructuring can be achieved without proper funding of the education. Fabunmi (2019) affirmed that education is underfunded in Nigeria by making comprising with China, Malaysia and Ghana. Fabunmi (2019) revealed that Malaysia and China assigned 21.7% of the 2017 budget to education. While Ghana allocated 16.7% and Nigeria budgeted 6.1 % to education in same year 2017. The researchers concluded that restructuring of the education sector in Nigeria needs adequate budgetary allocation with prudent funding. However, inadequate funding leads to inadequate infrastructure, incessant strike actions, poor salary to teachers' and low level of staff commitment to their duties. Therefore, it is recommended that, Nigerian Government should use the UNESCO budgetary benchmark for education to fund the education sector in Nigeria.

IV. CONCLUSION

The issue of restructuring Nigerian political, security and educational sectors are genuine issues that need urgent responses from the government. It is timely and appropriate for National Assembly to act on the gains of restructuring

these three sectors for the betterment of Nigerian citizens. Therefore, this paper points out viable restructuring process in the political sector of Nigerian. More so, this article justifies the need for urgent restructuring of the security agencies, especially the Nigerian Police Force for effectiveness in the protection of life and properties of the citizens. No nation can raise above the level of its education. It is important for the Nigerian Government to kick start the restructuring process of Nigeria with the recommendations made in this paper.

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