

# Federal Character Policy and Representative Bureaucracy in Nigeria's Federal Civil Service

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examined the implementation of the federal character policy and its implications for representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's federal civil service. The hunch of this research is that despite the introduction of the Federal Character Policy in Nigeria since 1979, the perception of many Nigerians is that the policy is yet to effectively chart the course of representative bureaucracy in the Nigerian civil service with particular regards to equitable recruitment, enhancement of competence as well as dissuading of mutual distrust, ethnic loyalty, discontent, and other primordial tendencies in the country. The research was essentially qualitative - descriptive and the documentary research method was used to carry out the investigation. Consequently, the study relied principally on secondary data that were analyzed descriptively. Findings of this study revealed that though all the major ethnic nationalities in Nigeria are represented in the country's civil service; the representation is lopsided favoring some ethnic groups at the detriment of others. As such, the implementation of the federal character policy cannot be said to have increased the representativeness of the Nigerian bureaucracy, improved service performance, and foster national cohesion in the country. Based on these research findings, it was recommended, amongst others, that a merit-based selection framework should be developed as a major strategy for employing people across the 36 states (inclusive of the Federal Capital Territory) of the country into the federal civil service; and this should be implemented jointly by the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) and the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR).

**Keywords:** Civil Service; Federal Character Commission; Federal Character Policy, Representative Bureaucracy; Quota System.

## INTRODUCTION

The Federal Character Policy was introduced in Nigeria with the motive of ensuring that all public service institutions fairly reflect the linguistic, religious, ethnic as well as geographic diversity of the country. In line with the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, all the agencies of the government were to conduct their affairs in such a manner that it reflects the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity while also commanding national loyalty and ensuring that there is no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in the government or in any of its agencies. This position was supported by the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) report of 1977 that referred to the federal character of Nigeria as the distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The above position was in affirmation of that fact that one of the key features of every heterogeneous society the world over is their diversity in terms of religion, culture, customs and tradition, as well as ethnicity and language. This plurality has tended to give a colouration on every facet of public life to the extent that it has always led to ethnic conflicts and the cry of marginalization by some ethnic groups in the society, especially in developing countries like Nigeria irrespective of the fact that appointments and promotions into the public service are expected to follow laid down bureaucratic rules and procedures. According to Kukah (2003), Nigeria's

peculiarities involve heterogeneity in ethnic diversity, religious and cultural affinities. It is important to note that ethno-religious differences have contributed too many of the problems in the country.

The argument raised by the writer above is that it is the quest for national integration and sustainable development in a heterogeneous society such as Nigeria that gave rise to the idea of Federal Character Policy (FCP) in the Nigerian public service. It is noteworthy that the term representative bureaucracy was employed to formally recognize the plural nature of a definite society or country in the recruitment of employees into government institutions as well as in the authoritative allocation of administrative and political offices (Onyishi, 2018).

The perception created by this federal character practice is that some people are 'more Nigerian' than others. A number of studies (Mustapha, 2007; Akintoye and Utang, 2012; Majekodunmi, 2013; Ibor, *et al.*, 2015; Ojibara, 2016) questioned the effectiveness of the implementation of the Federal Character Policy and suggested that the policy is yet to achieve its objectives. For instance, Ibor *et al.* (2015) maintained that the continuous disparity in employment distribution of civil servants in the Nigerian civil service as a result of the ineffective implementation of the Federal Character Principle has become a pressing national issue.

Observations of many Nigerians about the poor implementation of the Federal Character Policy bordering on its seemingly inability to effectively chart the course of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's federal civil service notably with regards to recruitment/ appointment and promotion of personnel; to enhance competence as well as discourage mutual distrust, ethnic loyalty discontent, and primordial tendencies was the curiosity that gave rise to this study. The main thrust of this research is to assess the impact of the Federal Character Policy implementation on the level of representative bureaucracy in the Nigerian civil service.

## Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Representative Bureaucracy theory espoused by Kingsley (1944). At inception, the theory was used to denote an administration which reflects the dominant classes in society. In other words, Kingsley's conception of representation is simply a reflection of the power structures in society (Andrews *et al.*, 2016). However, since the seventies representative bureaucracy has been used to explain a bureaucracy that is representative of the population as a whole, including disadvantaged or minority groups (Groeneveld and Van de Walle, 2010). From this period onwards, studies have begun to focus attention on social demographic characteristics with special interest in gender, ethnicity and race, rather than to social economic characteristics such as class and education.

Representative theory argues that bureaucrats' social demographic background is very significant as it affects their value system which in turn influences administrative decision-making (Andrews *et al.*, 2016). The theory as it is currently commonly used has two main underlying assumptions: first, it is believed that through the processes of socialization individuals of the same social demographic background will share certain values (Meier, 1975; Mosher, 1968). The second assumption is that bureaucrats will act in consonance with their values and seek to maximize the values that are salient to them at the time of the decision (Meier and Morton, 2015). It is argued that if bureaucracy is representative of the public which it serves, then its decisions will significantly reflect the values of that public. By being more responsive to the preferences and needs of the public, representativeness is assumed to contribute to the performance and legitimacy of a bureaucracy (Selden *et al.*, 1998).

It is important to stress that representation is essential in the civil service to ensure equal access and opportunity, and the inclusion of group interests in administrative decisions. Representative bureaucracy becomes necessary in view of the fact that passive or symbolic representation by designated groups can lead to active representation in which the representative agents may develop and implement policies for the benefit of the group. In other words, the theory argues that there is a strong linkage between passive and active representations (Adusah-Karikari and Ohemeng, 2012).

The relevance of the theory is hinged on the fact that representation of people drawn from various ethnic nationalities in the civil service will certainly go a long way to assist the administrative institution to formulate

and implement administrative decisions that could reflect the interests of all ethnic groupings in the country. In other words, when there is no predominance of one ethnic group in the civil service, there is high tendency that the service will definitely reflect the values of all the ethnic groups in the country in taking critical decisions and their onward execution. It is believed that this development is capable of encouraging and sustaining national cohesion, unity and consciousness thereby reducing to the barest minimum the high rate of mutual distrust and suspicions as well as cut throat competitions that have characterized inter and intra ethnic relations in the country.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Representative Bureaucracy**

The concept of representative bureaucracy refers to the notion that public organizations should look like the population they serve. It is further contended that the broader an organization is representative of the demographic composition of the population, the more likelihood of representatives of the people who share their values to be more responsive to their needs. The representatives of a people may not know why they are appointed or selected, but because they come from the same geographical description the people feel their interests are secured (Andrews, *et al.*, 2016). Elaiwu in Cornelius and Greg (2013) view the concept of representative bureaucracy as the process of creating unity and sense of belonging among heterogeneous groups in a particular state. While Ezeibe (2013), view it as the process of constructing a national identity using the power of the state. He further stated that it involves the process designed for unification of different group of people within the state so that they can remain politically stable and viable in the long run within a given country.

The 1979 constitution Section 14 Subsection 3 defined representative bureaucracy as:

The composition of the Government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnics or other sectional group in that government or any of its agencies (Constitution of FRN, 1979).

It is obvious from the above report and the federal constitution that adoption of FCP was an effort to address the problem of the prevailing imbalance in bureaucratic structure and ethnic domination in public sector in order to achieve national integration and development amidst the diversity in Nigeria.

### **The Federal Character Principle/Policy in Nigeria**

The account of scholars like Afigbo (1989:3-18), Ekeh (1989:19-44) and Gboyega (1989:164-185) on the origin of federal character principle in Nigeria seem to be similar. Afigbo (1989:3) was however more specific, when he posits that “the term federal character is one of the inventions of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC) inaugurated by the late General Murtala Mohamed on 18th October, 1975.” Other scholars merely traced the origin of federal character to the 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Afigbo (1989) corroborated the view, when he argues that “it was in the course of the debate on that section of the report of the sub-committee on the executive and the legislature which dealt with how to promote national loyalty in a multi-ethnic society that federal character was coined as the distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness the environment of Federal Republic of Nigeria. It seems logical to say that the CDC only tried to highlight some issues agitating the mind of Nigerians on how to make every segment of the society to be represented in the formulation and implementation of government policies known in Nigeria as “the National Question.”

Oyedeji (2016) sees the federal character policy as that provision enacted to redress the imbalances and perceived injustices in the society and particular in the civil service of Nigeria. Furthermore, perceived the federal character policy as that provision intended to ensure and guarantee equal opportunities for certain section of the population

to access every available job offer at the civil service of the country without limitation or restriction. The policy equally foster national integration in the civil service of Nigeria by downplaying all forms of discrimination based on sex, status, section of the country one belongs and religious and enhancing unity of purpose in the service (Oyedepi, 2016).

### **Federal Character Commission**

The Federal Character Commission is a federal executive body established to implement and enforce the federal character principle of fairness and equity in the distribution of public posts; socio-economic amenities and infrastructural facilities among the federating units of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Commission is also empowered to operate in a democratic setting (1999 Constitution). Its antecedents can be traced to the colonial period when recruitment into the Nigerian Armed Forces was processed through quota system to ensure that no one particular section of the country dominated in the military. The success of the implementation of the federal character policy in the military culminated in the call for its application in the Nigerian federal civil service. Regrettably, while the federal character policy was preferred in some sections of Nigeria, some other sections rejected the implementation of the policy.

In Section 150 of the 1989 Constitution, many new institutions, such as the governing bodies of state-owned companies and the governing councils of the universities, were brought under the purview of the federal character principle. The National Constitutional Conference convened by General Abacha in June, 1994 went furthest in promoting occasional power-sharing in Nigeria (Ekwueme, 2005) and also came to the conclusion that a Federal Character Commission was to be established, to monitor and enforce federal character application and proportional representation. By the time the FCC was established by Decree No. 34 of 1996, its powers, including the powers to prosecute heads of ministries and parastatals for failing to carry out its instructions (Section 4 subsection 1c) were enormous.

### **Civil Service**

By way of definition, civil service is conceived as an administrative institution composed of career staffs who are employed in a civil capacity to assist government in formulation and enforcement of approved public policies and programmes to meet the needs of the people (Olu-Adeyemi, 2009). To avoid any ambiguity or misinterpretation, Section 318 of the 1999 constitution as amended, defines the civil service of the Federation as:

Service of the federation in civil capacity as staff of the office of the President, the Vice President, Ministry or Department of the Government of the Federation assigned with the responsibility for any business of the Government of the Federation (FRN, 1999).

The civil service which lies at the centre of Public Administration structure is the major instrument through which Nigerian government, be it colonial, military or civilian administration manage development (Olu-Adeyemi, 2009). For the purpose of clarity, it is necessary to state that the civil service is different from the public service. As it can be observed, the caliber of officers alluded to here do not include the armed forces, the para-military, the judiciary, and other statutory commissions and institutions that have governing councils. Those that are employed by these institutions are public servants because they are not employed by the Federal Civil Service Commission. Making this clarification, Adamolekun (2002) held that public Service means the totality of services that are organized under public (i.e., government) authority. Therefore, in addition to covering the Civil Service in the strict sense of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies, public service also covers local governments, the military and other security forces, the judiciary, and the legislature. This perhaps informed the view of Ejere (2014) who asserted that the term public sector is generally identified with the government or state. Public sector organizations manage the public's business and are responsible for getting the work of government done. In a sense the public sector can be taken as a synonym of public service as both terms relate to governmental or public administration. Federal Civil Service comprises of Ministries and extra-ministerial Departments charged with the responsibility of implementing public policies at the federal level.

The federal civil service as an institution of government in Nigeria is known to have played a vital role in the

day-to-day implementation of government policies since its inception. Although a number of reforms have been embarked upon to help articulate new patterns aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service over the years from post-independence era to contemporary times, the structure has largely remained the same. A structure, which many believe is largely responsible for the existing rot and gross inefficiency that the system is known for.

## Recruitment

Recruitment is “a set of activities used to obtain a sufficient number of the right people at the right time from the right places (Nickels, *et al.*, 1999) and its purpose is to select and place those who best meet the needs of the work place, and to develop and maintain a qualified and adequate work force through which an organization can fulfill its human resource plan. Erasmus *et al.* (2005) conceive recruitment as “those activities in human resource management which are undertaken in order to attract sufficient job candidates who have the necessary potential, competencies and traits to fill job needs and to assist the civil service organization in achieving its objectives. To achieve organizational goals, the right recruitment must be in place.

## Review of Empirical Studies

Egbuta (2019) undertook a study on ethnicity, federal character principle and the bloating of federal government establishments from 2015 to 2018. The paper considered the age-long problem of ethnicity and the application of the Federal Character Principle in appointments into federal government offices as well as the bloated nature of offices in government's establishments since 2015 till date. The principle of federal character which was adopted in 1979 to address the imbalance in Nigeria's politics and wanton struggle for power among the different ethnic groups in the country has not been able to do so after many years. The paper adopted the survey research design through quantitative research approach. Primary data was elicited through the administration of questionnaire. Seven hundred (700) copies of questionnaire were administered to employees in seven federal government ministries and establishments. Findings revealed that ethnicity significantly affects bloating of federal government's establishments ( $R = 0.613$ ,  $R^2 = 0.376$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $F = 388.876$ ), federal character principle significantly affects bloating of federal government's establishments ( $R = 0.747$ ,  $R^2 = 0.558$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $F = 833.824$ ). It was found that appointments into federal government's offices since 2015 has been done with brazen disregard to the principles of federal character, and largely based on ethnicity. The paper posits that federal government's workforce will contribute immensely to the development of Nigeria if merit, federal character and expertise needs are taken into consideration in the composition of the nation's workforce.

Ughulu and Omamor (2020) examined representative bureaucracy and the challenges of diversity management in Nigeria. The adoption and application of Representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's public administrative system arose out of the need to manage its diverse populace, to achieve national integration and sustainable development. However the above purpose has not been achieved over the years, thus, this study attempts to examine representative bureaucracy as a tool of diversity management in Nigeria public service, to achieve national integration, nation building and sustainable development. The study utilized the secondary method of data collection and found that the major challenges in diversity management through the application of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria are Lack of meritocracy and heavy presence of ethnocentrism in the public sector. It however, recommended that the principle of merit should be applied in public service employment and appointment as well as admissions into Nigeria tertiary institutions and equal opportunity for all irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliation.

Okoye (2021) carried out research on Nigeria's federal character principle as a bureaucratic and administrative tool. The author observed that the task of inclusive and equitable governance in a plural society is a hard undertaking. In most countries with diverse ethnic groups, the government has a responsibility to manage ethnic cleavages and reconcile multifarious sectional interests by rolling out relevant policy measures. In Nigeria, the Federal Character Principle (FCP) is the legal basis for the equitable distribution of public sector jobs and administrative positions in government. For a country with more than 250 ethnic groupings distributed across six geo-political zones, the fear of ethnic domination and the need for ethnic balancing in public sector recruitment has made the idea of ethnic representation in the public sector a desideratum. Representative bureaucracy became necessary owing to the need to integrate the country's diverse ethnicities. Despite the benign

promises inherent in the FCP from inception, scholars have deemed it a policy failure. In this paper, attempts shall be made to critically assess the concept of Federal Character Principle as a bureaucratic and administrative tool in enhancing integration and inclusion in Nigeria. The constitutional remit of the Federal Character Commission and why the FCP has failed in achieving its key goals are issues up for consideration. As a recommendation, a case would be advanced for a merit-based approach to public sector recruitment.

Karibo and Akpan (2021) researched on federal character principle and personnel efficiency in Nigerian civil service. The authors observed that the policy or principle of “Federal Character” was introduced into the Nigerian Civil Service to enable all the states to be represented in the civil service. Though, it is good to have every state represented in the civil service, it has been discovered that Federal Character has adverse effects in terms of efficiency of the personnel. Evidence abounds of the employment of unqualified personnel, tribalism and nepotism, among others, in the civil service. This usually results in the decline of outputs in the civil service. It will take a critical study of the effects of Federal Character Principle on personnel efficiency in the Nigerian Civil Service. The paper analyzed how the Federal Character Principle breeds inefficiency and then proffered some recommendations to enhance the efficiency of personnel in the Nigerian Civil Service.

Most of the studies reviewed shared similar variables like the present study though they are differentiated by the focus of research. The major difference between the present study and the studies reviewed above lies in what the study seeks to achieve.

## METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research design using documentary method along with descriptive analysis was utilized as the research relied majorly on secondary data. While qualitative research describes a set of non- statistical inquiry techniques and processes used to gather data about social phenomenon; descriptive research design seeks data in order to methodically characterize a phenomena, circumstance, or population without manipulating variables (Okwueze, 2022). The documentary method was described as a desk review study in which a researcher categorizes, examines and interprets written publications; it entails the examination of documents containing information on or relevant to the issue under investigation (Obialor, 2021). Shank (2002) observed that the qualitative research approach allows for relatively easy access to data and also provides the researcher with the prerogative of deciding what to use, how to use it and where to use it. Nevertheless, the fact that the origin of the information may be questionable, and the doubts often associated with the validity and reliability of the data gathered could serve as impediments to the approach. To overcome this phenomenon, the researcher has critically evaluated the data gathered with a view to avoiding a misrepresentation of facts. Inherent to the documentary research method is the use of secondary data, which refer to information obtained second hand from already published works and archival sources that had previously been compiled for different purposes. The secondary data sources relevant to this research included a range of scholarly publications, academic journals, text-books, newspapers, magazines, and online resources. The data that were generated in this study from the documentary sources were analyzed descriptively with the aid of tabular presentations. Patton (2002:452) defined descriptive analysis as “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort which evaluates a volume of qualitative material and attempts to justify their core consistencies and meanings”.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

This section of the paper is dedicated to the presentation, analysis as well as the discussion of findings based on the information obtained from the documentary evidence and other secondary sources.

Table 1: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Grade Levels)

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics (GL 1-6)	Manpower Statistics (GL 7-10)	Manpower Statistics (GL 11-14)	Manpower Statistics (GL 15-17+)	Total
1	Abia	895	3778	1399	712	6784
2	Adamawa	2785	3585	1137	799	8306

3	Akwa Ibom	1281	3828	1226	649	6984
4	Anambra	972	4738	2391	1626	9727
5	Bauchi	1070	1977	384	184	3615
6	Bayelsa	1341	1866	360	204	3771
7	Benue	2863	5397	1657	1506	11423
8	Borno	1007	2393	723	370	4493
9	Cross River	1043	2754	786	415	4998
10	Delta	1190	4522	1588	830	8130
11	Ebonyi	631	1717	476	193	3017
12	Edo	1511	4956	1818	1117	9402
13	Ekiti	1573	3750	1273	762	7358
14	Enugu	1537	4191	1754	745	8227
15	Gombe	1212	3593	784	608	6197
16	Imo	1904	7502	2983	1886	14275
17	Jigawa	1434	1275	289	115	3113
18	Kaduna	2219	5745	1258	574	9796
19	Kano	1711	3624	840	391	6566
20	Katsina	1319	2444	595	245	4603
21	Kebbi	702	1415	441	163	2721
22	Kogi	2299	6674	2219	1129	12321
23	Kwara	1729	4451	1891	696	8766
24	Lagos	734	1897	645	294	3570
25	Nasarawa	1398	3463	791	402	6054
26	Niger	1233	2423	942	412	5010
27	Ogun	1894	5069	1834	898	9695
28	Ondo	1549	4232	1408	742	7931
29	Osun	1688	4591	1768	1081	9128
30	Oyo	2467	5178	1782	1111	10538
31	Plateau	1314	3244	924	548	6030
32	Rivers	2303	4270	1373	1327	9273
33	Sokoto	712	1155	275	103	2245
34	Taraba	584	1343	410	176	2513
35	Yobe	822	1240	350	171	2583
36	Zamfara	947	1542	299	179	2967
37	FCT	807	996	183	57	2043
	Total	52,680	126,818	41,256	23,420	244,173

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

Based on the Table 1 above, it is evident that every state of the federation is represented in the federal civil service. However, not all the states share the same manpower statistics. Going by the statistics, Imo state in the South-East has the highest number of manpower 14,275 staff, followed by Kogi and Benue States with 12,321 and 11,423 federal civil servants respectively. Besides the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) that has 2043 staff in the employ of the federal civil service, Sokoto state has the lowest number staff in the employ of the federal civil service with just 2245 employees. The overall evaluation of the above data shall be based on the dictates of the Federal Character Commission that has established that within any federal establishment, indigenes of any state shall not constitute less than 2.5% or more than 3% of the total positions available including junior staff at head office of any national institution, public enterprise or organization (FCC, 2014).

In furtherance, it has also been established that indigenes from a state shall constitute not less than 15% and not more than 18% of the senior level positions in each establishment. At the level of the 36 states bureaucracies, senatorial districts, local government areas and wards are the functional units used to distribute posts. The powers of the commission can be summarized as: (a) Working out formula for sharing posts and services; (b) Monitoring compliance; (c) Enforcement of compliance through the courts; (d) Demanding and receiving data on staffing; and (e) Instituting investigations. It is an offence in law to forward false information to FCC or withhold information from it, or supply it with incomplete information (FCC, 2014).

Table 2: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels)

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1	Abia	6784	2.8
2	Adamawa	8306	3.4
3	Akwa Ibom	6984	2.9
4	Anambra	9727	4.0
5	Bauchi	3615	1.5
6	Bayelsa	3771	1.5
7	Benue	11423	4.7
8	Borno	4493	1.8
9	Cross River	4998	2.1
10	Delta	8130	3.3
11	Ebonyi	3017	1.2
12	Edo	9402	3.8
13	Ekiti	7358	3.0
14	Enugu	8227	3.4
15	Gombe	6197	2.5
16	Imo	14275	5.8
17	Jigawa	3113	1.3
18	Kaduna	9796	4.0
19	Kano	6566	2.7
20	Katsina	4603	1.9
21	Kebbi	2721	1.1
22	Kogi	12321	5.0



23	Kwara	8766	3.6
24	Lagos	3570	1.5
25	Nasarawa	6054	2.5
26	Niger	5010	2.1
27	Ogun	9695	4.0
28	Ondo	7931	3.3
29	Osun	9128	3.7
30	Oyo	10538	4.3
31	Plateau	6030	2.5
32	Rivers	9273	3.8
33	Sokoto	2245	0.9
34	Taraba	2513	1.0
35	Yobe	2583	1.1
36	Zamfara	2967	1.2
37	FCT	2043	0.8
	Total	244,173	100

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

Going by Table 2, it shows that Imo state has the highest percentage of staff in the employ of the federal civil service of Nigeria with 5.8%. this was followed with Kogi state with 5.0% while Benue State had 4.7%. However, the state with the lowest percentage of staff in the employ of the federal civil service is Sokoto state with 0.9% while the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) had 0.8%.

Table 3: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels) by States

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1.	Benue	11423	4.7
2.	Kogi	12321	5.0
3.	Kwara	8766	3.6
4.	Nasarawa	6054	2.5
5.	Niger	5010	2.1
6.	Plateau	6030	2.5
7.	FCT	2043	0.8
	Total	51,647	21.2

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

Table 3 displays the manpower statistics of states that make-up the North-Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria that has 6 states and the FCT. This geopolitical zone has the highest number of staff in the employment list of the Nigerian civil service as at March, 2023. It is instructive to observe that the two states that rank 2nd and 3rd after Imo state are in this region, hence their high percentage. Apart from the FCT that has a 0.8%, it is only Niger state with 2.1% that has a low representation.

Table 4: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels) by North-East Geo-Political Zone

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1.	Adamawa	8306	3.4
2.	Bauchi	3615	1.5
3.	Borno	4493	1.8
4.	Gombe	6197	2.5
5.	Taraba	2513	1.0
6.	Yobe	2583	1.1
	Total	27,707	11.3

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

According to the above table, this is the region with the lowest number of persons that are engaged by the federal civil service of the country. The average percentage of the people employed from this region into the federal civil service is 1.9%. This average is a poor reflection of the number of persons from this region that are engaged in the federal civil service of the country. Going by the above data, out of the six states, only Adamawa and Gombe are well represented while the rest of the states (Bauchi, Borno, Taraba and Yobe) are under-represented.

Table 5: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels) by North West Geo-Political Zone

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1.	Jigawa	3113	1.3
2.	Kaduna	9796	4.0
3.	Kano	6566	2.7
4.	Katsina	4603	1.9
5.	Kebbi	2721	1.1
6.	Sokoto	2245	0.9
7.	Zamfara	2967	1.2
	Total	32,011	13.1

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

This region has the highest number of states compared to other regions. However, this has not reflected much on the number of persons from this zone that are employed into the federal civil service of the country. This region also shares an approximate average of 1.9% of its people that are employed into the federal civil service of Nigeria, just as observed in the case of the North-East geopolitical zone. Going by the Federal Character Commission that has established that within any federal establishment, indigenes of any state shall not constitute less than 2.5% or more than 3% of the total positions available including junior staff at head office of any national institution, public enterprise or organization. Within the federal civil service, it is clear that apart from Kano and Kaduna states, the rest of the states (Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara) are poorly represented.

Table 6: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels) by South-West Geo-Political Zone

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1.	Ekiti	7358	3.0
2.	Lagos	3570	1.5
3.	Ogun	9695	4.0
4.	Ondo	7931	3.3
5.	Osun	9128	3.7
6.	Oyo	10538	4.3
	Total	48,220	19.8

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

For Table 6, the data displayed here reflects the number of persons employed into the federal civil service from the South-West zone of the country. Even though the region does not rank the highest but the data shows a good percentage of persons from this region in the employ of the federal civil service with an average percentage of 3.3%. Besides Lagos state that falls below 2.5%; Ekiti state is just on point with 3.0%, while the rest of the states (Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo) in the South-West region are above the 3.0% threshold of the Federal Character Commission.

Table 7: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels) by South-East Geo-Political Zone

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1.	Abia	6784	2.8
2.	Anambra	9727	4.0
3.	Ebonyi	3017	1.2
4.	Enugu	8227	3.4
5.	Imo	14275	5.8
	Total	42,020	17.2

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

This geopolitical zone comprises of only 5 states in the country and boast of an average percentage of 3.44%, which is the highest of all the zones in the country. This is expected because going by the figures, besides Ebonyi state, the other states have a good ranking in terms of the number of persons employed into the federal civil service. Going by the law of engagement into the federal civil service of the federation, three states (Anambra, Enugu and Imo) has surpassed the threshold of 3.0% for any state to be engaged by the federal civil service.

Table 8: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels) by South-South Geo-Political Zone

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1.	Akwa Ibom	6984	2.9
2.	Bayelsa	3771	1.5

3.	Cross River	4998	2.1
4.	Delta	8130	3.3
5.	Edo	9402	3.8
6.	Rivers	9273	3.8
	Total	42,558	17.4

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

The table above shows the 6 states that make-up the South-South geopolitical zone of the country. The average percentage for the states in this region is 2.9%. This indicates that the ranking of the states in the zone is not poor, especially when compared to the states in the North-East and North-West geopolitical zones of the country.

Table 9: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels) by three Northern Geo-Political Zones

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1.	Benue	11423	4.7
2.	Kogi	12321	5.0
3.	Kwara	8766	3.6
4.	Nasarawa	6054	2.5
5.	Niger	5010	2.1
6.	Plateau	6030	2.5
7.	FCT	2043	0.8
8.	Adamawa	8306	3.4
9.	Bauchi	3615	1.5
10.	Borno	4493	1.8
11.	Gombe	6197	2.5
12.	Taraba	2513	1.0
13.	Yobe	2583	1.1
14.	Jigawa	3113	1.3
15.	Kaduna	9796	4.0
16.	Kano	6566	2.7
17.	Katsina	4603	1.9
18.	Kebbi	2721	1.1
19.	Sokoto	2245	0.9
20.	Zamfara	2967	1.2
	Total	111,365	45.6

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

With a percentage of 45.6 representations of their citizens in the employ of the federal civil service, it clears that despite having more states than the South, the North still trails behind the Southern region of the country in terms

of the number of people that are engaged by the federal civil service.

Table 10: Summary of Manpower Statistics in Federal Ministries/Parastatals (All Levels) by three Southern Geo-Political Zones

S/N	States	Manpower Statistics	Percentage (%)
1.	Ekiti	7358	3.0
2.	Lagos	3570	1.5
3.	Ogun	9695	4.0
4.	Ondo	7931	3.3
5.	Osun	9128	3.7
6.	Oyo	10538	4.3
7.	Abia	6784	2.8
8.	Anambra	9727	4.0
9.	Ebonyi	3017	1.2
10.	Enugu	8227	3.4
11.	Imo	14275	5.8
12.	Akwa Ibom	6984	2.9
13.	Bayelsa	3771	1.5
14.	Cross River	4998	2.1
15.	Delta	8130	3.3
16.	Edo	9402	3.8
17.	Rivers	9273	3.8
	Total	132,808	54.4

Source: Federal Character Commission, 2023.

As it can be observed in the Table 10, the Southern part of the country has more persons employed in the federal civil service of the country despite having 17 states when compared to the North's 19 states. Out of 244,173 employees in the federal civil service as at March, 2023, 132,808 were from the South, while 111,365 were from the North.

From the foregoing, the data on manpower statistics from the Federal Character Commission established that within any federal establishment, indigenes of any state shall not constitute less than 2.5% or more than 3% of the total positions available including junior staff at head office of any national institution, public enterprise or organization. It is important to note that going by these records, the hue and cry for marginalization from the southern part of the country, especially from the South-east region is to some extent not justified. Perhaps, this has turned-out to be a situation where one gains in a particular area while losing in another.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Going by the data obtained from the Federal Character Commission, it is evidently clear that there is some measure of lopsidedness in the nature of representativeness. This has been reflected in some states within the same region being overtly more-represented than some states. While the average for a particular region may suggest that the states in that region are well represented, the real numbers of the people from some of the states in that region suggest another thing altogether.

This finding comes amidst the hue and cry of marginalization by some sections of the country in the scheme of things during recruitment and appointment into the country's Federal Civil Service. Egbuta (2019) whose findings revealed that ethnicity significantly affects bloating of federal government's establishments; federal character principle significantly affects bloating of federal government's establishments. It was also found that appointments into federal government's offices since 2015 has been done with brazen disregard to the principles of federal character, and largely based on ethnicity. The finding of this paper also resonates with the work of Ughulu and Omamor (2020) whose finding found that the major challenges in diversity management through the application of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria are Lack of meritocracy and heavy presence of ethnocentrism in the public sector. It however, recommended that the principle of merit should be applied in public service employment and appointment as well as admissions into Nigeria tertiary institutions and equal opportunity for all irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliation.

## CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine the influence of the implementation of the Federal Character Principle on the level of representative bureaucracy in the Nigerian civil service with regards to recruitment, promotion and national integration.

The findings of this study revealed that the application of the federal character policy to recruitment and appointment in Nigeria's Federal Civil Service led to lopsided representativeness of people from the various states and regions of the country. This finding comes amidst the hue and cry of marginalization by some sections of the country in the scheme of things during recruitment and appointment into the country's Federal Civil Service.

It was found out that the application of the federal character policy in the promotion of staff in Nigeria's Federal Civil Service undermines competence and efficiency. The implication of this finding is that since the federal character policy is aimed at representativeness, the chance of trading off merit and therefore competence and efficiency during promotion of staff in the Nigerian Federal Civil Service has been quite high.

It was also found out that the implementation of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's Federal Civil Service has increased primordial and ethnic tendencies amongst its employees. This is because despite the efforts of the government towards averting situations that would promote primordial and ethnic sentiments through the implementation of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's Federal Civil Service, most persons in the system are still loyal to their various ethnic groups rather than the national ideal.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. The emphasis of the implementation of the Federal Character Policy should not start and end with representativeness. Rather, in addition to achieving the ethnic spread, there is need for effective implementation with regards to fairness while conducting recruitment and appointment of persons into the service. The emphasis on professionalism, competence and merit should be the canon for recruitment and appointment into the service. Therefore, the merit-based selection framework should be employed as a major strategy for employing people across the nation into the federal civil service. This can be achieved through the establishment of a clear and merit-based recruitment standard to be enforced by the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) and the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR). To achieve intended results, the framework should be structured to include standardized test, structured interviews as well as skills assessments to ensure that only the most qualified candidates are selected to fill the available positions. In addition, a transparent monitoring mechanism should be introduced into the Nigerian federal civil service system. To achieve this, the National Council on Establishments (NCE) and the Federal Character Commission (FCC) should ensure that they put in place a real-time and publicly accessible monitoring system that tracks recruitment data across all ministries. They must ensure that the geographic and ethnic distributions of staff are displayed at all times for the purpose of accountability and transparency.

2. It is safe to say that that with Federal Character Policy, there have been regional representation of all the parts of the country, though lopsided, but the same cannot be said about the level of competence. That is because when we get it wrong in the appointment and recruitment process, it is also easy for the system to be negatively exploited for promotion process, thereby producing incompetent people at the top echelon of the service. The government should therefore ensure that the promotion process is subjected to thorough scrutiny before the final approval. This measure will go a long way to enhance competency of service personnel. Going further, merit-based promotion criteria should be introduced into the federal civil service. The Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) should enforce a promotion system grounded in measurable performance indicators such as annual appraisals, professional certifications as well as specialized trainings. Promotions in the service should be contingent on achieving set benchmarks rather than tenure or ethnic considerations. On their part, the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) should develop a standardized performance evaluation tool to ensure uniformity across all ministries and agencies of government. The focus of this appraisal must be to assess job competence, leadership potential as well as productivity. Besides, promotion review panels should be set up in every ministry to be composed of representatives from the Federal Character Commission (FCC), professional bodies and Civil Society Organizations to ensure fairness and transparency in promotions.
3. The current practice where well placed individuals ensure that mostly persons from their ethnic groups within a state get federal appointments should be discouraged. This calls for a geopolitical quota audits strategy. The Federal Character Commission should therefore conduct periodic audits to ensure that the distribution of civil service staff reflects the diverse ethnic and geopolitical make-up of the country as well as within the respective states and regions, addressing both over-population and marginalization. The opportunity for any state/region should not be filled with persons from one local government in one state just because they have a privileged person in the system with the greed of cornering every federal opportunity for only his/her kindred. This has become the new normal of marginalization in the Nigerian system. Everyone deserves to be carried along when it comes to benefiting from the quota that is provided for any particular state/region.

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