

FEDERALISM AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: A CRITIQUE OF NEO-REGIONAL FEDERAL STRUCTURE

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Abstract

Federalism and federal practices albeit its variants has become synonymous and relevant in a heterogeneous society for it represents different shades of opinion and devolve power and responsibility to all the strata of government. Nigeria federal practices have traversed series of developmental stages and have been badly affected by military incursion in politics, ethno-religious violence, resource allocation and control among others. What is left of Nigeria federal practices is a glorified military federalism, a pseudo federal practice. The paper traces the antecedent of federal practices in the world while stream lining it to the evolution of Nigeria federal structure. It further identifies problems of federalism in Nigeria which have retarded or rather made elusive the consolidation of democratic governance in the country. It further makes a critique of neo regional federal structure proposed by Abacha military government. It however concludes by suggesting ways of achieving what Peter Ekeh refers as maximum federalism.

INTRODUCTION

The system of government adopted in a state is dependent on the socio-political configuration of the state coupled with the present reality at the time. It is customary that an homogeneous state is bound to opt for a unitary kind of rule while a federal system is often voted for in an heterogeneous state, a typical case is that of Nigeria. In most war torn areas like Mozambique, Rwanda, Burundi, Mali, Apartheid South Africa amongst others, consociational government is often institutionalized in the interim to accommodate various ethnic or tribal settlements in such countries. Conversely, the Soviet Union of yester years adopted a rigid confederal system; a union of several countries alongside embracing communist political cum economic system unmindful of the inherent contradictions of the time this concomitantly paved the way for the dissolution of the union in the late eighties.

Suffice it to state at this juncture that, whatever system adopted or practised in any country, the work-ability of such system, having considered the socio-political composition and peculiarity of the country will be highly dependent on the political good will, competent and objective leadership of the system. This explains better why the three states of United Kingdom viz: England, Scotland and Wales still triumph with their unitary system, and countries like Canada, Australia and United State of America as well flourish with their federal system albeit some variation noticeable in their federal practices. One may then conveniently submit that Nigeria's federal system of government is greatly suffering from lack of good leadership. At the same time, one cannot overrule some inherent contradictions in the system. Nigeria's case may not be looking for another system but rather rummaging on ways of making the present system work.

This paper will delve into the origin of federalism and democracy. It will examine their meanings and give a critical assessment of the antecedent of Nigeria's federal structure with a brief look into the parliamentary practice of early independence day of Nigeria and the recent clamour for a proposed government based on appointing premier for the six-geopolitical zones and prime minister at the centre, the doctrine of a true-federal system will be covered with a view at proffering a way forward for Nigeria political system. It may be instructive at the onset to declare that the essence of this work is to inform political leaders that democratic governance or good governing system does not lie in incessant change in political system.

1.1 THE BACKGROUND OF FEDERALISM

The concept of federalism as intergovernmental relations, coordination and control dates back to the Greek civilization, when efforts were made to describe the legal relationship between the leagues and the city states. The leagues were however, different from modern federalism in the sense that no direct contact was exercised between the populace and various government agencies while free interaction exists in the modern day. The advocate of mode federalism was Jean Bodin, who was quickly followed by others like Otto Cosmatus, Hugo Grotous and Pufendor (Allen, 1931).

A new concept of federalism thus emerged with the inception of American constitution of 1787, the concept of federalism incorporated the idea of contact at two levels of the government between participating units and among the citizens of these different units. Other constitution started evolving after the American constitution. While some have succeeded others have not been so fortunate. The existence of these new federalism has not only made it imperative for more evaluation of the theories and principle of federalism, but also modifies them rather than viewing federalism as a political abstraction or confuse it with leagues, confederations or other form of political affiliation or alliances.

The post 2nd World War experience brought new dimension to the study of federalism. The study of contemporary federalism emerged, owing to post war development and proliferation of types of political systems which manifest some decision makings among different levels of governments. The discussion on contemporary federalism starts with K.C Wheare (1943) who views federal government as a constitutional arrangement which divides law making powers and functions between two levels of government.

According to him, this constitutional arrangement is brought about by circumstances in which people are prepared to give up only certain limited powers and wish to retain others, both sets of powers to be exercised by co-ordinates authorities. He therefore posits federal principle to include the following:

- a. The division of powers among levels of government
- b. Written constitution showing this division.
- c. Coordinate supremacy of the two levels of governments with regards to their respective functions (Wheare 1943).

Williams Livingston (1956) sees Wheare's view beyond the narrow confines of legal formulation to the general system, viewed and saw federalism as the product of interaction of socio-cultural and political factors, while noting that the documentary constitution may be a poor guide to whether a political system is federal or otherwise. He explained:

The essential nature of federalism is to be sought for, not in the shading of legal and constitutional terminology, but in the forces economic, social, political, culture that have made the outward forms of federalism necessary. The essence of federalism lies not in the constitutional or institutional structure but in the society itself. Federal government is a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected (Livingston 1956).

Livingston demonstrates in the above assertion the interaction between the constitutional framework and the socio-cultural substructure. In effect, he shows that the form of the constitution is not dependent on the centripetal and centrifugal forces operating in the society. Indeed, these factors, find their expression in the constitutional arrangement. From this, Livingston distinguished federal society, which necessitates the federal constitution. According to him, federal constitution is the arrangement incorporating the federal principles such as the division of powers, while the federal society is one with cleavages which are patterned along geographical lines; a federal society is thus one with plurality of ethnic groups each with different historical, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, where each ethnic group occupies a marked and distinct geographical location from the others.

Federalism, therefore, becomes a device for compromising unity and diversity. Livingston, however, emphasized the need for common political tradition if federalism is to survive. He then concluded that the federal system should be seen as the institutionalization of compromise between demands for unity and diversity, then intensity of these demands being reflected on how the constitution works.

Positioning on this, William Riker (1964) tends towards a more static view of federalism. According to him, federalism is a bargain struck by the component units. He further stated two pre-requisites for this bargain thus:

- a. The desire by the leaders to expand their territorial control, usually Either to meet an external military or diplomatic aggression and\ aggrandizement.
- b. The presence of some external military-diplomatic threats or opportunity.

These two conditions in Riker's view are responsible for a federal union, which may be centralized, or in the same vein peripheralized. In the case of centralized federal system there is "tendency for the rules of the federation to overawe the rule of the constituent governments". However, if a federalism is peripheralized the rules of the sub-ordinate governments have greater influence over the affairs of the whole society than the rules of the federation (Riker, 1964).

Against this backdrop, there emerged a new school of thought, which stressed processes and dynamism of federalism instead of a state design. In this school, Carl Frederick (1963) view on federalism seems to be a broader perspective, he wrote that federalism should be seen as a process by which unity and diversity are politically organized; this process includes, like all political phenomena, persons, institutions and ideas. Agreeing with Wheare and Livingston, he noted that a federation should be seen as a group of states, united by one or more common goals or objectives, but retaining their distinctive group character in other sphere.

Thus, federations incorporate unity and diversity. Friedrich further went to the extreme, from Wheare, to argue that:

Federalism seems the most suitable term by which to designate the process of federalizing a political community, that is to say the process by which a number of separate political organisations, be it the states or any kind of association enter into arrangements for working out solutions, adopting joint policies and making decisions on joint problems or reversely, the process through which a hitherto unitary political community, as it becomes differentiated into a number of separate and distinct political communities, achieve a new organisation in which the differentiated communities now separately organized become capable of working out separately and on their own, those problems they no longer have in common (Friedrich 1963).

From the foregoing, one can easily deduce that Friedrich will want people to believe that federalism is a process of both aggregation and disaggregation. This process can go in either or both directions concurrently. His major contribution to the theory of federalism is, however, in his observation that values of the society do affect the integrative or disintegrative process.

The above analysis connotes that the traditional classification of governments into federal and confederal or quasi-federal sub types is no longer valid. Instead, scholars have addressed themselves to a way of making federalism work through cooperation between the various levels of governments. The mode of inter-governmental relations should be more of coordination rather than sub-ordination. This to me is a valid way a federal system should operate.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

While a coherent and conclusive definition of a federal system cannot be ascertained, one can conveniently say that the fundamental character of a federal system is that, it is a political system characterized by two sub-systems, one of central government and the other state governments, in which the component governments are co-ordinate, in the sense that neither is politically subordinate to the other, but which interact with each other at many points co-operatively and competitively. A federal system alternatively included among others a unitary political system in which the states are appendages of the central or rather subordinate and the central government super-ordinate.

Federations as such, are complex systems of government. Since they involve a multiple array of interacting governments, multiple administrative responsibilities, intricate cooperative machinery for co-ordination and complex financial arrangements, they often appear to be inefficient, slow and costly especially in such critical areas as economic planning. Moreover, it brings arrays of opportunities for the federating units, for it is expected that in a complex diversities lie a whole lot of potentialities, and if these are properly harnessed and utilized, the union or the federating states will be better for it.

By neo-régionalism, I mean a new form of government organized along regional basis. Wherein powers is devolved and vested in the regional government. The regional government in the context of Nigerian state, will retain their regional autonomy with a premier or governor general at the helm of affairs. Moreover, the six regions proposed in Nigeria instance will corporate or unite at the centre with a central government called the Prime Minister.

Democratic governance on the other hand is said to be a system of political administration where the administrative apparatus of the state is popularly elected or appointed and remain democratic to the extent that the wishes and demands of the people form mainly, the consideration for government policy and which end results is to provide greatest good for the greatest number of people.

UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Simply put, democracy may be described as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves (Appadorai, 1974). This means that a government may, in political science be termed a democracy if it provides institutions for the expression and, in the last analysis, the supremacy of the popular will on basic questions of social direction and policy.

Democracy in other word, is a form of government whereby the people in a country vote few individuals who will represent them in decision making in order to protect and guarantee security of life and properties. Harold Laski opines it to be a government which ensures social, political and economic equality (Aderibigbe, 1990: 11).

The origin of democracy is traceable to ancient Greek city state of Athens. Democracy is a coinage from the two Greek words "Demo" meaning people and "Kratein" to rule. Most importantly, democracy is all about the people and the government, it is the people that determine the kind of government which rule over them. It is in line with this Reo M. Christenson (1972) accentuates that 'democracy' in any political system is a system in which the people voluntarily consent to and are major participant in their governance. He also added that in a democratic system, the citizens hold the controlling shares of political power and public authority is limited, recognizing relatively broad area of private freedom. A democratic government is people's government and a leader is said to be a democrat to the extent of his willingness and resolution to do the wishes of the people. As a point of departure, a leader may wish to embark on a policy which to him, and truly is aimed at delivering the goods to the people, once such is criticized by the people, if the leader insists, such disposition becomes undemocratic, even where the people are wrong, this is the bad aspect of democracy.

Here, though a democratic leader is a popular leader, but is high time we began to dissociate uttermost popularity from pristine democratic ideals which resolve for goodness is unblemished. In any case, democratic governance is that which resolve is to meet the yearnings of the people where the need may arise in some cases and not in all cases a departure from people's line of reasoning where the end result still appropriates greatest riches and opportunity to the greatest number of people.

PERSPECTIVE ON NIGERIA'S FEDERAL STRUCTURE

Introduction: Two schools of thought have different views on the evolution of Nigerian federalism. The first school posits that Britain simply or arbitrarily imposed federalism on Nigeria for economic and political reasons, this view tends to point to the divide and rule policy of British Colonialism. The other school argues that Nigerian federalism was determined by historical and geographical factors. This position is informed substantially by the geographical size of the country and the heterogeneity or diversity of the peoples, culture, coupled with the varying levels of development between the composing ethnic groups. Supporting this view Oshuntokun (1979) writes: *"These factors dictated the adoption of the federal system in order to minimize conflict and to provide for unity in diversity"*.

In actual fact, Nigerian federalism is as much a product of British creation as it is of Nigerians themselves. Beginning from 1947, political developments in Nigeria came to be the product of interplay between British policies, and the views of Nigerian Nationalists. It will therefore be wrong to say with finality that Britain arbitrarily imposed the federal structure on the country.

Prior to Colonialism, Nigeria had existed not as a single entity but different or ethnic groupings, kingdoms, and empires. These were lumped together by the British authorities between 1906 and 1914 and later divided into three uneven parts (units) as a result of the outcome of the 1946 Richard constitution. One may then argue that a move towards Nigerian federalism commenced with the amalgamation of 1914, though the two protectorates of North and South were separately administered. Thus, the relevant aspects of the decision taken in 1950 Ibadan conference, coupled with the 1953 London constitution conference and its resumed sitting in Lagos 1954, all these were embodied in the 1954 Littleton constitution to give Nigeria a federal status (Akamere, 2001).

Nigeria's federal structure was built on a background of structural imperfection. This is due to the great disparity in both geographical size and social development between the federating units. It was under this state of imbalance that the amalgamation of 1914 and subsequent division into three regions took place. The North was greater in size and population than the East and West combined. This goes contrary to one vital principle of federalism which states that on no account should any one of the federating units be as big as the rest combined for if there be any such unit, "It will insist in being the master of the joint deliberation, if there be two, they will be irresistible when they agree, and whenever they differ, everything will be decided by a struggle for ascendancy between the rivals" (Mill).

This situation was obvious in the case of Nigeria. In 1950, for instance, the Northern delegation to the constitutional conference in Ibadan insisted that unless 50% of the seats in the central legislative council was allotted to the region, it would secede from the rest of the country. This condition had to be fulfilled under the 1951 constitution. In the 1954 federal constitution, out of a total of 184 seats in the central legislative council, the Northern region alone was given 92 seats while the East and the West each had 42 seats.

From the time federalism was introduced without any attempt to correct this structural imbalance, the result was that of conflict rather than cooperation, this became the trademark of inter-ethnic relations. There was fear of domination and feeling of insecurity among smaller or minority groups within these three major regions.

At independence in 1960, a new constitution came into force. It maintained the federal system initiated by the 1950 constitution. The three regions were left intact. The only additional was that each region now had a constitution of its own. Retrospectively, one other imperfect aspect of the Nigerian federalism still remained uncorrected. The relationship and division of powers between the central and regional government was a sharp contrast from the view Wheare posited on federalism. For example, section 70 of the 1963 constitution gave the federal (central) government emergency powers over the regional governments. This power was exercised when state of emergency was declared on the Western region, dissolving its legislature and executive structure and suspending its constitutional rights and power.

It is obvious here that the relationship between the federal and regional governments was more of superior subordinate rather than co-ordinate, the same emergency situation repeated itself in Benue in 2003 (emphasis mine).

The structure of Nigeria federalism was slightly altered with the creation of mid Western region out of the Western region making Nigeria a federation of four regions. Yet, the structural imbalance still persisted, as the North was larger than the other three regions combined. Continued schism between the regions and political chaos led to a military intervention in 1966. On assumption of office, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi altered the federal structure, this was promptly re-installed by Major General Yakubu Gowon when he assumed headship in July 1966 (Akamere, 2001).

In 1967, Gowon's effort to forestall the secession of the Eastern region led to the creation of 12 states. This move was an attempt at correcting the age-long structural imbalance, which was partly responsible for the political chaos in the country. Consequently, Nigeria was divided into 19 states under Murtala/Obasanjo Regime 1976, 21 states under General Babangida in 1987. Interestingly, today Nigeria is a federation of 36 states.

Moreover, it is not palatable to erroneously suppose that multiple division of state is enough palliative measure or rather a tool for correcting the problem of Nigerian federalism, this supposition has been proved invalid because of the attendant problems that still face Nigeria federal system viz: problem of revenue allocation, military issue, persistent clamour for state creation, ethno-religious rivalry, among others. In actual fact, the present federal structure is moulded or built after what some scholars called a glorified unitary system or rather "Military federalism". Nigeria adopted a federal system with a strong centre; this is peculiar with what is referred to above. Basically military federalism in Nigeria has two glaring features. The first is the military superstructure, a military hierarchy of authority, the Head of the federal military Government appoints all state governors who are responsible to him. This negates the salient and traditional principle of federalism. On the other hand, other institutions of federalism exist and are mainly civilian in terms of their incumbents. These include the federal and state bureaucracies and local government structure the federal and state judicial institution and federal and State Corporation from which retain their autonomy in their respective spheres of operation, as contained in the constitution (Ekeh, 2007).

One significant element in military federalism is the creation of state which is mostly required in federalism because it is believed to meet with the yearning of the people. The period between 1973-75 witnessed intense demands for state creation, these demands were met by creating additional state from twelve under Gowon to 19 states under Murtala/Obasanjo, 29 states under Babangida and up to 36 states structure under Abacha.

Military has also bequeathed the super structure to the nation federalism, most governors and honourables serve as stooges under the president with the believe that failure to do so may cost them their positions and relevance in the government, the situation which is antithetical to the pristine doctrine of federalism or true federal system. By and large, Nigerian federal structure is at the moment being faced with series of challenges that are threatening the realization of its true federal basis, this include:

- I. The limiting roles played by Nigeria's civil elites especially in frustrating progressive review schemes of the Nigerian policy. Reference could easily be made to the frustrative effort of the National Assembly members under Obasanjo. When the administration started the process of re-writing Nigeria federal constitution, which was hoped, could strengthening the federal system and probably remove some of the military tendency smuggled into the constitution. The whole effort was jeopardized and stalled by the third term Agenda.
- ii. Another problem is the injury inflicted by man ignorance about the advantages of activated true federalism.
- iii. Corruption is another serious challenge to the true federal practices in the country. When a sigh of relieve is about being contemplated with the introduction of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offenses Commission (ICPC). It is only hoped that the effort of these agencies will not be frustrated by government policy and infiltration of political stalwart in the country.
- iv. The Niger-Delta question, the emergence of youths' restiveness about their demand for fiscal federalism and the rising incidence of reckless

abductions, kidnappings and rustling among others, threaten the existence of the composite unity of Nigeria and thereby make all the Efforts at achieving the federal structure a sham.

It is sufficient to say that unless most of these anomalies are redressed Nigerian federal structure cannot be any better than a glorified unitarism or military federalism so to say.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED GOVERNMENT BASED ON SIX GEO-POLITICAL ZONE-NEO-REGIONALISM

The advocates of this system proposed a government where each geo-political zone will have a premier or Governor General as the case may be and a prime minister at the centre. In their view, the question of which state presents a premier at a given time is proposed to be on a rotational basis, while the prime minister will automatically emerge from the most populous party or party with the largest seats in the parliament. The fact still remained that when the issue of rotational presidency was introduced, the rationale behind it was that the position of a president should rotate among the six geographical zones, but the reverse has since been the case. It may be instructive to state here that the handing over of baton to the Yoruba was a product of exigency or necessity, it was not in the true spirit of rotational presidency. Now, the Igbos are clamouring that it is their turn to present a president come 2017, even somebody who is audio-visually impaired know it is not possible, what does this signify? Aside the fact that the Northerners are staging a come back, the question of which state and person is to represent the Igbos or the Easemeters becomes a multi-million naira question. Contemporary Nigeria politics is usually determined by the survival of the fittest. The fitness in this regard is loaded with multifarious qualities which if any candidate possesses then he/she is sure of being elected. This naturally is a constraint in rotational clause in the 1999 constitution.

What all these imply is that, presentation of a premier on rotational basis to each zone may not work. Hence, there arises a great potential for one state to gang up and be dominating in the regional politics thereby leading to marginalization of the position of the premier. In this sense, dissention may set in which may inevitably precipitate instability in the region.

Aside this, the issue of subjugation of the minority groups which in the first instance led to the clamouring for state creation and autonomy of states is still very much relevant, or at best this system may be a reversal of the old system where the minority groups felt highly insecure and clamoured for autonomy of their states. The minority issues became more pronounced as the date of independence approached, the various minority groups that were submerged by the major tribes, conscious of eventual domination by these major ethnic groups, began to clamour for the creation of their own states. As a result, each of the three regions, the North, the West and the East, had its minority problems.

The Ilorin and Kabba districts and Benue were renowned in the North, the middle belt in the west while Calabar Ogoja River State were popular in the East, various issues were noticeable for insecurity claim in various districts.

In the Eastern Region, the clamour for separate status came from the Delta and coastal areas of the region. Their demands included the creation of Cross River State, River State and Calabar Ogoja Rivers (COR) state.

This demand was borne out of the fear nursed by these minority group about the increasing domination of the Eastern Regional politics by the Igbos. The domination was carried out through the instrumentality of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon, later Nigerian citizen (NCNC) led by Dr. Azikwe and controlled by the Igbos. The 1952-53 split of the Igbo Efiik leaders was the result of the effort of the Igbos to maintain political hegemony in the region. This led to the expulsion of Eyo Ita from the party and final dissolution of the Eastern House of Assembly.

1. It has since been explained that rotational government is between the North and the South. This is tantamount to a contradiction, it does not matter who produces whatever when we have the physical presence of the dominating influence of a particular group in these regional divisions.
2. To be fit in Nigerian politics, one must combine affluence with influence. And ready to go for it at all cost.

In the Western Region, on the other hand, the major claim for separation came from the minorities in the Eastern part of the region. The demand of the minorities represented a protest against the attitude of the Western Regional Government which they described as "Yoruba in feeling". They substantiated their claims by citing the pro-Yoruba nature of the Action Group as well as the prejudicial (a derogatory adjective) "koko koko" by which the Yoruba described the non-Yoruba. According to them, Mr Dennis Osadehin, a non-Yoruba, was asked to surrender his post as the leader of opposition in the Western House of Assembly to Abaji Adebisi, who was a Yoruba, on the ground that no Yoruba would fight for a party that is likely to give them a non-Yoruba as a premier. Alai Chief Olatofun who was a Western commissioner in London had his appointment terminated for being on the list. This situation may be described (self how Akamere, 2001).

Some people may argue that the situation experienced in these days may not be feasible now, because each state will still retain her statehood and a form of government maintained, while the position of premiership on rotational basis will be strictly adhered to and will not necessarily affect the political status quo of various states. The question now is, of what use is the position of a premier if the status of states will still remain the same? The absolute truth is that the state powers will gradually erode for regional politics, where the regional politics in this age will be more drastic and its consequences greater than the problems it pretends to solve.

The solution lies in making the present system work, and not a reversal to the old school politics in a new disguise.

MAKING THE EXISTING FEDERAL STRUCTURE WORK

To achieve the above goal, amendments and restructuring have to be effected from the federal to state, up to the local government level. The unified and over centralized power of the existing federal system have to be de-emphasized along democratic principles. This is where constitutional re-engineering becomes expedient. In the 1999 constitution for instance, the power of the Chief Security of the state was taken from the state government and placed within the confine of the president.

This development, of course, helped to aggravate conflict in Kogi and Lagos State respectively during the Yoruba-Hausa crisis and the O.P.U. issues. The governor will have to inform the president about the security situation in her state before Mr. President could instruct the Inspector General of police to take action, he (Mr. President) may delay action if the governor is not in his good book, and the state of emergency can then be pronounced if the situation gets out of hand. The federal government in the purportedly envisaged new Nigeria should busy itself with the following:

1. Take charge of the country's foreign policy, protecting the territorial integrity of the country—control the national arm forces and the police here. It should be the Chief Security of the country and devolve such power to various states.
2. Regulate the revenue allocation to engender rapid development among states.
3. Regulate the National treasury and control of central bank. This does not mean the federal government should arrogate power to itself.

The states on the other hand should be made to have autonomy in all ramifications.

1. It should not be subordinate to the central government but co-ordinate.
2. The state should look inward for internal generation of revenue to sustain her own growth. In the pre-independence days, the west was known for her cocoa production, East for her palm oil while the North was renowned for her groundnut. All these resources and others are still there, they should be properly harnessed and utilized to guarantee true autonomy outside of outside aid.
3. The state should provide for full security of lives and properties for her citizens, the citizens should be looking forward to the state and not the federal government.

For the Local Governments, they in the same vein should be autonomous of the state government.

1. The Local Government should engender the development of their communities.
2. They should embark on productive business to guarantee the development of the community. This does not mean imposing undue and arbitrary taxes on the citizens.
3. In all cases they should be the first point of call for the indigenes before the state hence, they should embark on project that is of local relevance.

On resource allocation, the principle of derivation, need, national interest and rapid development of states should be maintained thus:

1. The oil producing states should be given 40% of federally generated revenue, in states where the federal government generates enough revenue 30% of the federally generated revenue should be given, while other states should be given 25%. This is in consideration that all state should look inward for internally revenue generation.
2. Local government units should be given 10% of the federally generated Revenue.
3. The revenue mobilization allocation and fiscal commission should be strengthened it should be responsible for the collection and disbursement of revenue even to the federal level and all parties involved including the local governments should be collecting their revenue directly. To this end, the commission should be granted full Autonomy.
4. Each level of government should be publishing the total revenue collected and expended subject to public criticism on a quarterly basis in the National dailies, television houses and government gazette. A clue should be taken from Rotimi Amaechi the River State Governor.

It is important to state that institution of justice i.e. the judiciary should be made functional to dispense with cases quickly and made accessible to all and sundry. This will further help to curb corruption and aid the integration of federal institutional structure.

Noticeably, in a federal system, the federal constitution is ratified by a specified proportion of the constituent states. In a genuine federal system, each constituent unit has its own constitution in which it decides how many legislative chambers it desires and in which it decides where its capital should be located. Each unit of a proper federal system should be allowed to select and fly its own flag. In addition to the Nigerian flag, federalism requires that each level of government exercises appropriate authority in judicial matters, along with a civilian police formation. It is disheartening that Nigerian has one police establishment. Does anybody really believe that the Nigeria Police can handle land cases in local communities, settle marital problems between husbands and wives, arrest petty thieves in remote villages, patrol the highway, apprehend armed robbers and still be efficient. This is practically impossible!

It is wiser to confine the Nigeria police to federal responsibilities of law and order, leaving state matters to the state, and local matters in maintaining the law and order to local police. This was, of course earlier practiced by our indigenous communities before British colonial rule, state who can raise state policing unit should not be denied.

Above all else, federalism enjoins a notion of justice in which each constituent unit gives to the whole and receives from the whole in some proportion. In the decade of decolonisation, the founding fathers of Nigerian federation agreed that each constituent unit of the federation shall optimally develop its economic resources. The military subverted this formation because of easy access to wealth from petroleum products, lost sight with other sources of revenue outside of oil and arrogated more power to the centre, hence, every state rather than looking inwards, began to focus and hope to get sustenance from the centre.

In any way, federalism was never a luxury in Nigeria, it was a necessity. Military rule has dangerously turned federalism into a disposable luxury (Ekeh, 2007). In doing so, it has attacked that very premises on which the

Survival of Nigeria rests. It has also changed fundamentally the theories of government that animated political discourse in the 1950's. In these ways, the legacies of military rule threaten the corporate survival of Nigeria. Reviving the integrity of Nigeria, according to Ekeh (2007), requires a return to maximum federalism, retaining the current states at its constituent units. Maximum federalism includes the authority of the states to have their own constitution, police formations and choices of their own capital headquarters. It also includes redistributing national economic resources in ways and manners that will enable states to develop their natural and human resources. For the sceptist who argues that the present states are too weak for such tasks, Ekeh (2007) points out that no state in Nigeria is smaller in population not in land area, nor in human endowments than Gambia. Many of our states, he concludes, are much better endowed than Liberia or Sierra Leone.

As alluded to in the introductory part that even the countries like Australia, Canada and the United States that practise a federal system have some variation. I am not advocating that Nigeria should adopt hook-line and sinker a federal system of these democracies. We can have our own home grown as sometimes advocated for in democratic discourse. Which ever way we want to go about it, our federalism must have in it basic rudiments that make it work. This to me is located completely outside our present military federalism as practised.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

One can conveniently conclude that federalism and democracy are like twin brothers. I mean to say democracy will only triumph in this country where the ideal federal structure is practiced. If democracy is all about people's rule, for Nigerian federalism to work, it must incorporate all democratic principles as dictated by the so-called maximum and not restricted federalism. Autonomy and all its attendant recipes should be extended to various units and both the minor and major players in federated states be given sense and advantages of belonging.

By and large, it has been stated unequivocally that solutions to Nigerian problems do not necessarily lie in the change of political system, rather making the existing system work. This can only be achieved if the super military structure where absolute power is concentrated at the centre is highly de-emphasized.

State in a federal system, apart from being co-ordinate and inter-dependent with the centre, should be responsible for total well-being of her people without necessarily depending on the centre. It should improvise developmental strategies, responsible and responsive to the individual needs in the state. The same thing applies to the local government. The doctrine of true federalism suppose where the federal, state and local government see themselves as partners in progress without any of the union becoming small monster and autocratic but rather each doing her utmost to carry out her statutory and socially imposed duties. The constitution should not be too rigid in relieving any government functionaries found wanting in his/her duties of his/her position as such, the immunity clause should be critically reexamined and reviewed. The political will of the government, coupled with competent and objective leadership will go a long way in bringing this proposition into fruition. For, unless the economic lots and total well being of individual are guaranteed in the polity the "gold-diggers" will always find their ways into government. The example of the present government in Yar-Adua will give credence to the statement leadership and political goodwill which have always eluded us. Nigeria's problem should not be located in the search for new political paradigm but rather in good leadership and the intent to deliver political goods to the greatest number of the populace.

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