

**NIGERIAN’S FEDERALISM, A FAILURE TO NATIONAL
INTEGRATION: A RELATIVE ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at examining the impact of federalism on national integration in Nigeria. The study revealed that despite the practice of federalism in Nigeria for decades, it has failed to promote national integration as being clamored by different regions, ethnic groups and religious groups. The rate of marginalization in terms of power sharing, policy targets, revenue allocation and quota system is alarming that has over time manifested into problems such as ethnic crisis, boundary disputes, mutual suspicion, religious crisis, clamor for successions and self-rule by different groups. This study made use of available literature on the subject matter and basically focused on the two major agencies designed for ensuring and promoting national integration in Nigeria, the Federal Character Commission and the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission. The paper concludes that despite the activities of these commissions and other sister commissions and agencies, much success has not been recorded, The study recommends that all these commissions should be reviewed to ensure efficacy, fairness, effectiveness, justice and due processes, also more mechanisms should be devised and employed to promote national integration for sustainable and prosperous Nigeria state.

Keywords: Federalism, National Integration, Federal Character Commission, Revenue Allocation Mobilization and Fiscal Commission

Introduction

The system and nature of government adopted in every country depends mostly on their population sizes, land masse, ethnics' composition, historical antecedents and religious plurality, so as to accommodate and fit in these diverse features. For a country like Nigeria, the suitable system is federalism which is conventionally agreed as a diversity solving mechanism which seeks to ensure and promote equity, efficiency and accommodate unity in diversity. Federalism is a political arrangement in which communities, states, and regions that prior exist independently are now being brought together under a platform which allow them to pull their resources together, share common opinions, take decisions on general issues and also being able to take decisions on some issues affecting individual states and communities, which means the platform or system provides an avenue for dependence and interdependence among them irrespective of their tribes, ethnic, political party, and religious affiliations etc. It is also a system of government in which governmental powers are shared between the component parts which is usually made up of the central, states and local governments while some powers and issues are highly restricted to be performed by the government at the center and these issues are usually of national concern like Currency, Security and Foreign affairs, while other powers are vested in the state to carry out and solve their internal related problems via concurrent list which now allows for unity and diversity. According Ayode (1988) as cited in Charas, Ahmed & Aliyu, (2014), posited that "federalism did not begin as a concept of social and political organization it evolved by reflective philosophers; rather, it is a political ideology that signifies a division of governmental powers between the national government and the constituent units which may well be a state, division, province, and region, among others".

However, the history of Nigerian's federalism has different versions; some scholars traced it back to colonial period and the reason being for administrative conviniences, while other to the 1914 amalgamation of the northern and southern province with the colony of Lagos, some are of the opinion that federalism is adopted because of the plural nature of Nigeria, other trace it to 1939 under Sir Bernard Bourdilion who divided Nigeria into three province namely the north, west and the eastern province, while other asserted it was under the Littleton constitution of 1954 because it provided for the exclusive, concurrent and residual list which allocate functions and

areas of jurisdiction to each levels of government. However all are of the aim of promoting national integration. Federalism in Nigeria subsequently graduated into 4 regions in 1963, 12 states in 1967, 19 states in 1979, 23 states in 1987, 30 states in 1991 and later 36 states and 774 local government councils in 1996, (Bello, Otohinoji & Akume, 2011); and still serves as the current structures of Nigerians federalism up till the current political dispensation. Elaigwu & Garba, (2014) as cited in Yakubu (2014) asserted that “Federalism was adopted in Nigeria as a mechanism for managing conflicts associated with the process of national integration. The current Nigerian State is British colony following the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. The artificial boundaries created by the European partitioning of Africa created culturally diverse states as they brought together strange ethno-religious groups into one political territory regardless of geographical contiguity or even historical backgrounds of these groups”. Because of these tribal, religious and ethnic conflict between these parts has been a serious threat to the development and attainment of national integrations during the post colonial administration. So federalism is the system that can accommodate and enhance national integration in Nigeria and in other countries of the world operating federal system of government like Indian, Brazil, Sudan, and Switzerland because of the diverse cultures, tribes, ethnic groups, castes and religions that exist there, so federalism has the mechanism that can accommodate and ameliorate these differences. That’s why Philips (2014), posited that Federal Systems world over are today consistently seen as political arrangements that afford an opportunity to accommodate the myriad diversities within a political system to find legitimate expression. And also Alapiki (2005) observed that the introduction of Unitary schools, NYSC, State creation, Quota system are some of the policies aimed at achieving national integration. In the case of Nigeria, federalism has not yielded the much expected result as compared to other federal states, so the conundrum here is: is it Federalism that fails Nigeria or is it Nigerians that fail federalism? Philips (2014) pointed out that the country has since been confronted with the challenges of accommodating diversities, fostering inclusiveness and promoting national unity amongst its diverse ethnic groups that make up the Nigeria’s nation – state. Other problems include ethnic crisis, tribal crisis, supremacy for power sharing, mutual suspicious, elitisms, abuse of federal principles, crisis over revenue allocation sharing formula and mediocrity etc. This paper therefore, tried to highlight the effect of Nigeria’s federalism on national integration, with the aim of proffering workable solutions. The

paper is being structured into five parts, the introductory part, Conceptual analysis, Theoretical Framework, Issues, way forward and conclusion.

The Concept of Federalism

Federalism is coined from a Latin word *Foedus*, meaning “treaty”, “covenant”. “League” or “compact”, (Ogudiya and abdullahi, 2012). In a broader view, federalism means a political arrangement of people of diverse ethnic groups, religions, cultures, systems and styles of traditional administration been brought together to embrace a particular modern system of government for cooperation and development through joint resources of both human, material and natural resources. In the words of Friedrich (1963:585) federalism is “a union of group united by one or more common objectives but retaining their distinctive group being for other purpose”. The reason behind this unionism is because of some common objectives they intend to achieve which ordinarily they would not have achieved it in isolation or have a common social benefit; that is the reason for the cooperation and after that the part away to settle individual state related problems, that is why federalism in Nigeria has not yield the expected result since it is taking for comparative advantage purpose. Ayode (1998) opined that federalism is a political ideology that allows division of governmental powers, functions and authorities between the central government and other constituent unit that form the government which may be the states, provinces, or regions depending on the tiers of governments in the country. Kapur (1986) defined federalism as “a dual government where powers are distributed by the constitution between the central and regional or state government”. This definition suits Nigeria in which there is a constitutional division of powers between the central, state and local government via the exclusive , concurrent and residual list as enshrined in the 1979, 1989 and 1999 constitutions as amended. Federalism according to Ricker (2006: 189) is a political organization or political arrangement whereby the powers and functions of governments are shared between the regional government and central government where by each level of government has a peculiar function to perform concerning issues or matters affecting its jurisdiction. Takan (2011), defined federalism as the system of government were by the component units of the system (political organization) participate in powers and functions sharing in a coordinated way through the combined forces of ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity. Federalism is a systematic arrangement which is guided

by rules of engagement, which clearly specify how powers, resources and functions are to be shared and where decisions are to be carried out jointly or separately. Going further, Jordan (1978:303) sees federalism to mean a form of government having bi- levels of commands existing side by side, sharing powers and responsibility dependently or sometimes independently between the central and state governments. Lastly federalism according to Jackson and Jackson as cited in Ogundiya and Abdullhi (2012) is “a division of jurisdiction and authority between at least two levels government”. From all the above definitions it is understood that federalism cannot exist where there is one level of government, there must be divisions of power amongst the levels that make up the political system, there is dependence and interdependence among the component units, there must be the presence of different ethnic groups, tribes, and religions, and lastly the central government is supreme than the other components.

The Concept of National Integration

The term national and integration are often used together however, the term Integration is coined from the Latin word “Integer” meaning whole, entire or the process of fixing together of many diverse part to work together as a whole body for even and rapid development. It’s also the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. That is why Shoma (2003) in his word opined that national integration means though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different languages we recognize the fact that we are all one. Maurice Duverger (1976:177) sees national integration as “the process of unifying a society which tends to make it harmonious”. Going further PhidE. Jacob & Henry Tenue (1964:9) believed national integration to be a pattern of communication and relationship of communities amongst people within the same political entity; stating further; it is a state of mind or disposition to be committed to mutual programs, mutual feelings and mutual benefits. In the view of Donald G. Manson et al (1972:385) posited that it is a mechanism in which members of a social, political and economic system develop linkages and location so that the boundaries of the system persist over time and the boundaries of the sub system becomes less consequential in affecting behavior . In this process, members of the social system develop in escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus and community. The aim of this social system is to create an avenue for ameliorating issues at the center so that the component parts of the social system will not take

individual behavior, interest, and problems more important than that of the general interest in order to ensure longtime relationship. Also James Coleman & Carl Rosbery (1964:4) sees national integration as “the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities in the process of creating a homogenous political community”. Because all these problems associated with national integration are those of cultural, tribal, regional and religious difference so if solutions are offered to these it will no doubt address other problems, Kukah (2003) stressed that it is remarkably imperative to note that ethno-cultural and religious superiority and crisis have contributed significantly to most of the problems in the country. Karl Deutsch et al (1966:2) proffer a more fitting definition as “The attainment within a territory of a sense of community and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to secure for a long time dependable expectations of peaceful community”. To him “sense of community” means attitude of oneness by the individuals making up the communities, that they have come to consensus and must have taken a stake on at least one point that common social problems must be solved on process of peaceful change. Notwithstanding Janeline (2010) believes national integration to be the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country, which help them come together under the same banner though tribe, culture, religion may differs but territory, history and origin bound them together which shows they are all one. Lastly Haas (1974) defined national integration as the means where by different political actors from different national setting are compelled to shift their loyalties, expectations, trust, commitments, patriotism and political activities towards a new center, where institutions possess or demands jurisdictions over the pre existing nation- state for the purpose of even development, peaceful coexistence and sign of oneness. All the ideas about national integration is just a means by which people of diverse cultures, tribes and religions habiting a particular territory comes to agree on certain terms and conditions on how to coordinate their activities and redistributions of these activities according to fair representations of each members making up the communities in order to promote harmony, perpetual existence, spirit of oneness and serve as each other’s brothers keepers.

The Concept of Federal Character

In a bid for inclusivity, justice, fairness, equity and feeling of belonging the federal character commission was deemed pertinent and necessary to come on board just so that appointment and other resources are being shared equally. The federal character commission is a part of those administrative agencies that has constitutional provisions, functions and legal backup. This commission was firstly inaugurated under the leadership of General Murtala Ramat Mohammed military administration in 1975. The commission was however incorporated in the 1979, 1989 and subsequently in section 14(3) (4) of the 1999 constitution and interpreted 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 its agencies”.

This commission was established to ensure equal and fair distribution of federal appointments amongst the thirty six states of the federation and taking into consideration ethnic, religion and tribal differences in the appointments; so as to allow transparency and fair share of the national cake in order to foster national unity and sense of oneness. According to Ogunna (1999), the federal character principle as enshrined in the constitution demands that all appointment, allocation of amenities and benefits at the federal, state and local governments and their agencies should have a “national spread”. Here national spread portrays the inclusion of every tribe, ethnic group, religion group in other words every section has to be represented and reached out to. Bagudu (2003) posited that federal character is meant to ensure that appointment is carried out in a manner that reflects the composition of federation so as to enable all to reap the benefit from the federation. The perplexing question at this juncture is, “is this attainable in Nigerian”? Abubakar (2003) asserts that federal character principle is intending to build a sense of belonging and participation by the diverse ethnic groups and power seeking groups in the governance of the post colonial Nigeria. And also the principle of fairness and transparency of the commission has been compromised which makes people to revolt and clamor for restructuring since the commission established and saddles with the responsibility of managing and solving diversity differences has overtime lost its grips. This as a result tends to make people lose hope and trust

as the result of the marginalization. That is why Ekeh (1989) asserted that the Federal character principle has become a problem instead of solution to diversity problems it was expected to address.

Establishment of the Federal Character Commission

The Commission was first introduced in 1995 under the military regime led by General Sani Abacha. By section 1(1) of the Act the Commission was established and by virtue of subsection (2) the Commission has the following features:

- (a) Shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession;
- (b) Sue and be sued in its corporate merit;
- (c) Shall have its headquarters in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and
- (d) Shall establish an office in each state of the Federation.

The Commission is one of the Federal bodies established under section 153(1) of the 1999 Constitution.

Composition and Powers of the Commission

The composition of the Commission and its powers are spelt out the Third Schedule, Part 1(c) of the 1999 Constitution. Paragraph 7(1) provides:

The Federal Character Commission shall comprise the following members,

- (a) A chairman; and
- (b) One person to represent each of the states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

However, the Commission has 37 members each per states besides the chairman and the secretary. In general term the chairman is a member of the Commission. The equitable representation by each state of the Federation as envisaged by the provisions is undermined by the fact that the chairman and the secretary would come from any state which would have been represented by virtue of paragraph 7(1) (b) of the provision under reference. This problem would have been eliminated if there had been no duplication of membership from the chairman/secretary's states. More important is the reality of the fact that the chairman has

inherent power to cast votes where members are equally divided on an issue that requires voting. Moreover, there are many states in Nigeria with multiple ethnic and religious groups; this was not taken into consideration.

Examination of Powers of the Commission

By virtue of section 5 of the Federal Character Commission Act 1995, the Commission shall have power to:

- (a) Formulate and provide guidelines for Government agencies and other employers and providers of services and socio-economic amenities;
- (b) Monitor compliance with the guidelines and formulae at Federal, State, Local Government and zonal levels in the employment and provision of socio-economic amenities;
- (c) Enforce compliance with its guidelines and formulae in areas of the provisions of employment opportunities, distribution of infrastructural facilities, socio-economic amenities and other indices;
- (d) Compel boards of directors of government-owned companies and other enterprises, which are subject to the provisions of this Act to comply with the guidelines and formulae on ownership structure, employment and distribution of their products;
- (e) Demand and receive returns on employment and socio-economic indices from any enterprise or body corporate and penalize any enterprise which does not comply with a request from the commission;
- (f) Undertake the recruitment and training of staff of government agencies or departments where desirable;
- (g) Institute investigation into any matter relating to any institution or organization where the institution or organization concerned fails to comply with the commission, the institution or organization shall be required to bear the cost of such investigations; and
- (h) Do anything which in the opinion of the Commission is incidental to its functions under this Act.

As a follow-up to the provisions of the Act which enables the Commission to formulate and provide guidelines for Government agencies and other employers and providers of services and

socio-economic amenities, the Commission in 1996 published the “Guiding Principles and Formulae for the Distribution of Posts in the Public Service” (hereafter Guiding Principles).

The Guiding Principles provide for general principles under column A as follows:

(a) That each state of the federation is to be equitably represented in all national institutions and in public enterprises and organizations.

(b) That the best and most competent persons are recruited from each state of the federation to fill positions reserved for the indigenes of that state.

(c) That once a candidate has attained the necessary minimum requirement for appointment to a position, he/she should qualify to fill a relevant vacancy reserved for the indigenes of his/her state.

(d) that where the number of positions available cannot go round the states, then sharing should be on zonal basis but that in the case where two items only are available, they should be shared between northern zones and the southern zones

(e) That if the indigenes of a state are not able to take up all the vacancies meant for them the indigenes of other state(s) within the same zone should be given preference in filling such vacancies.

(f) That in an ideal situation, posts to be distributed among the indigenes of the states and Abuja on the formula of equality would be 2.75% for the indigenes of each state after reserving 1% for the indigenes of Abuja. However, in the spirit of give and take, the Commission has decided to adopt a range so that the indigenes of any state should not constitute less than the lower limit or more than the upper limit of the range.

(h) That the six zones and the states they comprise are:

(i) North Central: Benue, FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger, and Plateau States.

(ii) North-East: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe States.

(iii) South-West: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara States.

(iv) South East: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States.

(v) South South: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States.

(vi) South West: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo States.

(i) That for the zones, depending on the number of states within each zone, the

Commission has adopted three ranges such that the indigenes of any state within a zone should not constitute less than the lower limit or more than the upper limit of the range applicable to the zone.

Column B of the Guiding Principles entitled “Definition of Indigene Adopted by the Commission” states:

(a) *An indigene of a Local Government:* An indigene of a local government is a person:

(i) Either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents was or is an indigene of the local government concerned; or

(ii) Who is accepted as an indigene by the local government concerned provided that no one can lay claim to more than one local government.

(b) *An indigene of a State:* An indigene of a state is a person who is an indigene of one of the local governments in the state that is to say, an indigene of a state is a person neither of whose parents or grandparents belong or belonged to a community indigenous to the state or a person who is accepted as such by a local government in the state. No person should be allowed to lay claim to more than one state in the application of the federal character principle.

(c) *An Indigene of the Federal Capital Territory:* An indigene of the Federal Capital

Territory is a Nigerian citizen, other than by naturalization, who cannot lay claim to any state of the federation in other words; the indigenes of the territory are those Nigerians

(and their descendants) who lived in the area now constituted as the capital territory before 26th February, 1976, and decided to continue to reside in the territory after that date.

(d) *Indigenous Status of a Married Woman:* A married woman should continue to lay claim to her own state of origin for the purpose of implementation of federal formulae at the national level.

Powers and Functions of Commission under 1999 Constitution

By virtue of paragraph 8(1) of the Third Schedule Part I-C of the 1999 Constitution the Commission has responsibility to give effect to section 14(3)(4) of the Constitution. In effect, it has a duty to enforce compliance with provisions relating to the concept of Federal Character enshrined in the Constitution.

In the light of the enormous responsibility placed on the Commission by the

Constitution, it is necessary to carefully examine the power of the Commission with a view to weighing it with the Commission's objectives so as to bring into light the reality of the power granted in contemporary Nigeria. The socio-political structure of Nigeria shows that the Commission would operate under the pressure of powerful group interests most especially as regards sensitive and influential posts.

The inclusion of section 14(4) of the Constitution gives the Commission jurisdiction over the states of the Federation. Unlike the provision of the Act, the provision in the Constitution omitted local governments. This is understood in the light of the fact that local governments are not recognized in the Constitution as part of the federating units of Nigeria. This might mean that the Commission's power does not cover local governments. However, local governments may be read into state as an integral part of states of the Federation. The Commission would need to seek for judicial clarification on the issue to avoid the pitfall of *ultra vires*.

Revenue Allocation Mobilization and Fiscal Commission

Brief History of the Commission

The emergence of Nigeria's Fiscal Federalism is said to have started by the adoption of the Richards Constitution of 1946, through the granting of internal autonomy to the Regions under the Constitution and the subsequent sharing of responsibilities between the Federal and Regional Governments.

Nigeria being a Federation has different levels of Government each with its own constitutional responsibilities. Accordingly, it requires a mechanism to handle fiscal issues including revenue allocation from which each level of Government will be provided funds to meet expenditure obligations, enhance economic development, and minimize inter-governmental conflicts.

In the course of time, the country witnessed various political changes and reforms. In response to these changes a number of Commissions were set up to review allocation formulae to reflect changing realities in line with the constitutional responsibilities of the various tiers of Government. These Commissions include.

(i) Philipson Commission (1946),

- (ii) Hicks-Philipson Commission (1951),
- (iii) Chick's Commission (1953),
- (iv) Raisman Commission (1958),
- (v) Binns Commission (1964)
- (vi) Dina Interim Commission (1969),
- (vii) Aboyade Commission (1977), and
- (viii) Okigbo Commission (1980).

It is instructive to note that each of these Commissions or Committee came into existence under different political and economic circumstances. Thus, they were ad-hoc in nature and disbanded on completion of their assignments. However, with increased complexity of inter-governmental fiscal relations, particularly as a result of creation of more states and Local Governments in the country, the need for a permanent body to handle fiscal matters arose.

Consequently, the National Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (NRMAFC) was established by Decree No.49 of 1989 (now an Act of National Assembly) as a body to handle revenue allocation and fiscal matters on a continuous basis. However, Decree No.49 of 1989 was later amended by Decree No.99 of 1993 (now RMAFC Act Cap R7 LFN 2004). The Commission was thus re-named Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria under Section 153(1) as one of the Fourteen (14) Federal Executive Bodies.

The Federation Account is a common pool from which revenues generated into it are then shared among the three tiers of Government. The Commission therefore, has the statutory mandate to monitor all accruals into and disbursement of revenue from the Federation Account. The Agencies that collect and remit revenue into the Account include: Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) and Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), etc. This is to ensure that all revenues accruable into the Federation Account are collected, properly accounted for and paid into this Account.

Establishment and composition of Commission

Establishment of the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission There shall be established for the Federation a Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (in this Act referred to as "the Commission") which, under that name, shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name, and whose members shall exercise the functions specified in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 and in this Act.

Composition of the Commission

The Commission shall consist of a chairman and one member from each State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, who are persons of unquestionable integrity with requisite qualifications and experience, to be appointed by the President.

VISION STATEMENT

To be a world class Federal Agency that promotes optimal and sustainable National Revenue base and ensure equitable, fair and just fiscal structure for transparent collection, remittance and disbursement of revenue to the designated beneficiaries aimed at enhancing good governance.

MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure effective mobilization of all revenue accruable to the Federation Account, advise on Fiscal matters and monitor effectively all remittances for equitable and fair disbursement to the beneficiaries to promote national unity and development through established fiscal structure under relevant extant laws.

CORE VALUES

The core values of the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) are:

Transparency

Accountability

Reliability

Fairness

Equity and

Justice

Functions of the commission

With the present democratic institutions in place, the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) is empowered by paragraph 32(a) of Part I to the third schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) to the same to perform the following functions:

(1) The Commission shall have power to-

- (a) Monitor the accruals to and disbursement of revenue from the Federation Account;
- (b) Review, from time to time, the revenue allocation formulae and principles in operation to ensure conformity with changing realities;
- (c) Advise the Federal, State and Local Governments on fiscal efficiency and methods by which their revenue is to be increased;
- (d) Determine the remuneration appropriate to the holders of the offices as specified in Parts A and B of the First Schedule to this Act; [First Schedule.]
- (e) Make recommendations and submit its finding by a report thereto to the government of the Federation or of the State, as the case may be, regarding the formula for the distribution of the Federation Accounts and the Local Government Accounts; and
- (f) Discharge such other functions as may be conferred on the Commission by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, this Act, or any other Act of the National Assembly.

(2) For the attainment of the objectives set in subsection (1) of this section, the Commission shall-

- (a) Be a statutory member of each of the following Government Agencies-
 - (i) The Federation Account Allocation Committee;
 - (ii) The Local Government Joint Account Allocation Committee;
 - (iii) The Joint Tax Board;
 - (iv) The Niger-Delta Development Commission; and
 - (v) The Commission on Ecological Fund;

(b) Have the power to demand and obtain regular and relevant information, data or returns from any Government agencies including the following, that is-

(i) The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation;

(ii) The Nigerian Customs Service;

(iii) The Federal Board of Inland Revenue;

(iv) The Central Bank of Nigeria; and

(v) The Federal Ministry of Finance.

(3) It shall be the duty of the Government agencies referred to in this section to comply with requests made by the Commission pursuant to subsection (1) of this section.

Theoretical framework

Theory is a body of knowledge that guides a research work in order to provide more evidence in relations to the concepts under study. This work is guided by the structural – functional theory of Gabriel Almond.

This theory posited that every political arrangement has its own structures and each structure is created to perform some functions which will foster the existence of that system and its survival. The examples of these structures in Nigerian include federal character commissions and revenue mobilization, allocation and fiscal commission. And each is assigned with certain functions that will promote the aims of their creation which is to promote national integration because of the diversity of ethnic groups, tribes, and religions that exist in Nigeria. And any diversion from these will lead to a lapse. To Almond there are seven- variables, four of which are input functions and are performed by non –governmental component and the remaining three are performed by the government. These four inputs include interest articulation, interest aggregation, political socialization and lastly political communication. The output functions include lawmaking, law implementation and rule adjudication.

The problem is that Almond did not believe and considered that some structures are dysfunctional especially in country like Nigeria, and most third world countries where these structures are not performing their functions as expected. This as a result failed to guarantee fair

representation in quota system and equity in revenue allocations. Almond also made emphasis on the capability of the system to cope with the inputs entering the system known as demands and it is not everything that goes into the system that the government can process to become outputs. However, for a system to survive it must possess necessary mechanism to process these inputs for its survival to avoid collapse in which Nigerian has done but no results from its feedback mechanisms.

Federalism and national integration: issues and challenges

In this section of the paper, our focus is on the issues and challenges of federalism in Nigeria. These have resulted in failure to attain and promote national integration in Nigeria since its genesis.

The Revenue sharing formula is one of the most critical problems of federalism in Nigeria, this has resulted to several debate on the proxies used in sharing of the national wealth which involves population, derivation, natural disasters and needs, etc. But still people are not satisfied with this formula for example people from the Niger delta or the oil region of the south- east are clamoring that the percentage allocated to them through derivation principle are not enough to guarantee their survival and development. Their land are not more fertile for agriculture, no portable drinking water, fishing in this area is not possible, and their forest have been damaged by fire all in the name of oil exploration. So they believe they have no fair share of the national income. Whittington (2001) in his word stated that oil region in Nigeria seems to be stuck in a time warp, with little or no real change since oil was discovered for over 50 years ago. Away from the main towns, there is no real development, no roads, no electricity, no running water and no telephone. And the North is also claiming that prior to the discovering of oil in Nigeria the revenue from the export of groundnut and cotton used to finance all capital project of the country. The northern region are again boasting of population size and using it as comparative advantages to acquire more allocations based on the principle of population, while others believes it a false figure, that the figures was initially increased to augment their allocation and also for political reasons like constituency, polling zones and wards now causing another debate questioning the workability of the principle.

Religious crisis is another factor which has inhibited the success to national integration in different parts of the country, for example the religious crisis in Kaduna and plateau states have claimed many lives and lots of properties, divided people on the basis of religious and promote hatred between the two major religion Islam and Christianity; the problem is everywhere unless it has not led to clashes that's why it has not been evident in other states. To Usman(2004) On the 7th of September in the year 2001, over 1000 lives were lost, about 1,000 people injured and property worth millions of naira destroyed in a clash between Christians and Hausa/Fulani Muslims in Jos, Plateau state and several others as occurred since from then and till date.

Ethnic crisis is also serious issue among the people, which has led to high degree of ethnocentrism among people of the different ethnic groups more specifically between the three major ethnic group namely Youruba, Hausa and Igbo's and the other minor ethnic groups feels they are being marginalized now leading to ethnic jingoism. Majority of the ethnic groups believe that the three major ethnic groups usually share the national resources and offices among themselves to their own detriments. This has no doubt created serious problem towards attaining national integration in Nigeria.

Another problem is that of boundary disputes among several states and communities for example, there have been serious communal clashes between the people Ife and modekeke , Offa and Arin- ile and also between Ekit local government , other states in which these problems are also evident include Taraba, Maiduguri, Cross river, Ebonyi, and more recently in Gombe state.

Clamors for succession is contentious issue and usually triggered by those from the eastern parts of the country it has been a long time issue since the 1967-1970 Nigerian civil war and also till date these groups are still active and still demand for succession. these problem lead the country to a quagmire because of other sect from the Arewa youth movement also retaliate and give the Igbo's living in the northern Nigeria an ultimatum of some days to vacate from the north before the issues was given attention and redressed. Also a group from the western region by name of

“Afenefer“ are also clamoring for restructuring emphasizing that they are also marginalized by the northern region.

The issue of mediocrity is another problem confronting federalism, the principle of federal character always provide the appointment of non-qualified civil servant since the principle for appointment is based on equality but not on merit and each state is given equal number of appointment which will latter have effect on efficiency, effectiveness and goals of the ministries, department and agencies MDGs. That’s why Harry Kranz (1976:59) stressed that appointment and promotion in civil service in pursuit of the federal character and quota provide a platform for nepotism, tribalism and a massive decline in standard of performance.

Supremacy for power by elite is also a factor. There has been tussle for power between the elite from different parts of the country so as to climb and control the mantle of leadership in order to provide policies that will serve and protect their cultural or ethnic interest. This has generated bitter politics and each ethnic group uses different strategy to gain power without looking at its consequences on the entire nation.

Quota is a principle which allows the allocation of public offices such as ministries, department and agencies, and also the allocation of project for infrastructural developments and programs to alleviate poverty and other social vices in a fair manner. However, the opposite is the case; the manner in which the quota is shared is not in accordance with the stated laws which now allows some form of special treatments to some particular region, ethnic groups or religion. These factors has led to a serious catastrophe in Nigeria making the citizens to lose hope in federalism and wish for restructuring and review its principles. Ayoade (1998:116) noted that as long as the application of the principle discriminated against groups, no unity can result.

Lastly mutual suspicion is another problem that causes a serious threat to national integration because there is no more trust among the diverse tribes, ethnic groups and religion groups now living every sect not to be their brothers keepers having in mind that each one envy another’s success and prefers his sect more than any other notwithstanding the situations and

circumstances. From all the above issues one can deduce that the absence in national integration in which the ideology of federalism was adopted to avoid and amend is at lowest ebb because of ethnic crisis, tribal clashes.

Conclusion

Conclusively, federalism as a mechanism is adopted to promote national integration among diverse communities, regions, ethnics, tribes and religions but the practice of federalism and national integration are 'relative'. However, this system is not working as required despite the creation of several structures and policies created to aid federalism and national integration in Nigeria. From the adoption of federalism to the federal character principle to that of revenue mobilization, allocation and fiscal commission, these are all beautiful policies and commissions that can guarantee and foster national integration so why the failure? The solutions to these problems are through the upholding of their principles, evaluation and implementations and so much has to be done to ensure efficacy, transparency responsiveness and due process.

The way forward

1. There should be strict compliance to the federal character principle in other words; they should follow due process in carrying out their responsibilities.
2. Some of the revenue allocation formulas should be reviewed in order to settle the problems associated with it.
3. The issue of merit system should be strictly adhered to in order to ensure development, efficiency and effectiveness in public sectors.
4. There should be creation of special agencies that will checkmate or serve as watch dog to government and private organizations regarding the issue of appointments based on fair representations.
5. The principles of Good governance should be emphasized which include transparency, responsiveness, accountability, rule of law, and equity, because this will no doubt reduce ethnic crisis, religious crisis, tribal crisis and mutual suspicion.

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