

THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF NIGERIAN FEDERALISM

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Abstract

Federalism is a constitutional device to ensure that, the local conditions, interests, resources and manpower are utilized to solve local problems in a concrete manner as possible. By implication, it means, federal government is specially a device by which the federal qualities of the state are put together and as well, protected for the transformation of socio-economic and political lives of the entire citizens, ethnic groups, religions, culture, etc. that form the state. Nigeria is one of the state that is practicing federal system of government with the aim to accommodate people of diverse ethnic groups, religions, culture, etc. in order to put the country together as well as solving the socio-economic problems of the people. Unfortunately, attempts to achieve these is bedeviled by some problems like; Revenue Allocation, prolonged military rule, ethnic-trap; political intolerance/competition, threat to national unity, etc, etc. As ways out of these malaise, it is suggested that, there should be strict adherence to constitutional dictates on federalism. Military should stick to their profession. Welfare of the citizens should be upheld. The citizens should desist taking laws into their hands, Nigerian's should shun ethnicity and above all, love for one another.

Keywords: Federalism, government, military, constitution and nationalities.

Introduction

The founding fathers of Nigeria adopted federalism as a pragmatic instrument had the aim of holding together the entity called Nigeria. They thought that through federalism, they will maintain unity in diversity; that within the federal structure the diverse ethnic groups can be welded into a modern nation. They were full of hope for this country and I am inclined to believe that they all meant well, But by 1966, the hope was blighted by the very same leaders who espoused it. What happened? Why did it happen? Where did the ship of state start steering away from its course? How can future pilots or captains of the ship of state ensure that they keep on course?(Elaezu; Gana and Egwu; 2003:26).

From the above, the “why did it happen?” how can future pilots or captains of the ship of state ensure that they keep on course is the concern of this paper. This is because, according to Ndehfru (2008.71) the contemporary Nigerian federalism is no doubt, embroiled in some structural and institutional crisis as a result of operation defects. Nigeria since independence till date has been battling with the problem of how to construct a mutually acceptable federal arrangement as a tool for striking a balance among her numerous ethnic groups (there were the

federal character principle, Revenue Allocation/ Principles for derivation formulae, states and local government creations, various constitutional developments etc.) (Ndehfru; 2008: 71-72). More to these are; political intolerance/ competition, prolonged military rule etc, etc).

This has resulted in the clamour for social, political and economic restricting of the Nigerian federation. It has shown itself in the agitation for a sovereign National conference (SNC) in Nigeria and at the extreme attempt of a break up as evidenced in the declaration of the Biafra Republic and the major Gideon Okar attempted coup of 21st April, 1990 (Olorode; 2003:9).

Considering the nature of the Nigerian society, while federalism has brought several ethnic groups within the polity together, actually federal practice has hardly been able to keep them together happily (Amuwo; 1998:5). The Nigerian federal state has been transformed into “a political monstrosity thanks”. It is poised to consume the “selves” that federated in an inferno of nihilistic plutocracy (Gana; 2003: 29). Whether these issues are seen as land mines that could explode and disintegrate Nigeria and, therefore, should not be publicly discussed raise a number of questions that touch on the way it is practiced in Nigeria (Anam-Ndu; 2003:47-48). It is for this reasons that, the paper is designed to discuss the fundamental problems of Nigerian federalism.

The paper is structured into six parts. Part one is the introduction. Part two is the theoretical and conceptual clarifications. Part three is the indicators of federalism. Part four is the practice of federalism in Nigeria. Part five is the fundamental problems of Nigerian federalism. Part six is conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical and Conceptual Clarifications

Much of the debate about the theory of federalism has been over the correct or appropriate strategy in explanation to adopt (Birch in Meekinson; 1968:69). Therefore, in the course of discussing the fundamental problems of Nigerian federalism and to proffer solution to these problems; federalism is considered the most appropriate framework. This is because, “federalism is considered the most appropriate framework for governing multi-ethnic societies” (Marc and Haraud in Glazar; 1977:71).

Onyeoziri (2005: 1-12) stress that; the idea of a federal arrangement as particularly suited for managing diversity in the political order is such a popular view in the extant literature on federalism that some scholars have even regarded this as the sole rationale of federalism. Simeon, R and Conway. D.P in Gagon, A and Tully, J (eds) (2001: 339) are of the view that the logic in support of federalism is simple; conflict will be reduced by a measure of disengagement of separation. Harmony will be increased in a system in which territorially concentrated minorities are able to exercise autonomy of self-determination on matters crucial to their identity and continued existence without the fear of being over hidden or vetoed by the majority group. Similarly, a federal system will limit the ability of the majority to impose its will on the minorities. Hence, they will be reconciled to the system.

Mazrui, A. in kuper and Smith (eds) (1971:300) said, in federalism, we find a system of government that has been referred to as “the magic formula” for solving the governmental problems of multi-ethnic societies because, federalism is an institutionalization of compromise relationship. It is not only democratic complete with the institutionalization of most essential ingredients, it is creative and flexible enough to incorporate several accommodation formula. According to Osaghae (2006:1) Federalism is therefore, reputed to be an effective political and constitutional design for managing complex governmental problems usually associated with ethnic and cultural diversity. According to Chafe (1994:131), the primary requirement for debating anything is to understand first and foremost, the actual thing being talked about.

Therefore for us to gain an insight into the fundamental problems of Nigerian federalism it will be of intellectual benefit for us to understand the concept “federalism”.

According to K.C.Wheare (1963:95-103), federalism or federal government is the method of dividing power so that, general and regional governments are each within a sphere of co-ordinate and independent. Oyovbaire (1979:78-91) defines federalism as the interaction between conflicts, consensus and resources which normally takes place in an arena- a value system which underpins the perception of these phenomena by actors. Once societal forces had called federalism into existence, the arena of interaction itself becomes a factor in the political process. It therefore, tends to acquire a legitimacy of its own. If the legitimacy is rooted, society can be said to possess a “federal attitude”, or lack it in a case of “converse experience”. Federalism as used in this paper is a device towards solving the socio- political and economic problems of multi-ethnic cultural and religions states like Nigeria.

How can we identify a federal system of government if we see one (Ojo; 2009:12)? In other words, what are the ingredients of federalism?

Features of Federalism

Carl Fredrick in Leo Dane in Akinyemi (1979:2) sets out the following requisite conditions that any political entity is expected to possess before it can be regarded.

- a) An assembly of representatives of the component communities which after instituting the league usually by way of a charter or treaty, amends it when necessary.
- b) An executive establishments of sorts to carry out the decisions of the assembly; and
- c) An arbiter or judicial body interpreting the treaty in its bearing upon the relations between them and the league as a whole, thus seeking to eliminate the recourse to arms.

William Livingston in (Ojo, 2009) also looked beyond the legal formulation of the general systemic view, He asserts that “the essential nature of federalism is to be sought for not in the shaping of legal force-economic, social, political; cultural they have made the outward forms of federalism necessary”. He stresses further that, the essence of federation is not in the constitutional or institutional structure but in the device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected. This paper is of the view that some of these qualities in view of the global trend are:

- a) Peace
- b) Security
- c) Development
- d) Tolerance
- e) Equality
- f) Rule of law
- g) Liberalism
- h) Good governance

Elazar cited in Ogban-Iyam (1998:80) outline the supplementary characteristics. These are:

- a) A written constitution
- b) Non-centralization
- c) A real division of power
- d) Elements maintaining union
- e) Elements maintaining non-centralization
- f) Elements maintaining federal principles

According to Birch in Jinadu (1979:18), conflict, cooperation and competition among levels of government particularly in the area of social policy should be regarded as one of the hall-marks of federal government.

The question comes to the mind once again. How does one discern a federal system of government? To this, we can now allude to a typology by Dudley (1963:98); which is still valid for recognition and identification of a federal system of government with these four possible confirmations.

Type 1- A federal constitution with federal practice.

Type 2- A non-federal constitution but federal practice.

Type 3- A federal constitution but non- federal practice.

Type 4- A non-federal constitution and not federal practice.

The above typologies will lead to our further discussions on the practice of federalism in Nigeria.

The Practice of Federalism in Nigeria

Although the federal Republic of Nigeria has persisted since 1960, its “federalness” has undergone many changes. Since the periods of its decline corresponds with periods of military rule, changes in the nature of federalism impact appears ambiguous (Elazar 1976).

A few incidents are indicative: during the first Republic, the Northern Regions dominance over the two and then three southern regions produced resentment against the Hausa/Fulani. Political struggle was organized during that period around ethnically based political parties, partly as a result of the shape of the federal system. The 1966 killing of Igbo's in the North and the Biafra secession resulting in a great loss of lives were not prevented by federalism. The creation of new states brought to the fore many grievances. Minority ethnic groups had been suppressed under the domination of the three large ethnic groups whose domination was assured by the size of the initial federal units. The efforts to introduce the notion of “federal character” as a means of overcoming an aspect of the ethnic problem appears to have done more to exacerbate than solve it. (Osaghae; 2000), Robert (1999), Pita (2001) made similar observation, suggesting that federalism has served only to provide a structure for the exacerbation of ethnic and regional conflicts; it may be that federalism is appropriate for moderate amounts of diversity, but not the extremes to be found in Nigeria.

Harowitz (1979) contends that, federalism impact was not consistently harmful: “the Nigerian evidence shows that federalism can either exacerbate or mitigate ethnic conflict. Much depends on the number of component states in a federation their boundaries and their ethnic composition. At the start of the second republic, he observed that:

The new Nigerian federal framework utilized all five mechanisms of conflict reduction: firstly, the proliferation of states dispensed some of the conflict into parochial forms. Second, the new states provided arenas in which interethnic conflict might also occur. Third, result of this was to enhance the position of some political parties at the expense of others, especially, in the North paving way for interethnic cooperation in the all Nigerian arena. Fourth, as the new states fought to advance their interests, a few non-ethnic issues and actors were also introduced. And fifth, the separate state bureaucracies provided career opportunities for groups not well represented in the federal civil service. Using all these tools, the then nineteen states re-adjusted, realigned, and complexed the Nigerian political system”.

The military overthrow of the Second Republic at the end of 1983 led Harowitz to reconsider what he thought was a success “as the indigenous federal engineering of the Nigerian Second Republic went down before a military coup, the jury must remain out on the success or otherwise of democratic federalism in resolving Nigeria's ethnic and regional dilemmas (Lukman; 2001).

If we are to Measure the Nigerian performance against the ends with which federalism has been historically identified, especially in the “new nations” of Asia and Africa; if, as Elazar (1979:42) argues, the purpose of federalism is “to achieve (the) Linking of the real and the ideal or the prosaic details of who does what and get what on a daily basis with the messianic aspirations for justice,” if this messianic in relation to one another, never allowing the human pursuit of ideal states to bring people to ignore the hard realities of politics to give them the an excuse for ignoring considerations of justice, then the Nigerian experiment has been a disaster. For over forty years after its institution, the “politics of communalism” so well caricatured by Melson and Wolpe has been “born again” in the aftermath of June 23, 1993. What do we have to say about the 2007 general elections, where the late president Umaru Musa Yar’Adua confessed in a broadcast that: “I knew that the election that brought me in-as the President was not a free and fair one”!

What about the 2010 general elections, where the ruling party, the people’s Democratic Party pulled the highest number of votes where it was known to all that it was fraud? Justice was thrown into the darkest part of “federalisms dust bin” hence the phrase, “scientific rigging”. As reported in the Nation (2011:1),today, instead of true federalism, “we now have creeping unilateralism; instead of true independent judiciary, we have executive impunity”. At this point, we will join Elazar (1979:42) who said: “thanks to the character of the Nigerian ruling class”.

Not only have the various factions of the class contributed in varying degrees to the near collapse of the state (which is what the current impasse represents), they have returned Nigerians to a state in the evolution of nationalism (Gana; 2002:34). Alfred Cobban (1969:17) calls “the stage of state-breaking for what is it other than the collapse of the federal state when elected representatives, such as state governors, threaten secession should the results of an election adjudged to be the cleanest in the nation’s history be respected.

More to the above are, statements from state-men like “do or die affairs” “politics, a cat and Mouse fight” or Dog and Monkey to fight in a pull of blood” should the 2015 election was not free and fair!

How else can one interpret the result to ethno-religious revivalism to justify the annulment of June 12and the inauguration of a fresh transition agenda. It is all, we contend, to prevent the passage of power from a section of the country the North that has become habituated to determining “who gets what” in the federation, to another the south-west-that has fought so relentlessly in the past but were denied by its leaders inability to forge a cross- cultural alliances so critical to electoral success in a multiglot that Nigeria is (Zakka: 1994: 10-17). According to Gana (2003:35),the ruling elite has thus fainted the foundations of an operational federalism. Thus, compounding the problems within the Nigerian federal system.

Fundamental Problems of Nigerian Federalism

Some of the fundamental problems of Nigerian federalism are:

- a) Revenue Allocation Formula;
- b) Prolonged Military Rule
- c) Ethnic Trap
- d) Political intolerance/competition.
- e) Threat to National Unity.

The above problems of Nigerian federalism are explained as below.

According to Okoli and Onah (2002:263)

“Revenue allocation as an aspect of finance dominated intergovernmental relations scene in Nigeria since (1954), 1946 and there about. Fiscal federalism and the machinery appointed to manage it have had to contend with the plurality, ethnic and

other particularistic tendencies and also the perennial instability of the Nigerian polity”.

Since 1946, the following Commissions have been established: Philipson 1947, Hicks and Philipson 1951, Louis Hicks 1954, Riasman 1958, Dina 1968, Bins 1964, Aboyade 1977, Okigbo 1979/1980 and the 1989 National Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (Odoh; 2008:290).

Subaru (2001:34-54) succinctly posits that, revenue allocation policies in Nigeria have been aimed at the resolution of the following four questions:

- a) What formulae should govern the division of national, centrally collected revenue among the federal state and local authorities (vertical revenue sharing)?
- b) What criteria should guide the sharing of national revenue among states and among the localities (horizontal revenue sharing)?
- c) What proportion of federally collected revenue should be reserved exclusively for the oil bearing areas on the basis of derivation and/or compensation for the ecological risks of oil production?
- d) What administrative arrangements should regulate the management and disbursement of the federation account in general and special funds (monies not designated as belonging to any of the three tiers) in particular?

How the Nigerians revenue allocation system should be handled has always been the bone of contention and acrimony. Resource control and who gets what between the centers, the regions (states) and the localities (LGA'S) has proved intractable over the years. These have led to series of constitutional changes, changes in revenue allocation formula to outright crisis as is on going in the Niger-Delta. This has resulted to the killing of the Ogoni human activists Ken Saro Wiwa and eight others which attracted reaction from the international community- (The Common Wealth, the UN and Canada). The issue of Derivation and Resource control pitched the federal government and the Oil producing states in the avalanche of litigations since 1999 till late 2003 on one hand and the 19 northern states (non-oil producing) which argued against resource control on the ground that, it will engender inequality in development (Odoh, 2008:291). No wonder Governor Aliyu Muazu Banangida's Sentiment about economic injustice in terms of what some states receive from the federation account is still part of this problem as the Governor clamored for new revenue allocation formula.

Buttressing the above (Jega; 2007: 210-211) is of the view that the application of criteria and principles in revenue sharing in all federal system is circumscribed by politics, and is often characterized by heated contestation, especially in the so- called new, or colonially created federations, revolving around the question of how equitable the sharing of resources are. Evidently, the more inequitable sharing is whether is reality or perception, the higher the intensity of protest and contestation. However, the likely negative consequences of these political contestations are, in most cases, contained by the use of non-mechanisms for demarcating fiscal responsibilities, defining revenues that accrue to the federation from numerous sources. India for example has gone a long way in this direction.

According to Ojo (2006:283), in Nigeria, revenue allocation assumes a zero sum dimension, which appears not to be conducive to a healthy federal state.

Another fundamental problem of Nigerian federalism is the “prolonged military Rule”.

Prolonged Military Rule

There are many unwholesome and undesirable factors, which are a legacy of our long history of military rule, and which stand out as serious obstacles to our quest for true federalism. With regards to militarism, these include the culture of arbitrariness by public officials in public

conduct; impatience of both rulers and the ruled; insensitivity to, and lack of accommodation of divergent perspectives and orientations; and intolerance of dialogue as a means of resolving disputes and avoiding conflicts. Most significantly, in addition is the legacy of coups and military intervention. The phenomenon of coups and counter coups and the excessive politicization of the military, which it has engendered have ensured that, there are always some ambitions, if not reckless group of officers hovering in the shadows, looking for the slightest excuses to launch their bid for seizure of power. And, there are also many ambitions, and equally reckless members of the political society, otherwise known as the militicians, willing to prod, support and legitimize their bid for power. In virtually all sectors of public service, authoritarian values have relegated the appropriate values rooted in true federalism to the background (Jega; 2007:85).

Buttressing the above, Janowitz (1964) and Janowitz (1971) said; the Nigerianization of the army which started in 1958 gave rise to the politicization of the army. The implementation of the policy created discontent and uneasiness in the army. The situation was exploited by politicians who were quick to see that control of the army could be an invaluable asset to parties. The introduction of the quota system in recruitment and promotion hastened the politicization of the army. Many soldiers recruited through this system began to think that they owed allegiance to their regions of origins or to the politicians of their regions of origin-many of them, therefore became sympathetic to views of their regional governments on matters such as federal elections and national census. The politicians welcomed the trend and made concerted efforts to encourage people from their regions or ethnic groups to enlist massively into the army. Some tried to maintain links with those already in the army and even infiltrate the ranks of military personnel. Individually, therefore, the mutual trust and esprit de corps which prevailed in the army was eroded. Unflinching loyalty to the federal government gave way to a situation in which each soldier owned loyalty primarily to his Region or Regional Government.

According to Abubakar in Osaghae and Onwudiwe (2001), this period of military rule in Nigeria not only entrenched authoritarianism and autocracy in Nigeria's politics but above all, it accentuated, to higher levels, the ideology of centralization of power and resources of the centre and engendered the neglect of the periphery in terms of infrastructural development among others the many vices of unitarism. The result of this has been the transformation of the federalized system to a quasi-unitary system and all the attendant features of unitarism.

Ethnic Trap is also a fundamental problem of Nigerian federalism because it is a major cause of disunity and Instability in Nigeria.

The Ethnic Trap

The biggest obstacle to Nigeria's political stability and national integration seen by many to lie in its ethnic and religious diversity. According to Onwuejeogwu, of the 1,000 or so ethnic groups or nationalities found in Africa, over 300 are to be found in Nigeria. This multi-ethnic diversity has made Nigeria a unique and grotesque example of a country suffering from "hyper-ethnic instability syndrome". Using "ethnic group" to refer to all nationalities in the world, Onwuejeogwu argues that in comparison with Nigeria. Russia (USSR) has about 27 ethnic groups, China and India have more than forty; the USA has less than fifty, excluding the Red Indians; England has three; France about eight; and Germany about 15. The only place in the world that has over 300 ethnic groups is Nigeria. This uniqueness creates unique problems unknown to the experience of other peoples in the world. No western or eastern civilization has ever evolved a political system that can cope with this gigantic problem of hyper- ethnic instability syndrome.

Writing about four decades earlier, Awolowo had argued that “Nigeria is not a nation “but a mere” geographical expression” whose constituent units differed so widely in their languages, cultural backgrounds, social outlooks and indigenous political institutions that a sense of belonging national loyalty and common identity was completely absent (Awolowo;1947). Unfortunately, this could be said of Nigeria’s federalism today.

Another fundamental problem of Nigerian federalism is political intolerance/competition. The fundamental danger to federalism in Nigeria is, however, not the polaralization of politics towards primordial identities but what Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida described as political intolerance and the lack of the sense of fairness in the competitive process’ (The Guardian; 1987). Nigeria’s first two experiments in federal democracy foundered after bitter electoral struggles in which those with power made devastating use of it. As Diamond (1982:663) has consistently argued, this desperate character of political competition in Nigeria emanates from the heavy reliance on state power for affluence and, ‘as a phenomenon more fundamentally of class than political structure, it does not easily yield constitutional innovations’.

Another fundamental problem of Nigerian federalism is the “threat to unity”.

The much orchestrated unity in diversity which forms the hub of Nigerian federalism is informed by the desire to secure good government based on liberty and the guarantee of the corporate liberties of the parties to the federal bargain. Restricting and dividing the governing power and granting a participatory role in government to the states does this. But unfortunately, the ambition has remained only absolutely possible but tangibly unviable. The reason for this is not far-fetched if one considers how the operators of the system manipulated it to their advantage. Martin Diamond has asserted: All political institutions and processes are intelligible only in the light of the purpose or ends for which men devise them or which they came to serve (Diamond; 1973:151). Thus, if federalism had not taken Nigeria to the Promised Land, it may be that she has not uphill new addressed herself to defining the goals and objectives desired from the system, or that she desires too much from the system which federalism may be incapable of accomplishing. Ayoade (1988) expresses this dilemma of rising expectation and equally high frustration thesis as rigorous federalism poignantly stressed:

The federal government recognizes and nurtures original division in a society such that it can only at best produce federal unity as opposed to undifferentiated consolidated unity. In fact, to expect federalism to produce seamless unity is to expect too much from federalism which it is not designed to give. Experience has, however, shown that it has not integrated plural societies to a single political system. The purpose is to separate the active and/or passive belligerent units, strengthen them to collectively solve the problems that would have overwhelmed them severally.

To all intents and purposes, the system is not all that successful in Nigeria. If it had and was devoid of frustrations and disaffections the repeated calls for alternative models would have been unwarranted. For instance, Bisi Onabanjo, a former Governor of Ogun state, called for confederal arrangement as a more realistic option for Nigeria than the federalism of the 1979 constitution which in his words, “fails to take cognizance of the diversity which constitutes the greatest potential of greatness in our country” (Onabanjo; 1983).

To lend credence to this call, Max Frank expressed the view that ‘politically, Nigeria would be more stable if it were split into two or three federations’ (Frank; 1986: 180). Too, within Nigeria itself there have been agitations for confederacy as a more realistic solution to the country’s problems of unity and stability (Suberu; 1990: 145-161). Since Onabanjo’s call, notable Nigerians have also demonstrated their frustrations and lack of faith in the federal solution to Nigeria’s perennial problem of instability and nation-building efforts thereby suggesting

numerous political models such as “consensus Government”, “Diarchy”, “National Government; Government by Natural Rulers” (Sunday Tribune; 1992:4) among others (Ojo; 2009:49).

Tam-David west (Sunday Tribune; 1992:12), considered the problem of Nigerian federalism so daunting to the extent that he inferred that:

If the entire above are not reasons sufficient enough for us to try other models of governance, then I'm afraid we are simply playing the proverbial ostrich, “a dangerous illusion”. The laboratory of Nigerian politics has eloquent data to impel us to try another model of governance. Submissively, the Nigerian federalism has been rendered impotent as a framework for resolving the tension of multiculturalism. Nigerian federalism through the manipulations of the power elites has turned out to be federalism for disempowerment, and economic emasculation, generating frustration, tension and conflicts perennially among its diverse people. This situation has degenerated so much that the federation is being referred to as a jail built by Britain to emasculate its colonial indigenous nationalities (Oguagha; 2000:32)

In the face of federalism, Nigeria risks break-up today under the heavy weight of Boko Haram insurgency. No more “One Nation, One Destiny”, No more “unity in diversity”. The question then arises. What is the solution to the problems of Nigerian federalism?

Conclusion

The paper is focused at discussing the fundamental problems of Nigerian federalism. To do this, the paper is structured into six parts. Part one is the introduction. Part two is the theoretical and conceptual classifications. Part three is the indicators of federalism. Part four is the practice of federalism in Nigeria. Part five is the fundamental problems of Nigerian federalism. Part six is the conclusion with recommendations.

The paper concludes that; Revenue Allocation formula is one of the fundamental problems of Nigerian federalism. Nigeria since 1946 to date has not been able to come-up with appropriate revenue allocation formula. How the Nigeria's revenue allocation system should be handled has always been the bone of contention and acrimony.

The paper also identify prolonged military rule as a problem to the Nigerian federalism. The paper concludes that, some of the problems posed to Nigerian federalism as a result of prolonged military rule are: culture of arbitrariness by public officials in public conduct; impatience of both rulers and the ruled; insensitivity to, and lack of accommodation of, divergent perspectives and orientations; and intolerance of dialogue as a means of resolving disputes and avoiding conflicts. All these are frustrating instruments towards smooth practice of a federal system of government.

The paper further identifies “Ethnic-Trap” as a fundamental problem to Nigerian federalism. The paper found that; the biggest obstacle to Nigeria's political stability and national integration is seen by many to lie in its ethnic and religious diversity. The paper agreed that, of the 1,000 or so ethnic groups or nationalities found in Africa, over 300 are made to be found in Nigeria. This multi-ethnic diversity has made Nigeria a unique and grotesque example of a country suffering from hyper-ethnic instability syndrome.

The paper also revealed that, “political intolerance/competition” is also a fundamental problem of Nigerian federalism. It concludes that, lack of sense of fairness in the competitive process after bitter electoral struggles pave the way for political intolerance where losers are busy heating-up the polity.

The paper finally found that, “threat to unity” is also a problem of Nigerian federalism. It reveals that, the desire for federalism in Nigeria is as a result of a desire to co- exists despite the diversity. The paper concludes that, to all intents and purposes, the system is not all that successful in Nigeria. It had, and was devoid of frustration and disaffections, the repeated calls

for alternative models would have been unwarranted. Deducing from the above findings, it recommends that:

- a) To start with the degree of loyalty to the constitution, particularly the sections relating to the formal division of powers between and amongst levels of governments is important to federal stability. Any federal arrangement like Nigeria's where the constitution is not taken as an upright and sacred document, which must be respected by all, no matter how highly placed, coupled with rare obedience to court verdicts, federalism definitely runs into troubled waters (Ojo; 2009: 60).
- b) The military should be strictly married to their constitutional responsibility (Defense) and be made to understand that, no matter how bad the system turns to be, they have no business with governance.
- c) There should be more to the Nigerian citizenship than the mere accident of being born in the geographical area called Nigeria. The situation where a Nigerian cannot reside, sleep and wake, take lucrative appointment outside his/her state of origin is an abuse to the tenet of federalism. Citizenship should also translate into something concrete and not just some vague form of abstract loyalty to the state (Nigeria). Where the citizen's abuse laws, rules and regulations, destroy the infrastructures needed for peace and development is against the fundamental ingredients of a sound federal system.
- d) Nigerians should for "God sake", try to break with their past practices particularly, the massacres perpetuated by one ethnic group or another. Leadership is not meant for a particular ethnic group or region. Let there be free, fair, transparent elections and independent electoral body devoid of ruling party influence with vibrant oppositions. Here, political land mines, hurdles should not be deliberately planted against the oppositions. With these, losers will accept defeat join the winning team to form a government of "National Unity" therefore boosting the long awaited unity for Nigerians and the "unity in diversity" upon which our federalism is formed. The kind of unity which is imposed on the ordinary Nigerians by the tyranny of shared poverty and suffering is not conducive to progress and national integration. It engenders hatred, apathy and disenchantment towards the fatherland. It turns people into saboteurs willing betrayals of the national cause and uncommitted workers because they have no stake in a system (Nkom; 1994:441).
- e) Finally, for a federation to be able to resist failure, the leaders and their followers must feel federal: they must be moved to think of themselves as one people with one common self-interest capable where necessary of over-riding most other considerations of small-group interest. It is not enough that the units of a potential federation have the same idea of "the good 'but that "the good' for any one must be consciously subordinate to or compatible with the good for all" (Raphal; 1909: xix).

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