

Colonial Policies and Post- Independence Development in Nigeria



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ABSTRACT: This paper argues that the British colonialists introduced indirect rule to deliberately slow down development in Nigeria and therefore examines how policies influenced the nature and character of socio-cultural and political activities in Nigeria, as well as made it dependent on the west for the sustenance of its economy. It adopts the Dependency Theory as theoretical framework. The study is qualitative and thus obtained secondary data from text books, journals, newspapers and magazines both online and offline, which were content analyzed and formed the basis of conclusion. It observed that the colonial masters had deliberate policies that negatively affected the post-colonial development of Nigeria. It recommended, amongst others, a comprehensive restructuring and overhaul of the political and economic structures that impede development, as well as the reawakening of the consciousness of Nigerians for veritable development.

KEYWORDS: Colonial policies; Development; Nigeria; Ethnicity.

INTRODUCTION

Colonial relationship is established when one powerful nation establishes and maintains political and economic domination over a geographically distinct area inhabited by people of any race at any stage of cultural, political, social and economic development. Political developments in post-colonial Nigeria have a lot to do with the nature of colonial administration and policies. In other words, the pattern of political activities in Nigeria is influenced by the role of the British colonialists; whilst they held sway the socio-political and economic activities of the country. Events in the country's political scenes how a clear a relationship between the nature and pattern of political development and colonial policies in Nigeria. Prior to the amalgamation, the British colonialists observed that the Northern protectorate was landlocked and the cost of administration outweighed the revenue generated from the region. On the other hand, the Southern protectorate, which is endowed with some natural resources, provided the resources that were used to keep the North afloat. Put other words, colonial authorities used the resources from the South to administer the North. In doing this, the political system had its own implications (Obiajulu, Obi and Iwuoha, (2003). Between 1900 and 1960, the colonial authorities initiated diverse policies which have shaped the nature of political activities in the post-colonial era. Most of these policies were enshrined in the various constitution promulgated by the colonialists. The nature of nationalist activities, political party formation, political leadership and development, as well as the current socio- economic development in the country were all footprints of the colonialists.

The aim of the study is to ascertain how colonial policies have affected current political developments in Nigeria. It attempts to examine, deeply, the activities and policies by the British colonial administration, as well as issues that relate to nationalism and constitutional evolution in the country. It tries to ascertain what legacies the colonial administrators left behind and also show the impact of colonial administration in Nigeria's political development.

The study shall examine the policies the British colonialists, with a view to ascertaining how they have influenced political developments in contemporary Nigeria. Policies to be examined are the policy of amalgamation, the policy of indirect rule, dichotomy in legal proclamation and implantation. These will be achieved under the following sub-headings: introduction; conceptual clarifications; significance of the study; statement of the problem; objective of the study; theoretical framework, literature review; discussion, analysis and finally end with summary and recommendations.

REVIEW ON LITERATURE

It is evident that the mission of the colonialist to Africa, especially Nigeria, was exploitative. In this regard, nothing good was expected to come from their activities and policies. Although as stated earlier, they came first as traders and missionaries and later held a political and economic grip of the people, scholars and critics have argued over the impact of colonialism on the African continent. During their several decades of colonialism, they initiated policies that enhanced their economic and political activities. It was clear that those policies that seemed good were actually for their particular benefits. One of such critics of the colonial

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administration is Walter Rodney, (1975, p. 223), who argued that faced with the evidence of European exploitation of Africa, many bourgeois writers would concede at least partially that colonialism was a system which functioned well in the interest of the metropole.

His argument that all that were done, in terms of infrastructural development, by the colonialists in Africa were for the purpose of appropriating the natural endowments in the continent for their selfish gains. This could be gleaned from their activities that seemed to impact negatively on the continent. They did not take into consideration the nature and culture of the indigenous people, but coerced them into one political unit for administrative convenience. What is today known as Nigeria is a conglomeration of different ethnic groups that had hitherto existed as distinct groups.

Considering this, Coleman (1986, p. 45) states that:

The artificiality of Nigeria's boundaries and the sharp cultural differences among its peoples point up to the fact that Nigeria is a British creation and the concept of a Nigerian nation is the result of the British presence.

There are many nations of the world, of course which began as "geographical expressions" inhabited by peoples of widely different cultural backgrounds, and yet subsequently achieved nationhood under unified administration imposed either by a dominant group within or by an alien invader from without.

There is no gainsaying that Nigeria is a creation of the British authorities for the purpose of economic and political gains. The various ethnic groups were integrated to amass as much economic resources as they could garner. Ekekwe (2011, p. 85) avers that In Nigeria and India, on the other hand, federalism arrived one fine morning on the wings of a fiat of the colonizing power- a good example of a forced marriage. Balogun (1973, p. 8) collaborating this view avers:

Needless to say, the peoples of Nigeria have a history which stretches far back into the past, in the savannah lands, and plain north and west of the Niger, the Kanuri, Hausa, Fulani, Borgu, Nupe, Jukun and Yoruba peoples evolved well-organized states of varying sizes, while the powerful Benin state lay in the forest lands immediately west of the Niger, and the Ibos, the Efiks and the peoples of the Niger Delta occupied the Eastern Banks of the Niger in political units of varied nature and size.

It is instructive that the diverse groups that were brought together were distinctly unique, had their system of administration, custom and tradition, as well as aspirations. These were nations of their own and bringing them together into one entity was to undermine their differences.

In this regard Olson, 1978, p. 87) argues:

An ethnic group is a collection of people self-consciously united by physical similarities, cultural traditions, or common visions of the past and future. Ordinarily, it will be difficult to coerce a people so bound together with others without necessarily determining what should link them together. By way of implication what benefits they stand to benefit from coming together under one authority.

It is becoming clearer that the history of Nigeria could be described as a marriage of convenience the British colonialists performed in their interest. What we currently have is what Nwankwo (1988, p. 60) describes as a geographical expression called Nigeria, a large nation of different people welded into one citizenry, but unfortunately still live as strangers to one another.

Madiebo, (1980, p. 134) was succinct when he argued that:

The federation of Nigeria as it is today has never really been a homogenous country, for its widely differing peoples and tribes are yet to find any basis of true unity. This unfortunate, yet obvious fact notwithstanding, the former colonial master had to keep the country one in order to effectively control his vital economic interest concentrated mainly in the more advanced and "politically unreliable" south. Thus, for administrative convenience, Northern and Southern Nigeria became amalgamated in 1914. Thereafter, the only thing that these peoples had in common became the name of the country.

Acknowledging the impact of colonial policies in post-independent Nigeria, Babatope, (1979, p. 8) argued that in 1946, the tribalist constitution was approved for Nigeria by the British colonial government. This constitution cleverly paved way for the tribal division of Nigeria. It is indicative of the skewed structure passed on to Nigerians by the colonial masters after taking advantage of the natural endowments of the country. Lamenting the negative effects of this development and how these effects could be redressed, he stated:

It is expected that young men and women of Nigeria will join hands with patriotic and progressive Nigerians to end ethnic chauvinism in the politics of Nigeria and also help to push the hands of the clock forward in the historical forward movement of Nigeria to people's democracy (p.8).

Adebayo, (1993, p. 63) having analyzed the British colonial administration in Nigeria, stated that much has been said to show that the British colonial policy was not directed towards the development of the colonies, but towards the promotion of their commerce. He added that in the first four decades of the century, whatever little development undertaken by the British administrators in Nigeria was largely dictated by the need to make Nigeria a more fruitful source of raw materials for imperial Britain.

Ellah, (1983) had also argued that in the circumstance, it would appear that the tragedies of Nigeria can be traced to the political imbalance established at independence by the colonial authorities. The skewed nature of Nigerian federalism is as a result of such

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colonial activities that were perpetuated to further the political and economic interest of the British colonialists. It is not surprising that the colonialists themselves were oblivious of the consequences of their actions.

Ellah, (1983, p. 167) quoting Sir James Robertson stated:

The general outlook of the people (Hausa-Fulani) is so different from that of those in Southern Nigeria as to give them practically nothing in common. There is less difference between an English man and Italian, both of who have common civilization based on the Greek and Roman foundations and on Christianity, than between a Muslim villager in Sokoto, Kano or Katsina, or an Ibo, Ijaw or a Kalabari. How can any feeling of common purpose or rationality be built up between people whose culture, religion and mode of living is so completely different... When the British go, what will keep these divers peoples together within the artificial boundaries drawn on maps in the 1880's and 1890's.

Regarding this Madiebo (1980, p. 13) argued that:

The colonial master, determined to ensure a continued uninterrupted economic exploitation of the country even after independence, recognized that this could only be done not by keeping the country one, but by ensuring that the effective political and military powers were left in the hands of that part of the country they could trust, the military power being necessary to ensure a stable government of such a big country as Nigeria, made up of diverse and heterogeneous element.

This argument is re-echoed by Ellah, (1983, p. 168) when he stated:

Considering Lugard's military background, and the fact that his longest and most intimate contact with Nigeria began in the Northern region, it would appear natural that he should have definite sympathy for the North in preference to other parts of Nigeria.

Developments since the political independence of Nigeria have been based on the struggle for power. This struggle has been along ethnic lines- the major ethnic groups that dominate the three regions. The colonial authorities in creating an unbalanced situation in the country introduced the politicization of population census in Nigeria. This is an area where the British colonialists clearly showed a high level of manipulation for one region to gain advantage of the others. The politicization of census figures began with the colonial authorities. Census figures have always and will always continue to be a thorny issue in Nigerian politics. As regards this, Ellah (1983, p. 68) argued:

However it should be noted that when Lugard amalgamation took place in 1914, the latest census (1914) indicated almost equal populations for Northern and Southern Nigeria viz: 8,110,621 and 7,855, 749 respectively-a difference of 254,882 or less than 2% which Lugard may have considered negligible. However in 1921, the Northern population increased to 9,994,515 and the South was 8,069,406, i.e a difference of 1, 925,610 or roughly 9%. In 1931, the North had increased to 11,010,668 and the South remained almost standstill at 8,115, 035 i.e a difference of 2, 895,633 or roughly 15%. In 1952, the population difference between Northern and Southern Nigeria became 4, 921, 747 with a population of 17,007,377 for the North and 12,085, 630 for the south or a difference of about 15%.

It is evident that the politicization of population was a means of gaining political and economic advantage had been a deep rooted issue *ab initio*. It became a major criterion in revenue sharing, especially with the centralization of political and economic power in the country. That is why in time to come population became a major factor in the consideration of revenue allocation.

According to Anucha (2010, p. 128): By 1982, the formula for distribution of revenue was:

Federal Government	55.00%
State Government	32.00%
Local Government	10.00%
Fund for Development of Mineral Producing Areas	1.5%
Fund for Amelioration of Ecological Problems in the Mineral Producing States	2.00%
Equality of States	40.00%
Population	40.00%
Direct Primary School Enrolment	11.25%
Inverse Primary School Enrolment	3.75%
Internal Revenue efforts	5.00%

The issue of population has always and will always be a major issue and so every group would do anything possible to ensure that it gains advantage with regards to its population. As a matter of fact, it is the issue of population that has given the North political advantage over the rest of the country put together. As regards this Ellah, (1983, p. 169) stated:

At the London Constitutional Conference which took place at Lancaster House, London under the Chairmanship of the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lennox-Loyd, (May 23rd to June 26, 1957), it was decided that

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the membership of the House of Representatives be increased to 320 on a basis of one member for every 100,000 of the population. In December 1959, after dissolution of the House of Representatives by the Governor General, Sir James Robertson in preparation for independence, elections were held to fill 321 single-member constituency seats of which 174 were located in the Northern Region, 62 in the Western Region, 73 in the Eastern Region and 3 in Lagos. i.e a total of 138 constituencies for all the Southern Regions compared with 174 constituencies for the Northern Region alone, thus the North which had only 2 constituencies more than the South in 1954, now in 1959/60 had 36 more constituencies than the South. Northern dominance of Nigerian politics and power grew in the same proportion.

This was the remote reason that led to the census crises of 1962, which result was rejected by the government and another census was held in 1963. At the end of the day, the Eastern and Western regions rejected the results, while the North accepted it. The country has had a situation where one region has political dominance over the rest of the country put together, which is against the principle of federalism. Today the North has a grip of political power and can decide the way the country would go at its own.

NIGERIAN FEDERALISM IN PERSPECTIVE

Nigeria became Federal in 1954 under the Lyttleton's constitution. Before 1954, three main factors indicated that Nigeria was a unitary state. The colonial factors account for the origin of Nigeria federalism. These include the practice of colonial administrations, the attitudes of colonial administrations and the political economy of colonial rule up to the 1940s.

The structure of the federalism practiced in the country continues to generate concern in numerous quarters. There have been calls from critics and stake holders for the country to adopt practical federalism in accordance with global principles. This is owing to the reality of what we call an 'abnormal; federalism practiced in Nigeria. It is such that power comes from top to the bottom, whereas federalism as practiced the world over originates from bottom to top. In clear terms, the federating units come together to build a strong centre, by contributing to its sustenance. What is currently practiced in the Nigerian case is a replica of the colonial policy of appropriating the resources from the South to service the North. In the present scenario, we have seen a situation where resources appropriated from one region in the country is used to service the rest of the states ,including the Federal Government. It is important to point out that at independence, the fiscal structure of the federation was such that the regions appropriated their natural resources and paid tax to the central government. On how this changed Ekekwe, (2011, p. 84) puts it thus:

The greatest harm to Nigerian federalism project was inflicted by the series of military regimes that ravaged the country. Between the military regimes of Generals Yakubu Gowon and Olusegun Obasanjo the country was stripped of whatever pretences it had of being federal. It was under the watch of those civil war heroes that the central government over ownership of minerals and land resources.

Since then, the structure of the Nigerian federation has been such that the Federal Government has had to wield its powers on the States, which are supposed to be the federating units.

Ekekwe (2011, p. 84) further argued that:

Federalism is supposed to be most suitable for multi-ethnic and multicultural societies because it would allow the constituent parts the opportunity for some appreciable degree of self-determination since all the parts recognize the value which others bring to the union. Federalism creates unity without imposing uniformity- and this is part of its great disadvantage.

Perhaps, we would say that the Nigerian project would have afforded the best form of federalism had the British colonialists structured the country in such a manner that the level of inequality was minimal. Although the end would also justify the means, it has become evident that both the colonial masters and those who inherited power from them played negative part in the current realities in contemporary Nigeria.

Suberu (in Ayeni and Soremekun eds. 1988, pp.13-14) giving a background to Nigeria's constitution making process has adduced reasons believed to have contributed to the demise of the First Republic. Amongst the factors are:

- the structural anomaly in Nigeria's federal system in which a single region was predominant over others, thus violating J.S. Mills *Law of Federal Stability* according to which there "should not be anyone state (in a federation) so much so powerful than the rest as to be capable of vying in strength with many of them combined;
- the debilitating centrifugal pressures exerted by intense regionalism and tribalism which informed the politics of the First Republic;
- the contradiction which developed from the situation in which the need for parties and politicians to achieve power at the centre was frustrated by the impossibility of transcending their local ethnic group or regional base of political support;
- the disaffection created among a significant section of the political elite, by the failure to grant relative political autonomy to the nation's minority groups;

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- a system destroying elite attitudinal pattern which predisposed political actors to a systematic violation of institutional procedures and which turned political competition into an intensive combative and perilous display of brinkmanship;
- finally and perhaps most importantly, forces and pressures unleashed by intra-elite competition for scarce resources (patronage, appointments. Amenities) needed for personal material consolidation, but also to satisfy demands emanating from the elite's ethnic or regional constituencies.

The factors outlined by Suberu show that they are problems associated with the influence of the colonial authorities on the country, namely ethnic struggles and agitations for scarce economic resources. These factors have continued to hunt the socio-political development of the country to present. They are not only factors that led to the fall of the First Republic, but have hindered and will continue to impact on the political development of the country. According to Ellah (1983:164) If anyone is to blame as the author of the remote causes of the conflict, it may be the British authorities who had the ultimate responsibility at the time of the independence constitution was formulated prior to Nigerian independence when Nigerians took over responsibility.

THE POLICY OF AMALGAMATION

The British occupation of Nigeria began on a very small scale in about the 1820s. The occupation was progressive, as traders and missionaries led the way for the administrators to follow. In 1861, Lagos was ceded to the British by Dosunmu. At the Berlin Conference on Africa in 1885, Britain got the other powers to recognize the rights of supervision over the lower Niger and other European powers also began to occupy the vast areas assigned to them. The Royal Niger Company had effectively acquired Northern Nigeria for Britain before 1890. The British, fearing that the French who had already settled in the Ivory Coast would push inland, attacked Kumasi and deported Asantehene. From then, the British government started to push into the interior of Gold Coast and Nigeria which were administered in the first instance from Gold Coast, now Ghana.

In 1906, the colonial office in Britain took over from the Royal Niger Company and the government assumed direct control over the Northern Nigeria. In the same year, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos were merged to form the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. In 1914, for administrative convenience, Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of the Southern Nigeria were amalgamated by Lord Lugard, who subsequently became the Governor General. The Colony was placed under the control of an administrator, while the Northern and Southern Provinces were each administered by a Lieutenant-Governor. In 1919, Lugard set up his Nigerian Council with three representatives from the North and four from the South. When he left, Sir Hugh Clifford in 1921 established a Central administration. Several constitutional developments took place thereafter, including the Lyttelton's Constitution of 1954 that provided for the regionalization of the country, which in essence introduced Federalism.

THE INDIRECT RULE POLICY

A number of reasons have been adduced for this policy. They are: language barrier, shortage of personnel, finance, transportation, communication, electricity, road network, reformation of the colonies, British interest, culture, custom and tradition (Wodi, 2008, pp. 289-290). Indirect rule in Nigeria was a continuation of the administrative system the British colonialists met on ground. It protected and promoted the administration of the traditional rulers. They were given the legal authority by the colonialist to carry out orders on their behalf. Indirect rule was first introduced in Northern Nigeria. Lugard was forced to introduce indirect rule in the North because there was shortage of trained manpower, as well as lack of finance to pay the staff. Again, it was not easy to disintegrate the large Fulani emirate, which already had a progressive institution for direct rule. With indirect rule, Lugard and his assistants ruled the emirs and the chiefs ruled the people. Indirect rule in the West was a partial failure because of the nature of the traditional authority. Power in Yoruba land is not centralized as is the case in the Hausa/Fulani Empire. The colonial master imposed indirect rule on the West based on his improper knowledge of the Kingdom. For the East, Indirect rule was a complete failure. This is because, there is no supreme traditional authority; the traditional society is democratic and egalitarian. Also, the units of society were too small to shoulder such a responsibility like the Fulani emirate. These resulted to the complete failure of the indirect rule system in the East.

Theforgone shows that the amalgamation of Nigeria was irrational, especially with the manner it was carried out. It is evident that Nigeria as an independent country started on a wrong foundation and that necessitated why a few years after independence, the country was embroiled in a number of internal crises that metamorphosed into a civil war. The policy of the British colonialists laid a foundation for power to be skewed to one part of the country as against the rest. This is against the principles a true federal structure which was supposed to guide such activities.

Evidently, politics is about the scramble for scarce resource and the determination of who gets what and how. With the configuration of the Nigerian federation, the quest for advantages by one ethnic group over the other is most prevalent. It is obvious that who gets what is determined by who lays hold to power. It is based on this that the majority ethnic groups strive to possess power, while the minority groups agitate for fear of being swallowed up the struggle. It was as a result of this that the minority groups agitated and expressed their fears in the 1957 London Constitutional Conference. According to Dappa-Biriye (1985: 18) Generally, the fears of

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the minority groups impugned on the existence in each region of a large ethnic group that was anxious to outlining entities into their own cultural systems.

No doubt that it has been shown that the colonial authorities built political inequality into the Nigerian national structure, during the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria.

Such imbalances that were orchestrated by the Colonial authorities have had much impact on contemporary Nigerian policies. The Northern region of the country has held tight to political power that even when they want to give out power, they decide where and who to give the power. For instance, at the transition programme that ushered in the present democratic dispensation, it was reported how the Northern power bloc plotted the emergence of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as President. It was reported that his choice was based on the fact they wanted one who would not betray their thrust. As a matter of fact, it was zoned to the South West in order to pacify the Yoruba's over the annulment of the June 12 1993 Presidential Election in which Moshood Abiola was believed to have won but was annulled by the Babangida administration. To demonstrate how powerful the northern political bloc was in the choice of the president, Dr. Alex Ekwueme was initially chosen by them to be the next civilian president but in a meeting held in Kaduna, the political capital of the region in June 1998, there was a reversal of that decision, hence the choice of Obasanjo. Reports have it that with the slogan, the leader we can trust, the northern conservative class was able to sell the project to Obasanjo and that was how he was steered into the Presidency.

It was in an attempt to correct the imbalance in the North South relationship that the Southern Governors embarked on what was described as "handshake across the Niger". Prior to this time, there have been meetings of Governors in the South in their geo-political zones. The South East Governors met independently, their South West and the South-South counterparts also did the same. For several years, the Northern governors have always met and discussed issues of common interest. They basically spoke with a common voice when issues concerning them arose. This explains why the British colonial authorities were comfortable with their administrative structure.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foundation laid by the colonial authorities, Nigeria adopted the federal system of government. Chapter 1, Part 1 of the Constitution of the country stipulates that "Nigeria shall be a Federation consisting of States and a Federal Capital Territory. Nigeria has undergone various political developments, from its creation to present. The contemporary developments in Nigeria are as a result of the foundation laid by the colonial authorities. It is evident that what is known as Nigeria today is a configuration of distinct entities that hitherto existed on their own. The reason for bringing together these entities was to advance the political and economic interest of the British colonialists. Colonial policies also influenced the nature and character of political parties in Nigeria. We also observed that the colonial policy was tilted to the advantage of the North in terms of access to political power. This advantage placed the North in a position where it has a numerical advantage over the South. Consequently, power has always been domiciled in the North, except for some cases.

The foundation of the Nigerian federation is fraught with deficiencies. This has resulted to numerous problem in the country. These problems are not only political, but they have affected the social, economic and cultural lives of the people. It is the imbalance that was set at the outset that has resulted to the myriad of problems faced in the country today. The British colonialist bequeathed on the country a federal system of Government without the way and manner the ethnic groups were brought together. At independence, Nigerian leaders followed suit without addressing the imbalance. It has been argued that the nationalists were impatient as they were in a hurry for the colonialists to leave so that they could gain political control of the country. In this regard, the imbalance continued. It led to the 1962 census crises, the federal elections of 1964 and subsequently the Nigerian civil war. One would have thought that at the end of the civil war, Nigeria leaders would have learnt their lessons, but this was apparently not the case as the inequality and imbalance continued to deepen. The Military held sway for a while and handed over to a civilian government.

The inequality in the federation brought about minority agitations for a fair share in the resources of the Federation. It turned out that the prior to independence, the allocation of revenue was based on the principles of derivation. AS at that time, the various regions controlled their resources and paid tax to the Federal Government. Then the North had groundnut, the West, cocoa and the East, Palm oil. It enabled the regions develop at their pace. Soon after the war, the Federal Government took control of all the resources.

At this time, the mainstay of the economy had become oil and agriculture had been relegated to the background. The oil came from the Niger Delta region of the country which forms the minority in the federation. The resources are shared based on certain principles that manifested the injustice and unfair treatment to the minority. The prevalence of this trend brought about the agitation for resource control by the minority groups in the Niger Delta. It was their view that they deserved a proportionate share of the revenue that accrues from the resources from their land. The development generated a lot of heat in the polity. There was also the call for a sovereign national conference to address the problems the countries faced. The political leaders turned a deaf ear on the call. In a bid to apply a half hearted approach to the problems, the late General Sani Abacha initiated the National Constitutional Conference in 1995. As expected this was not able to address the problems. The Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's administration also organised the National Political Reforms Conference in 2005, in a bid to also address the problem. These conferences were tainted with

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deficiencies as they did not reflect the ideals of a true national conference where the destiny of federating units would be collectively decided with sincerity. The problems have continued to linger with the minority groups calling for equity in the resource allocation in the country.

It is the same imbalance that has seen the Federal Government have the largest share of the resources that accrue to the country. The Federal Government takes more than half of the revenue that accrue to the country, leaving the states and local governments with less than half. The State Governors are currently calling for a review of the revenue allocation formula, given their responsibilities in their service to their people.

It is also noted that the claim by the Northerners to political power in the country has had political implications in the country. The North had always dominated the military and civilian powers in the country. When they are not directly in power, they dictated who holds power at what time. When they fall out of power, they do everything possible to frustrate the powers that be. This could be seen in the democratic dispensation that was ushered in 1999. When the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a Southerner made them uncomfortable, they decided to make the country ungovernable for him. The heat generated by the introduction of the Sharia Law by some Northern governors generated a lot of concern. Critics and scholars argued that it was an attempt to discredit and destabilize the government of a southerner. Indeed, it was distractive to the Government and was seen as politically motivated as a result of the way the thorn issue was laid to rest. Also the current insecurity in the country as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency is one of such antics. It is coming at a time when another Southerner, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, is on saddle as President of Nigeria. During the brief stay of late Alhaji Umaru Musa Yara'Adua, there was nothing such as Boko Haram. It suddenly emerged as a Southern President came on saddle. Some critics have argued that it is simply a political saddle to make the country ungovernable for the southerner. It is a manifestation of the belief that the North must hold power or nothing else. These issues have retarded the socio-economic growth of the country and will continue if they are not addressed. Nigeria as a country continues to grapple with an imbalanced political and economic structure that will continue to affect her growth and development. It is in this regard that the following recommendations are made:

- (1) The call for a National Conference should be considered and made a reality. This would afford the various ethnic nationalities that make up the Nigerian federation a platform to gather in a roundtable to define their relationship and mutual existence. The call for a Sovereign National Conference does not necessarily mean a call of the dis- integration of Nigeria; it should rather be a call for the strengthening of the bond that brings the people together.
- (2) For much to be realized in this regard, Nigerian leaders should be objective and sincere in the discharge of their responsibilities. It is when this happens that the country will have genuine leaders who have the interest of the country at heart and will do everything possible to protect the future of generations to come. This is imperative because, with leaders who are sincere there would have been the political will to address this problem early enough before it deepened to this level.
- (3) There is the need to re-orientate the mind of Nigerians towards national unity. As a result of the level of ethnicity in the country, a lot of Nigerians do not believe in Nigeria as a country. They are comfortable to identify with their ethnic group first before thinking of Nigeria as a country. With this development, ethnic self-interest prevails, while the unity that should bind Nigeria suffers.

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