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Political Restructuring in Nigeria: The Need, Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract- Restructuring is a song on the lips of many Nigerians. It has trended for decades and seems to be an inter-generational topical issue in Nigeria. The persistent call for restructuring takes numerous dimensions, but particularly outstanding is in the dimension of politics. It is no surprise though, because the philosophy behind the existence of every state and the control of its resources bothers on politics. Therefore, when there is a damaged cog in the wheel of the politics of the state, it becomes imperative to politically restructure the state. Since this is so, the big question then becomes 'what is the damaged cog in the wheel of the politics of Nigeria that is a necessity for restructuring? What are the challenges of political restructuring in Nigeria? And what is the way forward?' It is in a bid to fill this gap that this paper attempts to answer the above questions through an analytical study of a number of restructuring opinions. The findings of the study proves that ensuring the peaceful coexistence of Nigerian multiethnic nationalities as one peaceful entity called Nigeria and effecting of rapid and competitive development of the different regions of the country among other factors consists the need for restructuring; while elite interest, fear of ethnic dominations, political idiosyncrasy among others construe the challenges facing political restructuring in Nigeria. This paper recommends re-federalization, value reorientation, institutional re-strengthening, ethnic representation amongst others as the solution to restructuring issues in Nigeria.

Keywords: *federalism, re-federalization, resource control, political restructuring, nigeria.*

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Political Restructuring in Nigeria: The Need, Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract- Restructuring is a song on the lips of many Nigerians. It has trended for decades and seems to be an inter-generational topical issue in Nigeria. The persistent call for restructuring takes numerous dimensions, but particularly outstanding is in the dimension of politics. It is no surprise though, because the philosophy behind the existence of every state and the control of its resources bothers on politics. Therefore, when there is a damaged cog in the wheel of the politics of the state, it becomes imperative to politically restructure the state. Since this is so, the big question then becomes 'what is the damaged cog in the wheel of the politics of Nigeria that is a necessity for restructuring? What are the challenges of political restructuring in Nigeria? And what is the way forward?' It is in a bid to fill this gap that this paper attempts to answer the above questions through an analytical study of a number of restructuring opinions. The findings of the study proves that ensuring the peaceful coexistence of Nigerian multiethnic nationalities as one peaceful entity called Nigeria and effecting of rapid and competitive development of the different regions of the country among other factors consists the need for restructuring; while elite interest, fear of ethnic dominations, political idiosyncrasy among others construe the challenges facing political restructuring in Nigeria. This paper recommends re-federalization, value reorientation, institutional re-strengthening, ethnic representation amongst others as the solution to restructuring issues in Nigeria.

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I. Introduction

Nigeria as a sovereign state is one that has numerous ethno-tribal groups as matched with its vast territory, large population and enormous land mass. Each of the locales within the Nigerian territory is endowed with either one mineral, vegetative or other natural resources and/or a correspondence of resident human resources (population). In view of this, any knowledgeable administrative analyst would suggest the adoption of the federalist political structure, so as to ensure efficient administration of both the vast territories of Nigeria and its ethno-tribal heterogeneous population. This is what has been administratively put in place as a political mechanism for governance within the Nigerian polity. The current Nigerian political structure which has its roots in the 1946 Sir Arthur Richard's constitution of Nigeria, right from its inception till now has shown symptoms of administratively sick system of government resulting from such issues as the issue of resource control, outcry of marginalization, issue of ethno-tribal and regional discrimination, and issue of ensuring that every citizen irrespective of age, sex, religion, ethnic, linguistic, regional or tribal affiliation is given a sense of belonging to the country. Most importantly, the issue of resource control vis-à-vis political restructuring has become a contentious issue in Nigeria body politic, having been a key problem facing the Nigerian state since the onset of ethnic politics (Anugwom, 2005; Dickson and Asua, 2016). Despite the lopsided nature of the country's political structure, Nigeria has persisted in the practice and has always resolved to the effection of punitive measures to the dysfunctional issues marking the nature of the federalist political structure operational in Nigeria. These measures manifest in form of the different reforms, structural policies, intergovernmental relations, unification programmes etc which had been adopted in the past by different Nigerian government regimes.

Irrespective of the practice of imbuing the Nigerian political structure with corrective and curative measures, both scholars and other interested parties have gone to town for donkey's years to continue their clamour for the restructuring of the federalist political nature of the country with emphasis highly placed on the issue of intergovernmental relations between the federal and sub-national governments, issue of resource control and allocation, issue of revenue allocation, efficiency and functionality of the constitution, inequality of states and local governments in geopolitical zones, security and marginalization amongst others. However, a critical probe on the real reason for this call exposes all to the conflict of interest which has undermined the intention of the proponents. Apart from the genuine reason of using political restructuring as a veritable tool to better Nigeria, some people especially elite sees is it an abstract instrument to gain favour and achieve their self interest. In fact, many emergency nationalists and opportunists are already using the mantra to make political points ahead of 2019 general elections. This raises some levels of skepticism because it appears there is no clear difference between the ongoing call for restructuring and the last change mantra deployed as the machinery for the 2015 general elections (Farayibi, 2017).

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The history and historiography of the struggle for restructuring of the Nigerian political structure shows that it is an age-long practice that has bred conflicts and formation of conflict groups within the Nigerian society. Yaqub (2016) noted that it has polarized the country into north and south divide with the southerners being the protagonists and the northerners being the antagonists. The protagonists argues that by the virtue of their contribution to general purse, the principles of justice and equity demand that they should be allowed to control and manage their resources since they bear impact of oil exploration while the antagonists maintained that oil exploration activities in the south were funded from the agricultural proceed from of cocoa, groundnut, cotton, hides and skin gotten in the north (Ahmed, Norafidah & Knocks, 2017). As already indicated, those opposed to resource control and political restructuring are mostly from the Northern part of the country. Recently, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai stated that the north has a reservation for restructuring because it aimed to deny the North revenue and representation. In his words: " the idea behind the agitation for restructuring is to demolish those two advantages that are naturally due to the north in terms of representation and revenue sharing." (The Sun, May 26, 2017). The protagonist-antagonist stance on restructuring has resulted in the conflict of interest, conflict words and even physical violence between the two parties resulting consequently to name calling, exacerbation of the political system and loss of lives and properties. Eze (2016) noted that conflicts in Nigerian polity arising from restructuring is not limited to the northern-southern stance but include also ones manifesting in the nature of conflictual intergovernmental relationships. Prominent among the restructuring-bred conflicts are the MASSOB Vs Government conflict of 2005/2006 till date, the IPOB Vs Government conflict of 2014/2015 till date, the Lagos state government Vs Federal Government conflict of 2006/2007, the Anambra state Vs Kogu state boundary conflict of 2016, the Niger-delta militants and Niger-delta Avengers Vs Government conflict of 2003/2004 till date, the Boko-Haram Vs Government conflict the Nigerian-Biafran civil war of 1967-1970 amongst others.

It is in cognizance of these restructuring struggles and its concomitant effects pronounced in the various conflicts as well as the incessant unalloyed complaints against the federalist political structure of Nigeria, that this paper attempts to find out if truly there are needs to restructure the country in a political dimension, ascertain the challenges that the present and past restructuring calls and restructuring attempts has faced and proffer durable solutions to them to the best interest of the Nigerian state and its citizenry.

II. Terminological Conceptualizations

In the words of James clement (2014), any scholarly work, idea or knowledge not subject to critical evaluation should be disposed into the waste-bin of historical embarrassment. In line with this, this paper for the purpose of comprehensive clarification and understanding attempts a succinct scholarly review of terminological concepts and elicited an operational stance of these concepts within the context of this discourse. The concepts reviewed and operational zed include: Restructuring, Political Restructuring, Resource control, Federalism and intergovernmental relations.

Restructuring: Restructuring according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (9th ed.) is to organize something such as a system or a company in a new and different way. What this means is that restructuring entails alteration and re-organization of an existing system in way different from how it use to be. To Obiora Okonkwo (2018), to restructure is to change an existing status quo in order to make it more functional. Deductive from his assertion is that restructuring is a purpose-driven activity that hinges on replacement of an existing nature of a system with a new one that will be suitable to achieve the purpose of the system. In view of this, restructuring is operationally seen in this paper as a significant alteration, re-organization, reformation and re-arrangement of an existing structuring, form or status quo in a revolutionary or evolutionary manner, with the aim of making it more improved, effective, efficient and functionally competent.

Political restructuring: This has had different meanings as it has been a topic on the paper of most scholars with varying perspectives. According to Ahmed, Norafidah & Knocks (2017) it entails both political re-configuration of the country and devolution of powers to the constituent units as it is practiced in other climes. To Najakku (2016) it is the re-organization and re-arrangement of the nature of resource control by the various governments and regions to foster unity and development. Be it as it may, political restructuring in the context of this paper entails the systemic reform and re-organization of the existing political structure in the nature of practice and in the way it relates to the social and economic dimensions of the polity be it in governance and resource control or otherwise.

Resource control: There is no agreed definition resource control amongst scholars because of the wide spectrum of its usage in many different literatures. In the words of Arowolo (2011), resource control refers to the process by which component units in a federation are allowed to control their human and material resources for the purpose of accomplishing sustainable development for their people. In a similar manner, Ako (2011) focusing on Nigerian scenario opined that resource control is the desire that the region is left to manage its natural resources, particularly its oil and pay taxes and/or royalties to the federal government. However, this paper adopts definition of Ikeji (2011) as operational in this context. This definition holds that resource control is the

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direct management of resources within a geopolitical entity. This is because, resource control is a responsibility that can be done by any government at all be it the national and /or the sub-national government as far as the said resources is within its geopolitical jurisdiction.

Federalism: This concept has also had a plethora of definitions. To Okoli (2004), federalism is a system of shared powers between units of government. It is a system of government that involves organizing a nation in such a way that two or more levels of government have formal authority over the same area and people (Ugwu, 1999). For the purpose of this discourse however, federalism is operationally seen as a political structure and/or system of government in which there is constitutional division and devolution of power to two or more levels of government which are often independent and co-ordinate in rank within a state (country). These levels of government are usually created along ethno-linguistic line to ensure active and efficient representation of all ethno-tribal and linguistic groups in governance.

Intergovernmental relations: Intergovernmental relations according to Prof. F.C. Okoli (2004) is the activity of different layers of government (tiers, organs and agencies) which roam across each others' domain of specified authorities and in which they interact cooperatively and conflictually to achieve parochial and collective objectives of the division and the general government. In addendum to the well captured and encapsulating definition of Okoli, and in a bid to operationalize this concept in this discourse, intergovernmental relations would be seen as the formal relationship, interaction, transaction, interference and interdependence that exists between and among different levels of government (in vertical and horizontal pattern), cutting across their political, social, administrative, legal/constitutional, fiscal and other lines of authority in which they interact either co-operatively, competitively or conflictually to achieve the objective of their independent existence as component units of the general government and their collective existence as a systemic body within a sate (country).

III. Theoretical Underpinning

Political restructuring in Nigeria is an inter-decadal issue that its trend might not be outweighed if nothing is done. This restructuring which impinge on the federalist political structure of the country challenges the dysfunctions of the existing political structure with an aim of transforming it into a new and improved one. With this being the focus of this paper, there is a need to underpin the restructuring of the country's political nature with a theoretical framework. It is on this ground that this paper adopts the liberal-pluralist-institutional theory to empirically justify political restructuring in Nigeria.

The liberal-pluralist-institutional thesis is predominant in anglo-saxon countries. First, the thesis is regarded as being applied and pragmatic in nature and its research is empirically oriented usually with an emphasis on procedural and institutional concern towards resource control, policy relevance and problem solving. Second, this thesis recognizes actors within a society, representing diverse and often conflicting interests. It also assumes that these actors are cooperatively interacting in a way that leads to the realization of the objectives of the entire society as well as those of the actors. Dunlop (1958) in applying the theory to industrial relation argued that each of the actors has its own ideology (interest) and the notion of a pluralist societal system. Hence, it simply requires that the conflicting ideologies of these actors be sufficiently compatible and consistent to permit a common set of ideas, which recognizes an acceptable role of each. This theory further has within its tenets that conflict amongst the societal actors is one that is based on reconcilable and bread and butter differences which may require dialogue, concession and compromise for its resolution thus, giving room for repositioning and restructuring based on agreement. In addition to this, it recognizes the need for an institutionalized mechanism for the resolution of conflicts. In other words, it recognizes the importance of the collective bargaining mechanism which is guided by certain values such as negotiation, consensus, concession, and compromise. It is based on these ideals that this thesis argues that peaceful and violent demonstrations are helplessly tolerated as a means of resolving conflicts or disagreements between and amongst actors. The pluralist however, believes that there must peace in the society because demonstrations destabilize the societal system.

In applying this theory to the Nigerian scenario, the theory took cognizance of the various institutions within the federalist political structure of the country and the systematic and procedural way through which the issue of resource control, policy, conflicts, problem solving amongst others are handled by these institutions. It also points out the actors within our political setting to be the government (federal, state and local), the ethnic groups and regional groups since Nigeria is a federal country having its federalism cutting across ethno-regional line. The cooperative interaction of these actors leads to the actualization of the objective of the Nigerian state which include amongst others include peace, unity and progress; and that of the actors also. However, these actors have their various different interests within the political setting and when these interests are not covered and/or when it becomes conflictual with one another, the consequence becomes the cry of marginalization and call for political

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restructuring so that the interest of all be met. This call for restructuring and cry of marginalization is assumed by the theory to be an issue which can be easily solved by calling all the actors back to the drawing board for need identification, negotiations, compromise and thus re-organization of the system. However, in practical sense, this is not the case in Nigeria as what had at best happened is the use of military suppression technique unless the said marginalized group takes up arm and effect big harm on the peace and economy of the Nigerian state. Little wonder, those who are against restructuring the political structure of Nigeria have argued that the unity of Nigeria is non-negotiable and has been resolved by the fratricidal war fought in 1967-1970 (Atiku, 2017). Whereas there are numerous up-surging outcry of marginalization and call for both secessionist and political restructuring that requires the coming together of the actors of the Nigerian state for a renegotiation, compromise and re-organization of the political structure of the country. The said 1967 - 1970 war was a military suppression of restructuring call by the eastern region of the country because of the high rate of pogrom against the people of that region by the northern regional people. Despite attempts made to reconcile the situation through dialogue and compromise of which the con-federal Aburi accord was a notable one, the northerners breached the accord on their arrival in Nigeria and being in the seat of power resorted to military suppression of the call. This has also been seen in recent times with the happenings in the recent operation python dance in the eastern/Igbo region. The only occasions where negotiation has been used to address restructuring call was in the case of Niger-deltans probably because they were destroying the power house of the country's economy which is resident in their region and in the case of Boko-haram, probably because they were terrorizing the country, though there was no compromise in that of Boko-haram. From another angle of application that bothers solely on the levels of government in the country. Nigeria being a federal state implies that the country must have two or more autonomous and coordinate levels of government in existence within its political structure. The theory sees these levels of government as actors within the government structure/organization. However, the levels of government in Nigeria are not coordinate and the autonomy of local government is questionable since they are subject to the creation and dissolution by the state government. The state governments handles their electoral process, audits their accounts, approves their borrowing, handles their statutory allocation through their joint account and even determine their operation (Batcheson, Ebeziem & Obi, 2012). Little wonder, Nworji (2011) noted that local governments in Nigeria have an abstract existence. All these and many more are empirically the ground on which this theory justifies the need for political restructuring of the Nigerian state.

IV. What the Nigerian Political Structure – Federalism is Supposed to be

The political structure of Nigeria as bequeathed to her by her colonial master is federalism. Federalism is a decentralized structure of government that has many attributes which distinguishes it from any other contrivances that could be labeled federal government. in a bid to understand how the Nigerian political structure (federalism) is supposed to be, this paper aspect discusses below the core feature of true federalism in a succinct manner:

A written constitution: According to Abah & Nwokwu (2017), constitution is the grundnorm or the fundamental law according to which a particular state is governed. It is the whole body of fundamental laws, customs, conventions, principles, rules and regulations according to which a particular country operates. There is no doubt that a federation being a conglomeration of dichotomous ethno-regional groups can only be established through a perpetual covenant of union, which should be enshrined in a written constitution. This constitution must be made in wide consultation of all these ethno-regional groups and in their solemn agreement. Odike (2005) argued that the true mark of any federation is that it distributes executive, legislative and judicial powers between the federal government and the constituent states in a written document known as the constitution. Hence, the constitution of any federation will not only be made in solemn agreement of all the ethno-regional groups of the country but must also be written and documented in a single document. Since it is the constitution that shows in clear terms the modalities of power decentralization between and among the component units of a federation, it then follows that the constitution must be written and rigid for easy reference. This also implies that it is an indispensable characteristic of federalism which is a system of government in which there is constitutional division of power among coordinate levels of government.

Supremacy of the constitution: one fundamental feature of federalism is supremacy of the constitution. The constitution of a federation must be supreme and binding on all persons, authorities and governments. This is to ensure that all actors of the federation operate within the limits of their jurisdiction and not encroach on the powers of another.

Equality of power between levels of government: Ikpe (2009) asserted that a federation is one in which the levels of government operational within it are equal and coordinate in power. This simply means that in true federalism no tier of government is superior or subordinate to the other. Similarly, federal principle holds that the constituent units/ states that form a

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federation should relate to the federal authority on equal plane. No region or state should have more or less power in their relationship or interactions with the central or federal government. Any negation of this is a digression from true federalism as the regional governments can no longer relate among themselves as equal.

Equality in ethno-regional representation: One of the major reasons of adopting federalism is the existence of ethno-tribal heterogeneity. This is because federalism permits the equal representation of all tribes, ethnic groups, and regions in governance so as to ensure that no tribe ethno-regional nationality is marginalized or is left to lag behind developmentally and otherwise. This makes equal representation of ethnic and regional groups a integral characteristic of true federalism.

Fiscal Autonomy: In the view of Nworji (2004) the local government in Nigeria is entitled to fiscal autonomy being a level of government within a country that practices federalism. What this means is that all levels of government within a federation is fiscally autonomous. Abah & Nwokwu (2017) argued that financial subordination marks an end of federalism no matter how carefully the legal forms may be preserved. True federalism does not permit over concentration of power and resources in the hands of either the central government or the component units as to make it more powerful to lord its will over the other especially as regards to fiscal relationship.

Autonomy of each government: Federalism is a political system that emphasizes relative independence of each level of government. In the words of Wheare (1953), federal system must be fashioned in a manner that each level of government should be coordinate to another and that no tier should be seen to be subservient in relationship with others in the federation. The implicit of this is that any government which in practice contradicts the foregoing principle is unfit to be called a federation. This principle is necessary as it ensures that the federal government acts within the ambit of its constitutionally assigned powers while the state and local governments carry out their own affairs without intimidation or frustration. Little wonder, Hon. Justice Kayode Eso opined that the autonomy of the constituent units of a federation is a bedrock, a foundation and a defining principle of true federalism.

Division of powers and responsibilities: Federalism as a political system is one that is marked with clear-cut power division and decentralization. The constitution of all federation usually possesses a formula for dividing power among the levels of government. This formula is seen in the legislative list – exclusive list, concurrent list and residual list. The exclusive list is set aside for only the federal government to legislate on and have basically matters of national importance such as foreign policy, currency and minting, defense, extradition, migration etc. The concurrent list is jointly legislated upon by the levels of government present in a country while the residual legislative list is reserved exclusively for the constituent units of government to legislate on. The rationale behind this constitutional division of powers and responsibilities in a federation is to eliminate intergovernmental conflict between and among the federating units.

V. Nigerian Political Structure – Federalism or Pseudo-Federalism?

Having laid down the benchmark for federalism. It is imperative to critically examine the Nigerian federalist political culture to ascertain if truly it meets the benchmark of federalism, or it is a non-federalist practice disguised as federalism which we've chosen to refer to as *Pseudo-federalism* (false federalism). This examination however, will hinge on the manner of Nigerian practice of the core principles of federalism:

Written constitution: The Nigerian constitution which is the fundamental law through which the Nigerian state is governed is by nature a written constitution. It is one that clearly specifies the structure and system of government operational in the country and as well showcases the manner in which power and responsibility is decentralized among the levels of government present in the country (federal, state and local government). However, it is observed in dismay that this constitution in unitarily inclined as it was imposed on the citizens without proper consultation, referendum or involvement of the citizens in its enactment process. Obasi et al (2009) argued that a historical analysis of the entire Nigerian constitutions will leave every analyst with three dominant factors which are the influence of colonialism, national political elites and the military. By this, there is an absolute justification for the constitution's unitary nature, having been made by the military and hastily imposed on the citizens to facilitate the transition into a new regime that marked democracy in 1998/1999. Since the constitution was imposed and do not reflect citizenry involvement in its making, it then follows that the making of the constitution is neither cognizance of the ethno-regional heterogeneity of the country nor did it bring these groups to a negotiation table to have a perpetual agreement of union and that of the structure that would best suit the administrative operation of their entities. This little mal-federalist practice outrightly makes the Nigerian federalism a false one as one of the core attributes of federalism is not adhered to. Similarly, some scholars have argued that true federalism requires the ethno-regional governments have their own various constitutions citing instances in the case of USA, Australia and Canada. They argue that a federation run by one single federal constitution without constitutions in the constituent units is one that is unitary in disguise. Lord Haldene in support of this argument held that a

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federal government confines its application to cases in which states, while agreeing on a measure of delegation of powers to a common government, yet in their domain, continue to preserve their original constitutions. What the above legal luminary is asserting is that the federating units do not give out all their laws to the federal government for the formation of a federal constitution, rather; they surrender some parts of their laws to the central government while retaining others in their individual constitutions (Abah & Nwokwu, 2017). Obidimma & Obidimma (2015) also maintained that as a federal system is an arrangement between separate autonomous governments, it therefore follows that there should be separate national and regional governments which imply separate constitution for each government. By this, every component unit of a federation is supposed to have a constitution which guides its operation with regards to its affairs. This is not so in Nigeria where only one federal constitution is used to run the affairs of the entire country with no ethno-regional or state constitution.

Autonomy of each government: In the words of Obidimma & Obidimma (2015), the autonomy of each government as obtainable as a core feature of federalism emphasizes that separateness of government also requires that each government must exist not as an appendage of another government but as an autonomous entity, so that it will be able to exercise its will in the administration of its own affairs without external direction from another government. The implicit of this is that a federation does not permit the dominance of one level of government on the others in existing jointly with it in the country. Hence any arrangement which allows this, does not qualify to be called a true federalism. Little wonder, Wheare (1953) cautionary asserted that concentrating too much power and resources on a particular level of government is capable of intoxicating it and making it to dictate the affairs of other levels of government co-existing with it. However, the Nigerian federalist political structure is one that pay no heed to this core feature of true federalism as the 1999 constitution has wielded more powers to the federal government making it more superior and capable of dictating the affairs of the state and local government. Obidimma & Obidimma (2015) exemplarily noted that the exclusive list having 68 items is solely left for the federal government; the concurrent list is within the jurisdiction of the federal government and the state government with the federal government prevailing in case of any conflict. The same federal government is vested with the power to legislate in respect to any matter incidental or supplementary mentioned elsewhere in the legislative list. Again, the local government in Nigeria can be best seen as an appendage of the state government having been constitutionally created under section 7(1) and handed over to the control of the state government under section 7(2) of the Nigerian constitution, who (state) have the power to dictate the existence of local governments within their territory and to meddle with their finance. This is a complete aberration of the core principle of federalism. Hence, a symptom of pseudo-federalism in the name of federalism.

Equality of federating units: In the opinion of Wheare (1953) the equality of the federating units in a federation must be reflected in some reasonable balance between the units in area, population, and wealth which will ensure that all units can maintain their independence within the sphere allotted to them and that no one can dominate the other. This attribute of true federalism is negated in Nigeria where there is gross inequality in area, population, number of states and local governments within the regional zones. This has brought about special treatment and recognition of some federating units at the detriment of others, with complete disregard that the principle of equality of federating units being a characteristic of true federalism holds that federating units must relate to each other and to the federal government on an equal base without any special recognition to any federating unit at the detriment of others. Instances are in the number of states within the different geopolitical zones in Nigeria, where the north-west has 7 states, the south-east has 5 states, the south-south has 6 states, north-east has 6 states, north- central 6 states and south-west has 6 states; there is a clear marginalization of south east and preference on the north-west. Viewing it from a regional perspective, the northern region has 19 states while the southern region has 17 states. Is this not clearly a special recognition and treatment of the northern region? This is also applicable in terms of local governments in the regions. In addition to this, the federalist political structure of Nigeria partitioned the country in such a way that the northern region has an estimated number of 75% of the country's land mass and over 60% of its population despite the fact that landmass and population are part of the criteria for revenue allocation and sharing of national cake. This arrangement is clearly unequal and has in all ramifications given the northern region an undue advantage to maintain absolute dominance in the government of the federation as the region has capacity to dictate actions and policies to be pursued (Abah & Nwokwu, 2015). Little wonder, the laudable report of the 2014 national conference which the northerners believe does not reflect their own best interest has suffered implementation setback till date despite attempts made jointly by all southern states to bring it to life. This evidently paints the federalist political structure of Nigeria as pseudo-federalism.

Fiscal autonomy: Fiscal autonomy of the federating units/levels of government is a key attribute of true

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federalism. Wheare (1953) noted that any form of financial subordination will mark an end to federalism no matter how carefully the legal forms may be preserved. Therefore, for there to be a true federation, it must be structured in a way that each level of government is resourcefully buoyant and financially capable of carrying out its constitutionally assigned duty. It is on this ground that Obidimma & Obidimma (2015) argued that if the federating units/sub-national governments find their constitutionally assigned functions too exorbitant that their resources they cannot fund it and for this purpose resort to the federal government for subsidies and grants; then they are no longer coordinate with the federal government but subordinate to it. However, the reverse of this argument is practically present within the federalist political structure of Nigeria where the revenue sharing formula is skewed in favour of the federal government having been constitutionally assigned with more functional responsibilities at the expense of the sub-national governments. With the federal government of nigeria enjoying hegemony in revenue allocation, the state and local government which created for political reasons are made unviable as a result of their weak fiscal base. The effect of this is overdependence of about 85% of the Nigerian states on the federal government to run their state (Mohammed, 2014); especially Lagos state whose public debt owed to the federal government is the highest in the country. Most states in Nigeria can neither run the affairs of their domain nor meet the salary obligations of their workforce on their own without waiting for the monthly statutory allocation. This is a justification of the rapid increase in the number of states owing their workers' salaries for months, and the reason that some states have place their workers on disguised salary basis where the salaries are either reduced in small quantity or on half basis. The fiscal condition of the local government however is the most pitiful, having been an offshoot of the state government and having a joint account with the state government for the reception of revenue allocation; of which the state meddle with. The local government allocation is often times denied by the state and at other times, the state government dissolves the local governments while still receiving their statutory allocations from the federal government. A typical example is that of Imo state where Gov. Rochas Okorocha dissolved local government and established a constitutionally unrecognized community government, yet still receiving statutory allocation of the local governments from the federation account. This is the rationale behind the functional incompetence of local government and consequently the horrendous underdevelopment in rural communities. The above scenario within the federation of Nigeria paints a picture of false federalism as it is an absolute derail from the core principle of true federalism.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the Nigeria federal structure is marked with pseudo-federalist imperfections emerging from the abuse of and derailment from some core attributes of true federalism. This implicitly exposes that the federalist political structure of Nigeria is nothing but *Pseudo-federalism.*

VI. The Need for Political Restructuring of the Nigerian State: an Analytical Discourse

Over the years and in recent times, many scholars, elites and average Nigerians have been on an outcry that their voices have become deafening to the ears of all. What do they clamour for? RESTRUCTURING! Many questions have been asked and people tend to seek justification for which the political structure of the country should be restructured; others claim that those who clamour for political restructuring do so for the benefit of their own self interest. Hence, the latter address the former as the sub-optimalists of the current political structure - federalism. However the case may be, one thing sacrosanct is that Nigerian federalism is observably on paper, as in practice what the country has at best is pseudo-federalism since there exist ill-federalist practices within the federalism operational. Little wonder, Oruebor (2015) referred to the Nigerian political structure as the feeding bottle federalism. Some of these ill-federalist practices are outlined below in question format as a catalyze-able justification for restructuring the political structure of the country so as to move it from being the so called "feeding bottle federalism" to a more advances, better and improved political structure that would be able to accommodate the varying interests of all the ethno-regional groups and levels of government, getting them satisfied and bonded together in unity without any form of marginalization or agitation for secession. These questions amongst others include:

- Why is it that the states of the Nigerian federation cannot develop at their own pace using the resources which nature has endowed on them?
- Why are certain necessarily important realities like police, issuing of drivers license, birth registration etc dependent on federal government?
- Why is it that communities where mineral resources are being extracted from are still being denied the right to participate in the mining?
- Why does the current constitution of Nigeria bear "we the people of Nigeria do solemnly swear and agree…" even when it is obvious that it was imposed on Nigerians? Who agreed? Who was consulted? Was there any referendum?
- Why are there discriminatory unity schools and tertiary institution admission policies in the name of

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ELDS, quota system and federal character as against meritocracy?

- Why would the federal government still want to be building roads even when these can be efficiently done by the state government? Is this not the reason that the so called federal roads are worse than death traps?
- Why is it that the politicians in Nigeria earns much more than thrice of what the civil servants who are the administrative engine of the political structure earn?
- Why does the federal and state government have three arms of government (legislatures, executive and judiciary) respectively while the local government has two (legislature and executive)?
- Why is it that regions in the geopolitical zones of Nigeria have unequal states and local governments and yet number of states and local governments is a criterion for sharing national cake?
- Why is that the current operational constitution does not reflect a democratic constitution, rather a military imposed constitution with little or no appropriately laid down principle of federalism rather unitarianism?
- Why is it that local government receives their statutory allocation from the federal government in a joint account that is controlled by the state government?
- Why is it that state government till date cannot build and maintain their own railways and neither can they repair or maintain the so called federal roads which are nothing less than death traps?
- Why is the local government still subjected to the whims, caprices and control of the state government even after being constitutionally created as a functional third tier of government in Nigeria?
- Why does the federal government have to decide the amount that the state governments should pay their workers as minimum wage whereas the state governments lack the resources to do so?
- Why is it that the local government is still present as a third tier of government even when it is functional incapacitated and incompetent? Do local governments in Nigeria carry out their constitutionally assigned duties?
- Why is the federal government involved in the creation of local government even when it's the constitutional function of the state government?

Abah & Nwokwu (2017) observed that the above age long rape on the federalist principles coupled with apparent abuse of federal character principle enshrined in the Nigerian constitution by the current president Buhari led administration in areas of appointment into key positions and alleged marginalization and neglect of some sections of the country may have awaken the consciousness of Nigerians on the need for urgent political restructuring of the Nigerian federation. From the above, any sound minded person putting on his analytical glasses would see the need to restructure the political structure of the country on which all the above questions hinges on. These questions are raising dusts and tensions of conflicts. It is in lieu of the consequences brewing from these questions which are outrightly conflicts that this paper tends to present below, six scholarly tangible reasons to restructure the Nigerian political system. These reasons are well buttressed under the following headings and they include:

Origin, formation and consolidation of the Nigerian state: A prominent secessionist and restructuring agitating group known as Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in one of their broadcasts on January 1, 2015 on Radio Biafra said that the country Nigeria as an entity has expired on December 31st of the previous year (2014); the year that the country marked the centenary of its amalgamation. They vehemently alleged that the charter of agreement that merged the northern and southern protectorate into one single legitimate entity called Nigeria provided that after a hundred years (100years), if the two sides merged together see themselves as incompatible with each other, they have utmost right to secede. However, the authenticity of their claim is what I cannot establish as no record of the involvement of Nigerians in the agreement to merge the northern and the southern protectorates as one in1914 has surfaced till date. Obiora Okonkwo (2018) also noted that the significant thing about the 1914 exercise was that no member of the diverse ethnic groups that make up the protectorates was brought to a negotiation table to agree on the merger. As at the time of the merger, most of the Nigerian nationalists were still tender and little children. For instance, Nnamdi Azikiwe was 10years old as at then, Obafemi Awolowo 5years old, Ahmadu Bello 4years old, Tafawa Balewa 2years old, and Anthnony Enahoro has not even been conceived since he was born in1923. The big question then becomes, who/which Nigerian signed the amalgamation treaty? This simply shows that the entity Nigeria was not amalgamated but rather balkanized. It is but an imposed state; and this imposition affects the country today and the functionality of its political structure whose foundation was laid during the colonial period. This is because, the ethnic-regional groups that make up Nigeria today were as at that time not consulted before the protectorates were merged and neither did they come into any formal agreement. Hence, they have continued to disagree till date as a result of their non-consultation prior to the merger of 1914. Little wonder, Achebe (2012) asserted that the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates in 1914 extricably complicated Nigeria's destiny. Thus, if agreement and harmony should be brought between and among the

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various ethnic nationalities that constitute Nigeria, there is need to go back to the drawing and negotiation table where the diverse ethnic groups of about 371 in number will be fully represented, to negotiate in agreement or disagreement of the unification of all ethnic groups in Nigeria under one single political structure. This in all ramification is a need to politically restructure the country otherwise, Nigeria would continue to be what Chief Obafemi Awolowo called it "A mere geographical expression", because the trending problem of Nigerian political structure as expressed by Ojukwu (1989) is rooted in our fear of unity.

Democracy and true federalism: Lots of political actors and scholars in Nigeria and beyond has over the years stood their ground to say that Nigeria neither practices democracy nor federalism; rather, what we have at best is disguised Unitarianism and dictatorship, of which we've termed *Pseudo-federalism.* For instance, in the words of the former vice President of Nigeria Atiku Abubakar, as expressed in This Day Newspaper dated June 12, 2016; "the present structure of Nigeria is a pointer to the tension at the heart of the nation… agitations by many right thinking Nigerians calls for a restructuring and a renewal of our federation and democratic system to make it less centralized, less suffocating and less dictatorial in the affairs of our country's constituent units and localities". The implicit of his expression is that the federalism operational in Nigeria is one that has grown into a maze; hence it is dysfunctional and breeds conflict. The current federalist political structure operational in Nigeria is one which centralized most powers at the federal government, thus bringing about federal abuse power at the detriment of the state and local government. Observable within Nigeria polity is the practical expression of Lord Acton's words "that power corrupts and absolute power corrupt absolutely", as the federal government having been allocated with much power tends to be corrupted. Little wonder, the current President Muhammadu Buhari does not give credence to verdicts of the court thus negating the rule of law. In an interview granted to *Daily Sun*, Professor A. B. C. Nwosu (a one-time Political Adviser to President Obasanjo), starts by defining restructuring as: …let us change the structure. What is the structure? There is too much power at the centre. The Federal government has too much power, too much responsibility, too much money, much to waste…. I thought change was if it is not good for the country, we would do it. Is there anybody who has not seen that the federal government has too much power, and too much responsibility? Is there anybody who does not see that the over 60 to 70 per cent spent on recurrent expenditure is wrong? Is there anybody who does not see that the federal government has over 800 parastatals and that it is wrong? Is there anybody who does not see that having over 42 ministries is wrong? When asked why people are asking for restructuring, he answers by asserting that: The structure that we have is anti-development. The structure we have is unjust and unfair. I belong to the school of thought that regards restructuring more of devolution of power than regionalization of Nigeria.

With this picture painted of the current Nigerian federalist political structure, a picture of federalism in the nature of Unitarianism, a picture of federalism where the rule of law is trampled upon, a picture of federalism that is anti-developmental, unjust and unfair; would a sane person not argue that the current Nigerian federalist political structure be restructured? He would definitely; as it is no news that the rudimentary functional characteristic of federalism is decentralization of power and a rule of law-guided-democracy (Wheare, 1953). Adele Jinadu being cognizant of the lapses in the current federalist political structure and democracy of Nigeria stated in his article published in June 7, 2017 in The Guardian Newspaper that "the country must not fall victim to the fetishism or magic of legal constitutional design. It must also begin to find ways of re-strengthening and deepening the spirit, the political culture of democracy and federalism, as mechanisms for managing diversity and pursuing the public interest in a plural society; otherwise the design effort will be in vain".

Ethno-regional satisfaction and unity: The call for political restructuring nudges at the heart of millions of Nigerians who are outraged by the present structure of the federation which has increasingly become a recipe for uncertainty, insecurity and instability. This is basically done by ethno-regional bodies such as the Pan-Yoruba socio-cultural group of the western Nigeria, the Afenifere of the west, the Pan-Igbo umbrella body of the east, the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo of the east, the Arewa Youth Movement of the north, the MOSOP of the south-south, the Niger-delta militants and Niger-delta avengers etc. The reason for their outcry for political restructuring of Nigeria is one worthy of consideration if peace and unity should thrive in the country. These reasons cut across ethno-regional dimensions.

Regionally, questions have been asked on why the south – east region has only five (5) states, the north – west have seven (7) and all other regions have six (6) each; implying that in a representative sense of democracy, south – east have 15 senators, north – west 21 senators, and other regions 18 senators each; does this reflect the meaning of equity and balance? Similarly, amidst the 774 constitutionally approved local government areas in Nigeria, south east has 95, north – west 186, north – east 113, south – south 125, south – west 137 and north – central 112; why do this kind of political structure exist? Does it reflect equity and balance? The implicit of this political structure is that the south east becomes marginalized in the politics of

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revenue allocation and that of sharing of national cake as well as in development planning which has population principle as its yardstick. Little wonder, there have been multifarious agitations against marginalization from the south-east region which has often times resulted to conflicts, taking up of arms and consequently bloodshed. Similarly, there have been numerous cases of conflict on resource control in the south – south region of Nigeria who has constantly wailed that the resources found within their territorial environment have always been exploited by the government without involving them in the exploitation of such resources. An Amazon from the region Annkio Briggs stated that the political restructuring of Nigeria remained the only solution to numerous protests and deep-rooted anger that have constantly fuelled tension and inhibited Nigeria from moving forward (Ogefere, 2017).

Ethnically, the Niger – deltans consisting of a conglomeration of ethnic groups ranging from Ogoni, Kalabari, Ikwere, Etchie, Ijaw, Itshekiri and others, have cried out severally against marginalization and federalist ignorance even when they harbor the source of the country's economic power. Their struggle and outcry for political restructuring did not start today but dates back to the resource control struggle of 1966 botched by the Isaac Adaka Boro – led attempt to create Niger – delta republic which till date have culminated into oil – related restiveness in the region even after the death of Adaka Boro (Ako, 2011). The Niger – deltans have in recent past took arms to defend their God – given resources since despite their ownership of the resources, the government tend to exploit them and use the revenue gotten from their land to enrich and develop other areas of the federation while they languish in abject poverty, poor infrastructures and lack of good water supply; since their water bodies have been polluted through the extraction of their mineral resources (oil). The consequences of their taking arm is the bombing of oil pipelines, kidnap of oil extractors and stopping of oil extraction process which had caused Nigeria fortunes in the international market. The other ethnic group (Igbos) represented by the "Ohaneze Ndigbo" have on their own called for political restructuring of the Nigerian state; this is ascertainable in the words of Chief Enwo Igariwey of Ohaneze Ndigbo who stated that they (Ndigbo) have been calling for political restructuring because they believe it is in the best interest of the country and that the Igbos will only vote a presidential candidate who have restructuring agenda in his manifesto come 2019". The Igbos which are another ethnic group have through their various mouthpiece spoken of their being marginalized in the allocation of government seats. Little wonder, many rebel nationalist groups have risen from this ethnic group either calling for restructuring or for secession. Typical examples are Indigenous People Of Biafra (IPOB), Movement for Actualization of Sovereign State Of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) etc. The stance of the Igbos on the Nigerian political structure as deducible from the speech of the Deputy Senate President, Senator Ike Ekweremadu at the World Igbo conference (WIC) held in Enugu holds that "the minimum Ndigbo demand of Nigeria is a restructure of the federation so that every component part of it can substantially harness its resources, cut it coat according to its cloth and develop at its own speed… Igbos should peacefully struggle for a better deal within the Nigerian common wealth and this struggle must be sustained by Nigeria" (The Sun Newsonline, April 17, 2018).

The issue of these incessant agitations and struggles over resource control and restructuring often breeding conflicts by the different ethno-regional bodies is a sufficient reason to restructure the federalist political structure of Nigeria, so that each region and ethnic group will have their interest met and satisfied and their restiveness and agitations curbed. Restructuring the federalist political structure of Nigeria in an ethno-regionally agreed way will in all ramifications satisfy the diverse interests of the various ethno-regional entities in Nigeria and bring about unity in ethno-regional diversity within the country.

Necessary and important realities: Many questions have been raised on the high concentration of authority and responsibilities on the federal government. Whereas most people said that this concentration makes the Nigerian political structure a unitary federalism, others have similarly said that it is the reason behind the inefficiency of federal government in discharging of their functions; whereas another set of people are of the opinion that it is the reason behind the high rate of corruption at the central government level. Judging from all direction, the indications of the postulations of the above groups of people points towards negativity. Therefore, there is need to decongest, to decentralize and to deconcentrate the authorities and responsibilities accrued to the federal government to the state and local government in order to make it functionally efficient. Obiora Okonkwo in an inaugural lecture delivered in the University of Nigeria Nsukka earlier this year, argued that it is a matter of un-necessity for the federal government of Nigeria to be the sole handler of some necessary and important realities like the police, issuing of drivers licenses, construction of the so-called federal roads and bridges, and provision of secondary education. Similarly, former military president of Nigeria Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in his 2017 Eid-el-fitr message to Nigerians said that "restructuring has become a national appeal as we speak, whose time has come. I will strongly advocate devolution of powers to the extent that more responsibilities are given to the states while the federal government is vested with the responsibility to oversee our foreign policy, defense and

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economy. Even the idea of having federal roads in towns and cities has become outdated and urgently needs revisiting. That means we need to tinker with our constitution to accommodate new thoughts that will strengthen our nationality". There is no gainsaying to the fact that they are unequivocally right, these are duties that the state and local governments can efficiently carry out; why is it that the state and local governments are absolutely dependent on the federal government for these? These consequences of this could be seen in the case of Anambra state Governor Willie Obiano during the last gubernatorial election of the state of which he was not only a sitting governor but an electoral candidate re-contesting; he was left with no police officer to offer him security and he had to hire the services of his hometown vigilante security service. This justifies the reason that many scholars and elites have been agitating for state government policing; but this could not be easily done since the current federalist political structure of the country has concentrated such powers as to regulate policing and other necessary and important realities on the federal government. Similarly, most of the federal roads are worse than death traps, a typical example being the Onitsha – Enugu express road that has forced motorists to seek another route between Amansea Awka through Awkuzu to Umunnya where the situation of the road is nothing to write home about. Had the state government been in charge of constructing or maintaining the federal roads, the situation of this road would not be the same since other state roads in the state are in very good shape. Therefore, to make federal government more efficient, there is need to restructure the current federalist political structure in such a way that more authorities and responsibilities will be devolved to the state government while the federal government concentrates on issues such as foreign policy, economy, defense (military), migration (immigration and emigration), international relations and aviation, and any other function which is of classical importance that it will not be efficiently handled by the state and local government.

Rapid and competitive development: The state of development within the Nigerian territory is appalling when compared with the country's enormous human and natural resources. It only stands to suggest the proof of the resource curse hypothesis. Many have argued that the reason that Nigeria is still underdeveloped rests on the corruption on the central government which exploits the country's resource without putting the proceeds developmentally in use. Others have argued that the reason that most states of the Nigerian federation are not developing at speedy pace is because they lack the necessary power needed to harness what is at their disposal in terms of resources, in order to make development a reality. Obi(2006) noted that currently, Nigeria is a federation with 36 states' structure and 774 local government areas which totally rely on the distributive pool account (federation account) to perform their assigned constitutional responsibilities within their respective domains. Okonkwo (2018) argued that the system of government that brings 36 states to the centre at the end of every month to share money is not sustainable; there is need to restructure the federation in such a way that all persons and partners in the federation be it states or regions have the capacity to develop their internal resources with which they can develop at their own pace. Hence, restructuring the current federalist political structure in such a way that states and local government have more revenue sources and powers to control the resources at their areas of occupancy will boost their development functionality and will breed rapid and competitive development across regions in the country which is a giant step towards the development of the country in general. In addendum, it will be a milestone towards job creation. Giving a practical example, it has been said that the north – central zone of Nigeria has abundance of natural resources buried under their soil, imagine if Nigeria is politically restructured in such a way that each state is giving authority to mine, harness and control the resources endowed on it by nature and then pay royalties to the central/federal government; then the north – central region will become a new bride for solid mineral exploitation and development; thus an industrial hub creating millions of employment opportunities to all Nigerians. Now taking cognizance of the fact that virtually all states of the federation are in possession of these resources either in terms of solid and liquid natural resource or agricultural resource, then obviously all Nigerians will be under one employment or the other and each state will be striving to develop more than the other. This is a sufficient need to restructure the political structure of the country in order to actualize the development of the country and its citizens.

Functional competence and intergovernmental harmony: The political structure of the Nigerian state – federalism, has been defined as a system of government in which there is constitutional division of power between two or more coordinate levels of government existing and interacting within a country. The Nigerian federalism is one that has three constitutionally created levels of government – federal, state and local government; but practically two levels of government – federal and state as the local government is submerged into the state government. Hence, visibly sprouted is the issue of constitutional in balance within the constitutional framework of the federal political structure of Nigeria. Whereas the constitution created the local government as the independent third tier of government in section 7(1) of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria, it handed over the creation, management and control of the local

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government to the state government in section 7(2). This has been reason for the functional incompetence of local government which has resulted to the motion to abrogate the local government as a tier of government at the national political conference (CONFAB) organized by Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's led regime in 2014. This proves that the local government is dependent and un–autonomous.

Similarly, the state government which has been attributed with practical independence and autonomy has also been seen as being functionally incompetent; the reason is that the federal government most times ceases statutory allocation of the state government as could be seen in the case of the Lagos state government Vs. federal government during President Olusegun Obasanjo's regime; they are similarly, subject to the dictates of the federal government as to the determination of the amount to pay for the minimum wage. From the above, are the levels of government in Nigeria really co-ordinate? This practice has right from the time of its practice tends to make the local, state and federal government inefficient. It also serves as a befitting reason to restructure the Nigerian federalist political structure as it will quench the fire of intergovernmental conflict ignited by the above problems of Nigerian federalism and facilitate functional competence and intergovernmental harmony between and among the levels of government in existence in Nigeria.

VII. Challenges of Political Restructuring in Nigeria

There is an unequivocal need for political restructuring of the Nigerian state as observable from the above analytical discourse. Also observable is that there have previous attempts made towards the restructuring of the Nigerian state. Why then is it that no impact has been felt? What factor is inhibiting and challenging the restructuring of the pseudo-federalist structure of Nigeria? This paper aspect in an attempt to do justice to these questions have outlined and buttressed below the factors that are responsible for the unresponsiveness and fruitlessness of political restructuring struggle in Nigeria. These factors amongst others include:

Elite interest: This appears to be a major problem facing political restructuring of Nigeria. The politico-economic elites of the country who are being favoured in one way or the other by the existing political structure of nigeria influence negatively the struggle for political restructuring. These set of people constitute the wealthy, the politicians and even some elected government officials. In the words of Ujah & Agbakwuru (2017), one of the reasons that the northerners shun the call for political restructuring is because of their landmass and population which grants the northern political elites the opportunity of being appointed in large numbers into government positions and using land to hustle for fund in Abuja. Also in the words of the former Governor of Akwa Ibom state, Obong Victor Attah as cited in Ujah & Agbakwuru (2017), "no governor today will lift a finger or put himself out to diversify or second restructuring when every month he can come to Abuja to collect his share of the booty. The only reason he would do so is if he knows that the survival of his state depends on it". This outrightly shows that the call for restructuring has fallen to the dictates of the politico-economic elites of the Nigerian society. Thus, they become a strong challenger of the bid to restructure the pseudo-federalist political structure of Nigeria.

Fear of domination: This is another problem of political restructuring in Nigeria. Ojukwu (1989) asserted that the problem with Nigeria is rooted in the fear of unity between the ethnic constituents of the country. This fear is predicated on the nature of allowing one ethnic group to dominate and is prevalent amongst the northern region of Nigeria. Sani cited in Nuhu (2016) stated that the north is opposed to restructuring because there is nothing to restructure. He argued that those who clamour for political restructuring or true federalism to enable each region and/ or constituent unit to develop at its own pace are unwittingly advocating that Nigerians should leave as if they are in different countries, where some citizens would leave in comfort zones while others would live on the fringe. Also, in the words of Nwaorgu & Erondu (2010), an attempt to restructure nigeria in 1966 and 1967 was battered by the northerners because of fear of domination of the southern region and the consequent was the genocidal war. From the above, the fear of having nothing and having the southern region dominate the northern has in a tremendous way inhibited political restructuring of the country as the northerners who are acclaimed the most populous would not consent for fear of a domineering uprising of the southern region.

Political idiosyncrasy: The political ideology of most of the politicians and citizens of Nigeria is one that is based on suboptimalism. By this, they are only concerned of their own self interest and not concerned about the interest of all other people living within the diasporic federating units. Hence, their fight for or against restructuring will depend on how it will affect their self interest even at the detriment of others. This political mindset makes some persons whose interest is neither within the politics of Nigeria nor its governance to remain apathetic towards the call for political restructuring despite their seeing the enormous decadence caused by pseudo-federalist practices within the country. This in all ramifications is a inhibition of political restructuring because had these set of people been nationalistic and hold the interest of their country high, they would have added their effort for the call for

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restructuring and in no little way, the impact of their voice might foster the political restructuring of the Nigerian state.

Military Incursion: The effect of military incursion on Nigerian politics at the early age of Nigerian independence is till date an inhibitor of political restructuring. The incursion of the military into the politics of Nigeria enhanced the fear of domination in Nigeria which in no little way has challenged the political restructuring of the Nigerian state. Similarly, the military constitution which is unitary in nature was imposed on Nigeria following democratic transition and was made written and rigid despite its non-federalist nature. This makes it quite difficult for the federalist political structure of Nigeria to be easily restructured since the Nigerian constitution which shared powers and responsibilities unequally is the root of Nigerian federalism and is thus far, written and rigid, making it difficult to amend. If this unitary constitution in a federalist format is difficult to amend, it then follows that the structure it laid would be difficult to be restructured.

Corruption: This is an *anguis in herba* – a snake conveniently hidden in the grassland of Nigeria social scene. The struggle for political restructuring has seen shades of manifestation of corruption in different dimensions. There are corrupt officials who are but political restructuring entrepreneurs using the call for political restructuring as a way to gain favour from the government or gain recognition or even paid. Once they achieve this, they end their call and move towards discouraging the call for political restructuring in Nigeria. Typical examples are in the cases of Asari Dokubo, Ralph Uwazurike and others who ended their struggle for political restructuring of Nigeria when they gained recognition and favour from the government. This is an absolute inhibition of political restructuring in Nigeria. Similarly, corruption has also manifested in the struggle for political restructuring in the nature of presence of corrupt recidivistic politicos who having been in the position of government ab initio have also resorted to influence those in government now who are more like their godsons not to effect political restructuring. A typical example is the case of Rtd. Gen. Yakubu Gowon firmly standing behind President Muhammadu Buhari on non-effection of political restructuring in Nigeria. This is a strong challenge against the political restructuring of Nigeria and one that need urgent attention.

Fear of suppression: This is seen on the part of the citizens. The struggle for political restructuring is not meant only for the nationalist groups, the politicians, scholars and elites but for all the citizens. Observable is that one the reasons for the non-involvement of some citizens in the struggle for political restructuring is the undemocratic use of military to suppress political restructuring agitators. Lots of lives of those calling for the political restructuring have been lost in this form and most citizen dread of losing their own lives too. This fear of military suppression in a uni-dimensional way has adversely affected the call for political restructuring of Nigerian state.

Citizenry laissez-faire attitude: This is another inhibitor of political restructuring in Nigeria. The Nigerian citizens as a result of fear of suppression, ignorance, corrupt mindset and politicization exhibits lack lustrous and carefree attitude towards the struggle for political restructuring of the Nigerian federalism. This attitudinal deficiency is one of projectile factors that have necessitated the un-realization of the restructuring of the pseudo- federalist political structure of the Nigerian State.

The nature of the existing structure: The nature of the existing political structure of Nigeria is one that has an adversary effect on the restructuring struggle. This existing political structure is one that has a rigid constitution that makes it hard for restructuring to be effected. Similarly, the existing political structure of the Nigerian Federation allocated more land mass and population to the northern region of the country. This in all reasonableness is negatively affecting the political restructuring struggle as the higher population of the northern region makes it extremely difficult for the stance of the southern region on political restructuring to be adopted; giving to the fact that northern region is comparatively favoured by the existing pseudo-federalist political structure of Nigeria than the southern region.

Weak institution: In the words of Ocholi (2009), "the government institutions who were strategic to the country's pursuit of democratic ideas instead of serving as the bulwark of democracy, have become weakened by inefficiency, corruption, lack of commitment, incompetence, tribalism, hooliganisms and other sundry handicaps". This weakness of government institutions is negatively felt on the political restructuring struggle of Nigerians. The government institutions who in the past have been assigned restructuring role had woefully failed in the performance of the assigned duty due to the weakness of the said institutions caused by the factors listed by Ocholi. An instance is the case of Revenue mobilization and fiscal allocation commission who was and still is charged with the responsibility of structuring revenue allocation in such a way that will restructure the federal character of the country. Had they efficiently carried out their responsibilities, the ill-federalist revenue allocation problem trending in Nigeria today would have been a thing of the past. This shows the extent to which government institutional weakness has affected the political restructuring of the Nigerian state.

Ethno-regional rivalry: The issue of ethno-regional rivalry in Nigeria is an age-long one that till date is militating against political restructuring of the Nigerian state. Following the rivalry among the ethno-regional

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nationalities in Nigeria emanating from development, resource concentration and resource allocation with a matching fear of domination, the ethno-regional bodies (especially the southern and northern region) have failed to come to agreement on restructuring. This is because they believe that restructuring would make one region more developed than the other and as such, the region that thinks that political restructuring might not fully favour them having conceived the other as a rival, tend not to agree to the adoption of political restructure as a way to eliminate the pseudo-federalist practices in Nigeria. This is solid wall on the way of political restructure which will be difficult to demolish.

VIII. Nigerian Political Restructuring: the Way Forward

The issue of political restructuring in Nigeria is one that needs an addressing touch because Nigerian political structure is long overdue for restructuring. Therefore, in a bid to tackle the hydra-headed monsters impeding the political restructuring of Nigeria and in order to facilitate the birth of a new and improved political structure that will be suitable to the current civilization of Nigeria and ease the country of the tensions and conflicts emanating from pseudo-federalist practice; this paper recommends the following:

1. The country should be re-federalized in such a way that the ill-federal practices observed within this paper are abrogated.
2. The political structure of Nigeria should be made cooperative federalism instead of pseudo-federalism so that the ethno-regional entities interests would be mutually integrated in the formation of a serene sociopolitical structured Nigeria.
3. The Nigerian government institutions should be re-strengthened in such a way that they are made viable in performance and impenetrable by corruption so that they can easily implement political restructuring should it be adopted.
4. The entire citizens of Nigeria irrespective of tribe or region of origin should be value re-oriented and psychologically engineered towards understanding the need for both unity in their diversities and advantage of politically restructuring the country into an egalitarian society. This will also make them to change their laissez-faire attitude and embark on a nationalistic call for restructuring without fear of suppression.
5. The Nigerian constitution should be abolished and re-enacted following a democratic process to lay foundation for true federalism in practice, with sufficient citizenry consultation and referendum.
6. There should be periodic constitutional review and conference (at least every five years) involving all ethno-regional entities and states of the federation to checkmate the functionality of the Nigerian federalism and integrate the interests of the minorities in governance.
7. The contents of all the legislative lists should be re-shared and made to reflect the coordinate nature of all levels of government.
8. There should be equal representation of all ethno-regional entities in all affairs of the country especially in the appointment of people into government offices.
9. There should be revolutionary expunge of pseudo-federalist practices and any culprit attempting it should be severely punished.
10. The state government should be allowed to engage in their own policing to ensure effective security of lives and properties.
11. The country should be structured to have regional equality in number of states and local governments, land mass and population.
12. There should be meritocratic adherence to the principles of federal character of the country and not using it as an instrument of favouritism for any region of the country.
13. The state governments of the country should have ultimate right to exploit and utilize the resources within their territorial domain and remit taxes to the federal government.
14. The states of the federation which have other mineral resource other than oil should also be included in the operation of derivation principle.

IX. Conclusion

The issue of restructuring Nigerian political structure is a topical issue that trends on the front page of the paper of every scholar or elite in Nigeria. No matter how one wants to elude it, this issue needs a quality look and an addressing touch. Therefore, this paper urges all Nigerians and their leaders to stop playing the ostrich on the issue of restructuring the Nigerian political structure. A joint effort towards restructuring the Nigerian federalism will make Nigeria a better country were needless tensions and conflicts are minimal and where the sub-national government are not reduced to mere appendages. Therefore, to achieve this, urgent steps should be taken in the execution of the recommendations of this paper so as to change the status quo to one that will work despite the multifarious ethnic-regional nationalities in the country.

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