

## **RESTRUCTURING FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: OVERCOMING THE ‘DEPENDENT’ SYNDROME**

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### **Abstract**

*The issue of whether the Nigerian State requires some restructuring has remained part of the contentious public discourses within the country. Whereas some see restructuring as a condition that must be fulfilled before the country could overcome most of the internal contradictions that have continued to militate against her national development, others feel strongly that she does not require any restructuring and can attain her national developmental ideals by advancing the notion of good governance. Are there structural problems identifiable in the Nigerian State? Does the Nigerian state, as presently constituted, encourage a culture of dependency? Does the present Nigeria's federal structure undermine national development? By applying an explanatory research design, this paper explores the structure of the Nigerian state and its implication on national development. The study relied basically on secondary source of data, which were analysed through content analysis. Findings confirm that the structure of the state is faulty and that this has proven counterproductive in the sense that it breeds some sort of 'dependency syndrome' among the federating units. By assuming a worrisome distributive character, the state seemingly limits the capacity of the constituent units in contributing meaningfully towards national development. It is recommended that, in the face of the existing contradictions, there is need to reorder the socio-political and economic arrangement of the country so as to advance the goal of national development.*

**Keywords:** Federalism, restructuring, development, national development, dependency, good governance.

### **Introduction**

Nigeria came into existence as a result of colonial conquest. In effect, the country was formed and governed within the colonial period based on the whims of the British colonialists. It is a truism that the country has not been able to completely dismantle the 'colonial infrastructure' within her independence era in order to be freed from (post)colonial influences. This is exemplified by the fact that certain practices established during the colonial era have continued to define and regulate the patterns of both her intra and international engagements.

One of the discernible features that characterize the country at independence was lack of cohesion and sense of hegemony among the constituent groups and this was rooted in the seeds of divisiveness sowed by the colonialists. Apart from igniting the flame of ethnic consciousness on the people, the regional arrangement structured

by the colonial masters appeared to be imbalanced and these remain part of the issues being pointed out in many quarters as constituting threats to Nigeria's national development.

During the colonial era, and within the early years of her independence, the Nigerian economy thrived on agricultural production. Within the period, each of the three big regions engaged in self sustainable agricultural production and was actually contributing positively to national development. However, the discovery of oil in commercial quantity turned the table. The production and exportation of agricultural products began to suffer serious reversal the moment oil export and revenue started making significant impact on the economy. As the country witnessed a boom in oil production and began to record enormous oil revenue, the constituent units began to pay less attention to the agricultural sector and other alternative sources of revenue and instead concentrated on the oil revenue being shared at the centre. This development began to condition the minds of those piloting the affairs of the constituent units and enthroned an environment of over-dependence on federally collected revenue, which promoted indolence and militated against resourcefulness.

The purpose of this study is to examine the current structure of the Nigerian state and the patterns of socio-economic and political engagements inherent in the system. This is with a view to ascertaining the extent to which these have fostered or militated against sustainable national development. To achieve this, the paper is divided into seven parts that starts with this introductory part, followed by part two that dwells on the explication of the basic concepts adopted in this study. While part three focuses on theoretical issues, part four makes a brief review of the structure of the Nigerian state, and part five discusses the matters arising from the structure of the Nigerian state. Part six discusses the Nigerian federal structure and how it contributes in engendering the dependent syndrome and part seven deals with conclusion and recommendations on how to overcome the dependent syndrome.

### **Conceptual explications**

**Structure:** Our simple understanding of the term – structure – throws up the notion of patterned arrangement. It brings to mind the idea of parts arranged in a particular order. As such, when we talk about a particular structure that we know, such as a building or a ship, we can easily create a mental picture of how the parts are arranged and how they are connected to make a whole. In explaining the concept of social structure, Little (1991) identifies it, among others, with the attribute of temporal continuity, which means that as a social system feature, it persists over an extended period of time. Also speaking in social scientific terms, Holt (1967) describes structure as a pattern of interrelated roles while Riggs (1964:20) defines it as “any pattern of behaviour which has become a **standard feature** of a social system” (my emphasis).

By implication, any structure has an identifiable definite form. To this extent therefore, it can be understood that restructuring means reorganizing an existing structure and making it appear in a slightly or remarkably different form. As discussed in this paper, we are looking at restructuring from the angle of reorganizing

the existing arrangements or structures that produce the line-up of political actors, the economic system, the policy making bodies, and the constituent nature of the Nigerian polity.

**Development:** Development has been viewed from different angles. From the traditional perspective, development is only weighed on the scale of certain economic variables such as income per capita and Gross National Income and in this mould, it is believed that developmental success comes with the planned alteration of the structure of production and employment so that manufacturing and service industries would significantly overtake agriculture's share of both (Todaro and Smith, 2011). However, the new thinking in development studies tries to adopt a human-centred approach by looking deeper than the national economic level and focusing special attention at what happens to the substantial portion of the population vis-a-vis their quality of life and living standards (World Bank, 1991; Ake, 1995; Brinkman, 1995; Gandhi, 1996; Sen, 1999). It is in the light of this that Todaro and Smith (2011:22-23) submit that development must have at least three objectives that include increasing the availability and widening the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods; raising levels of living and; expanding the range of economic and social choices.

From our general understanding of the concept of development, we may begin to appreciate what national development should represent. Since citizens remain the central essence for the existence of any nation, it is their welfare and quality of life, rather than national wealth per se, that should form the main yardstick for measuring national development. For no matter how immense the national wealth appears, its relevance can only be weighed on the basis of the extent to which it has been deployed to transform the lives of citizens. Hence, we can say that national development takes place when a country demonstrates the capacity to initiate positive steps that improve the lives of her citizens. This assessment covers not only the economic, but also the political and social aspects. Here, we look at the extent to which the structure of the Nigerian state has either facilitated or militated against socio-political and economic development in the interest of the generality of the citizens.

**Dependence:** The simple dictionary meaning of dependence puts it as the state of needing the help and support of somebody/something in order to survive or be successful (Hornby, 2015). Within the development theoretic circles, the term is generally employed to look at the world economy from the viewpoint of the unequal relationship existing between the developed (core/centre) nations and the developing (periphery) ones. In a nutshell, it tries to capture how the economically weak(ened) and developing nations rely on external sources (developed nations and their economic institutions) as a means of overcoming their developmental challenges, though they often end up in a worse state of underdevelopment. Seen from this angle, it suggests a relationship between a domestic economy and a foreign one, which is skewed against the former, and mostly involving former colonized countries and their

colonizers. It is in this regard that Haslam, Schafer, and Beaudet (2009) adopted the term “informal imperialism” in describing it. For the purposes of this study, however, dependency syndrome is used to capture an anomalous state of affairs or condition existing between the central government and the constituent units within the Nigerian federation whereupon the latter rely mainly or even wholly on the centre for financial allocations, which tends to limit their capacity to look inwards and devise/develop other means of generating revenue on a self-sustainable level.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Goal-based theory is a management-oriented theory geared towards stimulating employee motivation within an organizational context and for the purposes of increasing performance. But given its basic tenets, it can actually serve a useful purpose even in people’s personal lives and other general circumstances. This theory that took its roots from Locke’s (1968) discourse rests on the assumption that people’s behaviours are motivated by their conscious goals or objectives. As Rollinson (2008) puts it, the idea that motivated behaviour is a function of a person’s conscious goals and intentions. According to Sapru (2013), the theory emphasizes that specific and challenging goal with feedback leads to higher performance.

Some of the concepts associated with the theory, which are worth emphasizing here, include goal specificity, goal-directed effort, goal acceptance, goal commitment, and performance. Goal specificity deals with how explicit the objectives to be achieved are. The idea is that when the intended goals are explicitly and clearly stated, it will make for an easier understanding and create the motivation for goal-directed efforts. That is to say, it is easier for people to pursue a goal when they have a clear view of what the goal entails and the roadmap to achieve it. Without having a clear picture of what the goal entails, one may not know what it would require to get the task ahead accomplished and neither could the person foretell when it is likely to be completed.

Goal-directed effort relates to the actions taken towards performing the necessary tasks that would lead to the accomplishment of a goal. According to Rollinson (2008:236), this is influenced by goal acceptance and goal commitment. While the former stands for the extent to which a goal is accepted as legitimate and appropriate, the latter represents a person’s vested interest in achieving the goal. On the other hand, performance “is an indication of whether, and to what extent, the goal is actually achieved”. It is quite agreeable that the tendency is high for someone to show greater zeal towards the performance of a task if s/he sees it as an appropriate and legitimate act. And by sharing a vested interest, the person is more likely to pursue the goal with a self-driven state of mind instead of seeing it as attending to a directive.

In view of this study, one can rest on this framework to raise certain questions. What goal(s) are the constituent units within the Nigerian state pursuing? To what extent can one say that there are clear specifications for them to direct their efforts towards actualizing national developmental goals? Assuming, but not conceding, that there is the existence of goal specifications directed towards national

development, does the current structure of the Nigerian state permit the various units to strive towards actualizing such goals? It is necessary therefore to ascertain the goals being pursued by the constituent units. If for instance there are no clear specifications concerning how to actualize national developmental goals or how to be self-reliant, there may be little or no motivation to act in that direction. But if there are such clearly specified national developmental goals, and whereupon the structure of the Nigerian state permits for its actualization, the emphasis of the various units would shift from unproductive competition and dwell on making positive goal-directed efforts. Thus, performance will be rated in terms of the ability of each unit to contribute positively to national development. But as it appears, the current goal of the constituent units revolves around how to expand the space for attracting increased allocation from the centre and in doing this they employ certain unproductive strategies that include demanding for creation (splitting) of more states and local governments, manipulating population census, etc. It does not appear that efforts directed towards the actualization of these goals can promote resourcefulness and national development.

#### **Brief Review of the Structure of the Nigerian State**

The geo-demographic structure of Nigeria was crafted by the British as an outcome of colonial conquest. During the pre-colonial era, the geographical area that eventually came to be known as Nigeria was populated by people from various ethnic nationalities that lived as different entities. These peoples were therefore conquered separately and brought together arbitrarily to form one political entity. This explains why Enahoro (1966) described the country as a conglomeration of tribes assembled compulsorily and branded Nigeria.

Indeed, the journey of forming the different nationalities into a single entity was not sudden. It began in 1886 on a somewhat 'business' note when the Royal Niger Company was granted the royal charter to control trade within the area and, by 1900 graduated into direct colonization and fusing of the different ethnic nationalities into clusters that manifested in form of the Colony of Lagos and the Protectorates of Southern, as well as Northern Nigeria. In 1906, the Lagos colony was merged with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. It was by 1914 that the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated and knit together to begin the journey as one political entity under the same colonial master.

It is significant to note, however, that the 1914 amalgamation did not obliterate the north/south divide of the country. Through their divide-and-rule tactics, the colonialists not only highlighted the existing differences and inflamed sectional consciousness among the different peoples but also went ahead to set up a structure that would preserve their divisiveness. For instance, Northern and Southern Nigeria were governed separately even after the amalgamation, with each being under the control of a Lieutenant Governor.

Prior to the amalgamation, there was a huge disparity in terms of landmass between the Northern and Southern Protectorates. After the amalgamation, the

structure of the two areas continued to reflect this disparity. By 1939, this structural disparity was exacerbated when the country was divided into three Regions. In fact, it was actually the southern part – with a smaller landmass – that was split into two (Eastern and Western Regions) while the north was left in its disproportionately larger form. It is in the light of this that Nnadozie (2005:205) observed that the northern region remained “equal to, if not more than, the two regions in the South combined”. Nwabueze (quoted in Odum, 2016) equally noted that the colonial masters failed to discard the pre-existing territorial structure and create a new entity with balanced structure. Rather than redesign the structure in order to reflect the new geo-demographic realities that arose from the amalgamation and the subsequent splitting of the country into regions, the colonialists chose to preserve the Northern part as one large undivided entity while subjecting the southern part to subdivisions.

It was in their bid to retain the territorial advantage accorded the northern region that they (colonialists) decided not only to ignore the fact that there exist other ethnic groups (apart from the Hausas) within the region, which ought to have formed the basis for splitting it into smaller parts, as was done in the south. Besides, there were areas designated as being part of the north that, geographically speaking, should have fallen under the southern part of the country, yet the colonialists left them as part of the already large Northern region.

Further moves aimed at exacerbating and perpetuating the structural imbalance that existed between the north and south manifested within the early days of independence. In 1963, the Mid-Western region was carved out from the Western region to bring the total number of regions in the southern part of the country to three – while the north still remained as one monolithic entity. Perhaps, this disparity would have remained unnoticed had the environment been one where sub-national interests do not play significant role over national issues. It became a serious issue owing to its socio-political and economic implications on national affairs.

Nigeria started practicing federalism right from the colonial period. The foundation for the federal arrangement was laid in 1946 with the introduction of regionalism by the Richards constitution. The move towards becoming a federalist state was further boosted in 1951 when the McPherson Constitution introduced a semi federal structure. The country adopted a federal principle and structure in 1954 when the Lyttleton Constitution took effect in favour of a federal arrangement that operated with three constituent regions. Signs exist to show that the country operated with a true spirit of federalism upon its introduction, as evidenced by the fact that the Eastern and Western regions opted for and became self governing in 1957 whereas the Northern region attained that status in 1959. Each region was therefore granted leave to move as she desired.

This decentralized federal structure that provided for regional autonomy was retained at independence. Then, the regions exercised a great deal of fiscal autonomy. But few years into her independence, the country witnessed a slight hitch in her practice of federalism. This happened when the military administration that emerged following the initial coup d'état of 1966 opted for a unitary system. It was a move that encroached on the autonomy of the constituent regions. The unitary arrangement,

however, lasted for a brief period and was reversed by the second military administration that emerged following the counter-coup, which occurred same year. The country has remained a federal state since then.

It is worthy to note that despite the claims about retaining a federal structure, what began to transpire under the successive military regimes bore marks of unitary practices. While pretending to be acting on a federal background, the junta centralised political power as well as economic resources and exerted overbearing influence over the constituent units. As a matter of fact, the successive military regimes brought the unitary command structure to bear on the country's pattern of federalism and administration. It was the Head of state that appointed (and reserved the authority to remove) the Heads of executive at the regional/state level. As expected, such appointees owed their loyalty to the source of their mandate and in effect, acted as mere field officers to the central government. It is in the light of this that Odimegwu-Ojukwu (1989, p.10) submitted thus: "Wherever the military called itself a federal military government it was sheer propaganda which does not reflect the real situation."

The lip service being paid to federalism while acting on the contrary did not stop with the military regimes, as most of the unitarist tendencies that were exhibited by the junta found their way into the democratic (or civilian) era. Among others, the central government continued to amass powers that ought to have been exercised by the lower tiers of government within the federation and by so doing, control what happens at that level of government. Ekweremadu (2012) captures how sixteen items out of twenty eight that were listed under the concurrent list in the Independence Constitution eventually found their way into the exclusive list in the 1999 Constitution. Equally, seven items on the residual list were taken up by the federal government and included in the exclusive list. Against known federal principles, the Nigerian federalism is one that eventually began to parade a very strong centre that abhors devolution of power, which eroded the autonomy of the constituent units.

As remarked by Enyi (2005), the fiscal aspect of Nigeria's federalism depicts one with preference for a strong centre and weak periphery (states) in view of the fact that the Federal Government retains a proportionately larger size of the revenue than the states put together. Apart from the domineering influence being wielded by the centre, the manner in which the centrally generated revenue is being shared among the constituent units equally gives cause for concern. From Ekweremadu's (2012) presentation, one can see how the fiscal powers of the state have been subjected to continuous assault by the centre. The share of revenue received by the states/regions (on the basis of derivation) between 1960 and 1969 stood at 50%. This declined to 45% between 1969 and 1975, and further nosedived to 20% between 1975 and 1979. Between 1979 and 1981, the states did not receive anything in this regard, which means that the federal government did not make any allocation to the constituent units on the basis of derivation. A paltry 1.5% was however recorded between 1982 and 1992, and was increased to 3% between the period of 1992 and 1999. From 1999, it has remained at 13%. This picture tallies with the submission of Okolie (2009), as he asserts that it was the early federal system, which paid serious attention to the

principle of derivation as a basis for regional access to national revenue.

Nigeria's Independence Constitution adopted the structure of government tailored in the fashion of the British parliamentary system. However, her romance with this system of government lasted for a brief period and ceased when the first republic collapsed. It suffices to say that successive military regimes operated without the legislative arm of government, and even showed little regard for the judicial organ. Upon her return to democratic (or civilian) dispensation, the country adopted the American-type presidential system of government that recognised three autonomous branches of government with checks and balances.

### **Matters Arising from the Structure of the Nigerian State**

As Adewuyi (2014) rightly observed, the nature and composition of a state is very important and central to the nature of relationships that exist within it. Nigeria, as earlier noted, is a multi ethnic state and her multi ethnic status has negatively affected the patterns of relationships among the various ethnic groups. Nnoli's (2008) discourse on ethnicity highlights the fact that mere co-existence of different ethnic groups within a common geographical boundary may not necessarily generate tension or conflict. Citing the examples of peaceful cohabitation between the Reindeer Tungus and the Cossacks of Northwest Manchuria; Igbo and Ijaw in the Niger Delta of the pre-colonial times; local inhabitants and migrant palm tree cutters in the Asa area of Ngwaland; etc, he identifies resource competition as a major culprit that instigates ethnic conflict. A critical analysis of the Nigerian situation will reveal that Nigeria's multi-ethnic composition has been generating tension owing to the manner in which the different ethnic groups compete for resources on an ethnic platform.

Nigeria gained her independence in an atmosphere that was suffused with the feeling of internal divisions and unhealthy rivalry among the different ethnic groups. Owing to the machinations of the colonialists, the political elite pursued the Nigerian project from a parochial view and were consumed with plans of how to manipulate the system towards achieving narrow sectional interests. Just like Odumegwu-Ojukwu (1989:8) pointed out, the political atmosphere of the country at independence was one in which "each region set up its headquarters and sent out patrols to the centre for loot".

Indeed, terms like territorial imbalance, disparity, lopsidedness, etc gained national relevance because of the internal contradictions emanating from the manner in which the ethnic/sectional differences were highlighted and allowed to exert divisive influence within the polity. It was the belief of many a great number of people that the structure of the Nigerian state was manipulated in a particular fashion in order to serve certain parochial interests. Nnadozie (2005, p. 205) aligns with this line of thought, as he opines that the main reason the colonialists agreed to a federal arrangement in 1954 was to ensure that the oligarchy in the northern region continued to dominate the political landscape of the country. According to him, it was the desire of the British to ensure that the "structures, agencies and processes established for the realization of Her Majesty's goals and interests during the colonial period were left intact and indeed expanded through the northern oligarchs...whom they intended to



hand over the realm of power at flag independence”.

Given the above account, and in view of the earlier design by the British to allow the North remain as a monolithic entity, one may begin to see the ‘gains’ of the structural imbalance manifesting right from onset through the outcome of the independence elections and the political arrangement of the first republic. In the 1959 elections that ushered Nigeria into independence, records show the north having undue numerical strength over each of the other regions (Awa, 1960; Ujo, 2012). It was the existing territorial imbalance that gave the north the numerical strength to produce a disproportionately higher number of parliamentarians than any other region and, from this vantage position, was able to produce the Prime Minister. In the circumstance, the other regions stood as the brides to be toasted for an alliance by the domineering north. And it was in view of these political and other related benefits that led the northern-controlled federal government into carving out one extra region in 1963 from the southern part of the country to bring the tally to three regions while the entire northern region with its larger landmass still remained as one.

The issue of structural imbalance and problems arising from it has continued to expand and assume more serious dimension with the passage of time following some of the policies adopted in the country. It is not out of place to say that aside the political aspect, the imbalance that characterized Nigerian federalism has fiscal significance. It is noteworthy that at a period the constituent units were relatively enjoying fiscal autonomy; the southern part of the country was allowed to have more regions whereas the north remained as one unit. But things began to change since the states lost fiscal autonomy and the federal government deemphasized derivation as a basis for accessing federally-collected revenue. It is not surprising that presently, the area originally being guarded as a monolithic north has more states (and local governments) than the area that fall under the southern part. The reason for this turn of event is not farfetched and can be explained on the grounds that under the present circumstance, having more states accords a zone greater opportunity to attract those resources shared to the states on equal basis. With the application of federal character principle, certain positions such as senatorial slots are shared equally among the states (three slots per state). Each state is equally given the opportunity to have at least one minister at the centre. Same goes with appointments into some of the federal establishments, requiring that states are given equal opportunity.

It is therefore understandable when Achebe (1983:49) alluded to Muhammed-Obasanjo conspiracy while explaining the main reason behind the 1976 states-creation exercise, which he stated was done “in preparation for a new fiscal arrangement in which states would determine what share of federal allocations went to whom”. And just like all other states-creation exercises that were driven by ethnic/sectional considerations, the basic aim of those that control the federal government remain manipulating the system to serve parochial interests. Considering that all the state-creation exercises undertaken in the country took place under the incumbency of northerners as Prime Minister/Military Heads of State, it remains clear that the southern part was granted more regions at a point when having one large region favoured the north, but the trend was reversed when having more states offers

greater advantage.

Summarily, it can be said that the structural imbalance being witnessed in the country is not an accidental event but was rather planned deliberately right from the colonial era to serve parochial interests. This imbalance has continued to generate serious concern and tension owing to the manner it has been directed towards gaining political and economic advantages by one group over the other.

### **Nigeria's Federal Structure and the 'Dependent' Syndrome**

There is a sense in which one can say that Nigeria's fiscal federalism encourages indolence among the constituent units and prevents them from undertaking self-sustainable initiatives. This can be understood from an analysis of the path the country had taken vis-à-vis the economic activities that were geared towards growth and development. As observed earlier, Nigeria thrived with an agro based economy as at the time independence was granted. Within the period, each region made serious efforts to engage in self-sustainable agricultural activity. The northern region took the production of groundnuts seriously and was primarily identified with the then popular groundnut pyramids. On the other hand, the Western region produced cocoa while the Eastern region was identified with palm produce. This was a period the regions enjoyed relative fiscal autonomy whereupon the share of revenue received by the regions on the basis of derivation stood at 50%. As a matter of fact, each region was committed towards expanding and developing its economic base in order to increase her quota of revenue accruable on the basis of derivation. There is no gainsaying the fact that this was an environment that promoted industry, positive productive competitiveness, initiative, creativity, and regenerative production. The implication of this is that each region, while trying to increase her revenue base, was contributing positively towards her self-sustenance and overall national development.

It should be recalled that the success and fortunes recorded within the agricultural sector started witnessing reversals, as the oil sector began to gain relevance and make considerable impact on the national economy. This state of affairs can be attributed to some reasons. First, the revenue coming from oil business appeared to be an easy one in view of the fact that the government did not have to make any serious investments before reaping huge dividends. The main task of the government was simply to collect rents from oil companies. Thus, investing or engaging in businesses that demand creativity, commitment, resilience, and which are tasking appeared unappealing; appeared like a waste of time. Again, the government appeared to be overwhelmed by the amount of revenue accruing from oil rents and, perhaps, felt that it would be adequate to take care of all the country's financial needs. Ogunlesi (2015) captures a former Head of state, General Gowon, as declaring within the period of oil boom that the problem of the country was no longer money but how to spend it.

Given the above mindset, it can be understood why the government did not consider taking up steps towards industrialization and other alternative sources of revenue but instead focused primarily on oil rents. It is therefore not surprising, as

*Financial Times Survey* (1980) reveals that economic activities within the period favoured importation and consumerism and were highly biased against agro-allied industries and other areas that require developing local potentials.

Again, and more importantly, the era of oil boom coincided with the period the federal government started toying with the allocation formula for the share of revenue accruable to the states whereupon other unproductive criteria were given prominence over and above 'derivation'. Under the arrangement, it became possible for a state that contributed very little or nothing to the national revenue to receive by far a larger share of centrally allocated revenue than a state that contributed the biggest percentage. Owing to the fact that the constituent units started seeing the centrally generated revenue as a national cake meant to be shared (even without making any contribution towards the baking of the cake), they diverted their attention mainly towards devising means of competing and attracting a fairer share of the cake. It was under this circumstance that the different sections began the agitation for the creation of more states/local governments from their area. This is against the reasoning that the more the states/local governments in an area, the greater their opportunity of accessing larger share of resources from the centre. In this scramble for states/creation, the issue of propensity for self-reliance or viability usually takes the backstage.

Indeed, the immediate effect of the dependency syndrome that was orchestrated by the faulty structure of Nigeria's federalism manifested through the manner the federating units began to neglect their revenue generating potentials. The revenue allocation formula that gave little or no relevance to derivation destroyed the incentive/reward for those generating resources and this dampened the spirit for regenerative competition, which had thrived among the regions and sustained the economy during the early days of independence. Indeed, the allocation formula made 'easy money' available to the units. It is this unproductive-inclined allocation formula that can give a state the leverage to frustrate a revenue-generating activity and still turn around to share from the proceeds when other states explore same opportunity and generate revenue from it. This is exemplified in the manner a state like Kano could ban the sale of alcohol within her territory and yet share from the proceeds of the Value-Added Tax generated by other states of the federation through the sale of alcohol.

It is a fact that the states and local governments in the country depend basically on revenue allocated from the centre and most of them could not perform their basic functions if asked to do so with their internally generated revenue (Eme, 2014; Ugwu, 2017). This explains why most state governments cannot afford to pay even their workers' salaries once there is a delay in the disbursement of federal allocations. Following the recession that gripped the country due to the recent decline in oil revenue, the federal government had to intervene in the financial situation of most of the state governments and offer them bailout funds. The situation in the country is such that both the oil-producing states and those without oil deposits depend on the fortunes of the oil business for survival and once there is any slight dislocation in the oil revenue it will affect all of them on equal basis.

There is no doubt that the overarching and domineering influence of the centre not only dampens the spirit of industry and enterprise but also frustrates it in most circumstances. It is a clear fact that the people of the South-East zone of the country are known for their spirit of enterprise. Within the country, they are among the major players (if not the highest) in the importation business. However, the federal arrangement whereby the centre determines (with ethnic lens) who sets up international sea/airports saw the zone being denied of a functional seaport and an international airport for many decades. The people's dream of having in place a seaport at Onitsha is yet to be realized and it was not until 2010 that the federal government approved and actually took positive steps towards upgrading the Akanu Ibiam Airport, Enugu to the status of an international airport. As such, it took the federal government about fifty years after the country gained her independence to upgrade the airport to an international status. This was an airport that had been ranked as the fourth busiest even while still operating as a local airport. It suffices to say that the other three that came before the Enugu Airport in the ranking are international airports. In the light of the fact that the zone can boast of producing the highest number of importers and international businessmen/women, it stands to reason that her not having an international airport for so long was based on the fact that the states within the zone depended on the federal government to lift the ethnic tinted lens and grant the upgrade of the airport in order to promote the existing potentials of enterprise. Equally, there is an extent to which one can say that the federal government has deliberately stultified technological growth of the zone following her attempt to pull out from the federation and her subsequent defeat in the ensuing war. In spite of the fact that the zone prosecuted the war by relying mainly on local technologies, none of these technological feats was harnessed after the war due to certain policies that would not have been necessary in a truly federal state.

It is based on the manner the Nigerian federalism has been structured that the state governors always have to go, cap in hand, begging the federal government to grant or deliver what they (states) should have done for themselves were true federalism to be in place. After looking at the definition of the concept of federalism, the easiest conclusion for one to make is that the Nigerian situation deviates from the normal standards expected of a federal state. Jinadu (quoted in Enyi, 2005) captures federalism as a form of government designed to promote unity in an environment marked by diversity. Nnadozie (2005) equally views it as a form of government in which the constituent units have consented to stay together under a central authority but allowed to control and manage their own affairs and share the powers of the union (state) in such a manner as to make the levels of government coordinate and autonomous. Against expectations, the practice of federalism in Nigeria has failed to promote unity and national integration. It has also failed to accord the constituent units the relative autonomy they require to operate a virile federal structure. By assuming a centralised power structure, the federal government succeeded in rendering the constituent units impotent and incapable of exploring means of overcoming their state of dependence.

### **Concluding Remarks: Overcoming the ‘Dependent’ Syndrome**

As already noted, most of the states within the Nigerian federation cannot survive with their internally generated revenue. The implication of this is that the country operates with more constituent units that feed on national treasury than those that contribute to it. This is disheartening, especially, in view of the fact that most of these states actually possess the natural resources and potentials needed to generate self-sustainable revenue internally but have merely failed to tap them. The reason for this is traceable to the structural defects that characterize the Nigerian state, which appear to be encouraging these units to remain indolent and refrain from taking serious steps towards harnessing their potentials.

Thus, it is the defective structure that makes it possible for a state government to keep living with the impression that it must perforce be sustained by the efforts of others and as such does not need to be resourceful in order to keep afloat. It is based on same reason that a state government can abandon some of her basic responsibilities with the hope that the federal government would intervene. It is still this defective structural arrangement that makes the centre very powerful while the states remain too weak. Going by the current structure, it stands to reason therefore that these units will remain in their beggarly status and continue to depend on nationally shared *cake*; continue to neglect their potentials. Or are there possibilities of reversing the current dependent status of the constituent units when the system keeps creating opportunity for them to continue feeding ‘freely’ from the federal treasury? Put roundly, what are the circumstances that can ginger up the states out of their beggarly status and compel them to look inwards and devise means of contributing towards national development?

There is no doubt that the constituent units may never rise to the challenge of undertaking a self-reliant approach to development so long as they continue expecting and receiving ‘manna’ from the centre; so long as allocations keep coming on a basis that does not encourage industry and resourcefulness. In order to overcome the dependent status of the constituent units, there is every need to expose the Nigeria’s federal system to the currents of true federalism. In effect, there is need to alter a federal arrangement that bears a very close semblance to a unitary structure. That is to say, devolution of power is very necessary so that the powers located at the centre should be pared down while the units are strengthened in the manner of true federalism. So long as the centre retains its all-powerful posture to the detriment of the lower tiers of government, the latter will remain weak, incapacitated, and unable to play its expected roles as a federating unit.

Among others, there is every need to inject a sense of responsibility and resourcefulness on the states. They must be challenged to have the orientation of self-reliance, develop specific goals aimed at charting a self-sustainable path to development, and make goal-directed efforts towards realizing this objective. The current practice where little emphasis is placed on derivation is counterproductive and robs the system of the motivational force to push the states into taking up the challenge of resource mobilization. By giving due relevance to the derivation principle and cultivating the culture of resource mobilization, the units will be

challenged to become viable units rather than parasitic ones. This can only be possible when the federating units enjoy a high degree of fiscal autonomy.

It stands to reason that once the federating units begin to enjoy fiscal autonomy and the allocation formula altered in favour of 'derivation', the problems associated with demand for multiplicity of states/local governments will cease. It can be recalled that there was no attraction for having more regions during the first republic. Hence, the north was comfortable remaining as one large entity. In fact, the carving out of an extra region from the western region was even seen as a political gimmick to WEAKEN the region politically. The crave for more states only started when it became an opportunity for attracting federal allocation irrespective of whether or not the state is viable. As such, states will be challenged to overcome their dependent status when the issue of viability forms the basis for its existence.

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