

Restructuring the Nigerian Federalism: the Proposed Form and Shape

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Abstract: Nigeria from colonial period through post colonial period has settled for federal system of government which allows for division of powers and jurisdictions among the levels of government that make up the federation. Overtime, there have been observable imperfections in the Nigerian federalism which have triggered protests, agitations and patriotic calls for restructuring of the system. This study was intended to expose those factors that gave rise to imperfections in the Nigerian federal system and proposed the form/shape of restructuring to be adopted in the country. To achieve the above broad objective, content analytical method was adopted as data were generated from secondary sources such as official publications, articles from reputable journals, newspapers, conference and workshop papers, internet materials, textbooks, etc. This source was augmented with direct observation of the practice of federalism in Nigeria. Cooperative Federalism is the theory upon which the study is anchored. The findings revealed that there have been a lot of contradictions in the Nigerian federalism which needed urgent restructuring to bring the system to minimum international best practices. On the basis of the foregoing, we commended as follows: that there should be devolution of more powers to the federating units in Nigeria; that fiscal federalism should be practiced to give room for resource control by the federating units and that the principles of federal character as enshrined in our national constitution should be observed in appointment and location of critical infrastructure across all sections of the country.

Key words: Restructuring • Federalism • Nigeria • Fiscal federalism • Cooperative federalism

INTRODUCTION

In recent time, restructuring has assumed a household name in Nigeria. The concept has continued to gain currency especially in the current era of President Muhammad Buhari led administration. Opinions have remained divided on what restructuring exactly means. However, restructuring has been used in many occasions in the country to imply divesting the central government of certain powers it wields and limiting its influence in such areas as fiscal policies, military defence, foreign policy, immigration and national elections (Nwankwo cited in [1]. If this definition is anything to go by, restructuring presupposes that there are some imperfections or defects in the Nigerian federalism, which must be given priority attention to bring the version of Nigerian federal system as close as possible to what is obtainable elsewhere.

There is no doubt that Nigeria since colonial period has favoured federalism given her heterogeneous character. It is argued that Nigeria has well over 250 ethnic nationalities [2] with three main ethnic groups (Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba). [3], who is credited to be the father of federalism conceived federalism as the method of dividing powers so that general and regional governments are each within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent. This definition has attracted criticisms from scholars who argued that Wheare's notion about federalism is too legalistic and rigid. Given the defects noticeable in Wheare's definition, [4], argued that the nature of federalism is to be sought for not in the shading of legal and constitutional terminology but in the forces – economic, social, political, cultural that have made the outward forms of federalism necessary adding that the essence of federalism lies not in the society itself. Federal

government is therefore a device by which all the federal attributes of the society are articulated and protected [4]. To Lord Haldene (1914) [5], the literal interpretation of 'federal' confines its application to cases in which states, while agreeing on a measure of delegation to a common government, yet in the main continue to preserve their original constitution. [6], maintained that federalism is a juristic concept of sorts and that fact is retained in our definition by emphasizing the existence of two kinds of governments and their separate ability to make some decisions independently of each other. It is a written constitutional contrivance through which governmental powers, functions and procedures are shared among the national, state and local government or constituent units, ensuring in the process the independence and exclusively defined area of responsibilities for each tier of government [7]. From the avalanche of definitions above, we can safely argue that federalism is a method devised to ensure division of jurisdiction, powers and authority between at least two levels of government.

The formation of a federal system is usually informed by many reasons chief among which are the need for independence from foreign domination, hope for economic advancement and need for defence. Whereas some federations were formed by coming together of hitherto independent states, others were formed through division of the country into several layers or tiers using constitutional changes as major instrument.

The history of Nigerian federalism is usually traced to Arthur Richard's Constitution of 1946 which brought regionalism in Nigeria by dividing the country into three regions. This was followed by the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 which made Nigeria a quasi-federal state. However, Nigeria became a federal state following the coming on board of the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954. What gave impetus for adoption of federalism in Nigeria by colonialist is the heterogeneous character of ethnic nationalities in the country. This system of government is believed to encourage unity in diversities as it allows the constituent units some level of autonomy to manage their own local affairs in areas of their jurisdictions.

It is noteworthy that between the period of Nigerian independence in 1960 and 1966 when the military junta struck, principle of fiscal federalism was somewhat adhered to. During this period, emphasis was on the principle of derivation which allowed each region to retain 50% of the revenue generated in their domains. It is on record that the practice of derivation enabled each region

to embark on competitive development projects that led to the generation of more wealth to each region [1].

Unfortunately, the intrusion of the military into the Nigerian political landscape in 1966 upturned the whole arrangement. It is however, argued that the military was responsible for erosion of autonomy of the constituent regions thereby undermining the vibrancy of Nigeria's federal system. [8], captured the situation of Nigerian federalism under the military in the following lines:

There is absolutely no doubt that the pseudo-federal system presided over by General Yakubu Gowon (1966-1975), Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo (1975-79) severely compromised the integrity of Nigerian federalism, in addition to making a mockery of it, while the regimes of Generals Muhammadu Buhari (1983-85), Ibrahim Babangida (1985-93) and Sani Abacha (1993-98) slaughtered and buried federalism in the praetorian graveyard of imposed, centralized and authoritarian dictatorship that followed the Shehu Shagari administration of 1979-83.

Apart from the centralized posture adopted by the military, the Nigerian federalism was subsequently severely compromised through the state creation exercises which were undertaken under the watch of the military dictators. Consequently, the creation of more states makes the centre to be much stronger while the states become weaker. Currently, Nigeria is a federation with 36 states' structure and 774 local government areas which totally rely on the distributive pool account (federation account) [9] to perform their assigned constitutional responsibilities in their respective domains. The above age long rape on the federalist principles coupled with apparent abuse of federal character principle enshrined in the Nigerian constitution by the Buhari led administration in areas of appointment into key positions and alleged marginalization and neglect of some sections of the country may have awakened the consciousness of Nigerians on the need for urgent restructuring of the Nigerian federation.

Key Features of Federalism: In this segment of our discourse our attention will be focused on the basic features that set federalism apart from any other contrivances which could be labelled federal government. The core features are hereunder briefly discussed:

A Written Constitution: Constitution is the grundnorm or the fundamental law according to which a particular state is governed. There is no doubt that a federation can only be established through a perpetual covenant of union, which should be enshrined in a written constitution. The constitution shows in clear terms the modalities for power sharing among the federating units. To [10], the true mark of federalism is that it distributes legislative, judicial and executive power between the federal and the constituent states in a written document known as the constitution.

Autonomy of Each Government: Federal system of government emphasizes relative independence of each level of government. [3], argued that the federal system must be fashioned in a manner that each level should be co-ordinate to another and that no tier should be seen to be subservient in relationship with others in the federation. Any arrangement that runs contrary to the foregoing principle is not fit to be called a federation. Hon. Justice Kayode Eso views autonomy of the states as the defining principle of true federalism, its foundation or bedrock. This principle is imperative as it ensures that the federal government acts within the ambit of powers assigned to it while allowing the states to run their own affairs without frustration, intimidation, etc.

Equality of Powers Between the Regional Governments: This principle insists that the constituent units/states that form the federation should relate with federal authority on equal plane. No region or state should have more or less power in their interactions or relationship with the central government otherwise the regional government cannot relate among themselves as equal partners [11].

Financial Autonomy: This is a key feature of federalism. [3], 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 constituent parts as to make it more powerful to lord its will over the other.

Division of Powers: There should exist a formula for division of powers among the levels of government. Usually, legislative lists are enshrined in the constitution which specifies powers to be exercised by the tiers of government. Thus, exclusive list contains matters of

national significance such as foreign policy, currency and minting, security against external aggression etc. This list is exclusively set aside for the federal authority to legislate or exercise on behalf of the federating units. The matters of local importance are included in the concurrent list for both the central and state governments to handle. The constituent units have exclusive right to legislate on matters contained in the residual list. This constitutional division of powers and responsibilities are crucial owing to its capacity to eliminate conflicts between or among the federating units.

Creation of Additional Federating Units: The constitution should make provision for conditions and other requirements necessary for creation of additional constituent units in a federation. To this end, the constitution provides for all the requirements to be satisfied for new regions, provinces, states, or federating units to be created.

Supremacy of the Constitution: Another key feature of a federal government is the supremacy of the constitution. The supreme constitution must be binding on all persons, governments and authorities. It must be seen to be supreme over both the central government and the federating units.

Contradictions in the Nigerian Federalism: A Critical Analysis: There are some defects that have become the hallmark of Nigerian federalism, which apparently distinguish it from what is obtainable in other countries of the world that practice federal system of government. It is believed that such internal contradictions have been largely responsible for the upsurge in the agitations for restructuring of the Nigerian federation to accord with minimum international best practices. In examining the obvious imperfections in the Nigerian federal structure, our attention will be fixed on the abuse of some core principles of federalism. Such core principles of federalism that are of interest to us are:

A Written Constitution: Nigeria has a written constitution which specifies in clear terms the structure and system of government operational in the country. It equally provided for the division of powers among the levels of government (federal, state and local government). In short, the constitution has remained the fundamental law according to which the country is

administered for the good life of the people. However, it is observed with dismay that the entire country is run using one single federal constitution. Put differently, the constituent units that make up the Nigerian federation have no constitution upon which they run the governments of their respective domains. This practice runs contrary to the position of Lord Haldane, who held that a 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 the main continue to preserve their original constitutions. The above legal luminary argued that the federating units do not give out all their laws to the federal authority 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. Consequently, every federating unit is able to have its own constitution that details how its own affairs should be handled. It is absurd for a country to be called a federal state and it is run with a single constitution. (11), 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 constitutions for each government. In federal states like the United States of America and Australia, the constituent units of the federation retain their original constitutions while they delegated some of their powers to form the national/federal constitution. The foregoing exposition reveals that Nigerian federalism is a clear departure from what is obtainable in some countries such as the USA, Australia and Canada. The use of one constitution to establish and run both the federal and state government is unacceptable.

Autonomy of Each Government: This principle according to [11], 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). Any arrangement which allows one level of government to dominate the other (federating unit) does not qualify to be known and called a true federal state. To guard against this development, [3], warned against concentrating too much powers and resources on a particular level of government as it is capable of intoxicating it and causing it to direct and

dictate for the other perceived subordinate levels of government. In an apparent disregard to the above position, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has assigned enormous powers and resources to the federal authority to the effect that it could easily influence the direction and course of administration in the federating units. For instance, the exclusive list contains 68 items all of which are to be legislated and exercised by the federal government. In addition, the same federal authority concurrently legislates with federating units (state governments) on matters in the concurrent list. As if that was not enough, the federal government is equally vested with more powers to make laws with respect to any matter incidental or supplementary to any matter mentioned elsewhere in the exclusive list [11]. It is argued that the lopsided posture of Nigerian federalism is a brainchild of the military which favoured excessive concentration of powers and resources to the central government to the detriment of the federating units.

Equality of Federating Units: This feature presupposes that every constituent unit should relate with each other on an equal footing. The relationship of the constituent units with the federal government should also tow the same line so that each federating unit will perceive each other as partner. This principle insists that on no account should a given federating unit be accorded special recognition/position in relation to the federal government. Moreover, there should be no significant inequality in population between the federating units. [3], advocated for 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. The observance of this principle is markedly different in Nigerian federalism; there have been apparent inequality in area and population between the constituent units. For instance, the Northern region parades 75% of the country's landmass and over 60% of its population. This unequal arrangement has given the north an undue advantage to maintain absolute dominance in the government of the federation as the region has capacity to now dictate actions and policies to be pursued. A case in point is the 2014 Sovereign National Conference report, which has suffered a serious setback because the north believes that the recommendations of the conference are not in their own best interest. Although, states in

southern Nigeria have joined forces to press for the implementation of the report, the north because of the size of its population and landmass has continued to hold the country to ransom.

Financial Autonomy: To [3], financial subordination would definitely mark an end to federalism no matter how carefully the legal forms may be preserved. The foregoing statement presupposes that financial autonomy is key to the functioning of true federalism. Put differently, fiscal federalism is a key factor that defines a federal state. Any arrangement that lays claims to federalism without enough financial resources that match the assigned responsibilities of federating units is practising anything but federalism. Therefore, a federal state should be designed in a manner that will support each level of government to have financial resources adequate enough for optimum performance of its constitutional assigned functions. For if the state authorities find the services allotted to them to be too expensive for them to execute given their lean resources and they turn to the federal authority for subsidies or grants to help her, then they are no longer co-ordinate with the federal authority but subordinate to it [11]. Wheare argued further that both state and federal authorities in a federation must be given the power in the constitution each to have access to and to control its own sufficient financial resources. Each must have a power to tax and to borrow for the financing of its own services by itself [3].

The Nigerian federation has derailed from this key principle of federalism. It is no longer news that the revenue sharing formula in Nigeria is skewed in favour of the federal government as significant functional responsibilities and overwhelming resources are allotted to it to the detriment of the federating units. [12], stated that in 1982, the government revenue sharing formula looked thus: Federal government – 55percent, State government – 35 percent and Local government – 10 percent. The formula according to him changed in 1985 during the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida to take the form of: Federal government – 55 percent, State government – 30 percent and Local government – 10 percent. In 1999, following the return of Nigeria to civil rule, the federal government established the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMFAC) to among other things monitor the accruals into and disbursement of revenue from the Federation Account. In 2001, the commission came up with the following

sharing formula: Federal government – 41.3 percent, State governments – 31 percent, Local government – 16 percent and Special Fund – 11.7 percent. To [12], this formula proved unworkable as a result of the Supreme Court judgement on resource control in April 2002. Thus, in 2008, the fiscal commission drafted a new proposal which seemed to reinforce the hegemony of the federal government. The federal government was to enjoy as much as approximately 54 percent of the total revenue [12]. The arrangement has continued to deprive state governments of any meaningful autonomy in their relations with the federal authority. To state the obvious, the thirty-six states in Nigerian federation are economically unviable as they have been created for some political reasons with weak financial base. Most states in Nigeria are left with tax bases with low revenue yielding capacity. Consequently, the state authorities usually wait patiently on monthly basis for federal allocation to be able to run its affairs and meet salary obligation to their workforce. According to [12], there has been near complete dependence of about 85 percent of the Nigerian states on federal grants to run their states. The size of some states' allocations have gone so low that after deductions from source they are left with little or nothing to pay workers' wage bill. Some workers in some states of the federation have not received their monthly emoluments for about 6 or 8 months. In some states, workers are placed on half salary pending when their federal allocations will improve for the better. In short, state governments are now mere agents in relationship with the federal government and not partners. The financial condition of local governments is most pathetic. State governments have taken advantage of the state-local government joint account to deny them of their rightful federal allocations hence, the state of underdevelopment that has become the hallmark of rural communities in Nigeria.

It is believed that the above parlous financial condition of the federating units especially the state governments was made possible through some military decrees introduced by former Nigerian military dictators. For instance, Decree No 13 of 1970 made population and equality of states the main factors for revenue allocation. Later on, Decree No 9 of 1971 gave 100 percent of offshore mining rents and royalties to the federal government. (14), argued that the final blow on derivation came through the budget broadcast of General Yakubu Gowon when he declared inter alia:

As from the 1st April 1975, all portions of Customs and Excise Duties formerly payable to the state government on the basis of derivation would be payable to the Distributive Pool Account (DPA), the percentage of royalties payable to state governments on the basis of derivation would be reduced from 45 to 20 percent and the federal government will surrender its entire share of both on-shore and off-shore royalties into the Distributive Pool Account.

The 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria also through Section 42(3) transferred ownership of mineral resources from any parts of the country together with revenue accruing therefrom to the federal government. The foregoing, development has definitely made state governments mere appendages in relationship with the almighty federal government.

The above observable imperfections in the Nigerian federation have triggered agitations from all parts of the country. In the north, the dreaded Boko Haram insurgents have been wrecking havoc on the lives and properties of people resident in the region. In the south south region (Niger Delta), the militants have been carrying out wanton destruction and vandalism of oil installations and hostage taking of oil workers especially expatriate officials. The opinion leaders in the region are clamouring for resource control as government has failed in the twin responsibilities of providing for developmental needs of the people and ensuring environmental protection of the area. The Oduduwa Peoples Congress (OPC) is kicking against alleged marginalization and neglect of people in the zone (southwest). The IPOB and MASSOB as well as other sister organizations have continued to protest against the inhuman treatment of the people of the southeast (Igbo) extraction. They have consistently alleged that the region has suffered and continued to suffer from untold marginalization from the federal government in areas of the number of states, appointment into key federal institutions, number of the local government areas, etc. in the area. To them, actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra will definitely solve the problems. However, some well meaning Nigerians have joined forces to campaign for restructuring of the Nigerian federalism to at least accord to minimum international best practices. To them, Nigeria will be much better and stronger when she is united than divided.

Restructuring the Nigerian Federalism: the Form and Shape: The debate for restructuring of Nigerian federation has been raging for quite some time now in Nigeria. This heated debate has pitched the southern Nigeria

against the northern Nigeria. We could safely argue that the people from southern Nigeria are the protagonists, who sincerely want the status quo in Nigerian federalism to change. On the other hand, the people of northern Nigeria are the antagonists as they consistently entertain some fears on the intentions of the proponents of restructuring. This segment of our discourse will expose the viewpoints on both sides of the divide.

The position of the protagonists will suffice here. To [15], the structure should be changed. There is too much power at the centre. He maintained that the federal government has too much power and too much responsibility, too much money, much to waste... Continuing, he queried whether it has not occurred to us that the federal government has too much power and too much responsibility? He argued that the structure we have is anti-development. To him, restructuring implies devolution of powers to component units of the Nigerian federalism. In the same vein Nwankwo cited in [1], averred that restructuring means divesting the central government of certain powers and limiting its area of influence to such areas as fiscal policies, military defence, foreign policy, immigration and national elections. He argued that the concept of restructuring does not entail merging of states. Rather, it is a thorough going process that allows each region to control its resources and pay royalties to the federal authority. He believes strongly that restructuring to a large extent will stem the tide of restiveness in many parts of Nigeria as it is capable of resolving the problems of citizenship, religion, resource control and fiscal federalism. Atiku Abubakar, the former Vice President of Nigeria believed that the current structure of Nigerian federation has been a major impediment to the economic and political development of our country. He insisted that our version of federalism should be made less centralized, less suffocating and less dictatorial in the administration of the country.

On the other hand, the antagonists represented by some voices such as [16], argued that those who call for restructuring in Nigeria today are doing so with some kind of hate in their minds adding that what is working in their minds is to find a way of denying states from the north opportunity of getting the kind of shares they are receiving from the federation account. He argued that some of the factors that government is using to distribute the revenue are God-made. Furthermore, he insisted that those talking of restructuring are actually hiding their real intentions under the slogan. In the same vein, Sani cited in [1], stated that the North is opposed to restructuring of Nigeria because there is nothing to restructure. He argued that those who clamour for true federalism to enable each

constituent to develop at its own pace are unwittingly advocating that Nigerians should live as if they are in different countries, where some citizens would live in a comfort zone, while others would live on the fringe. From the position of people of Northern extraction, it is clear that they are not perturbed about the present structure of Nigerian federalism. In other words, they are very comfortable with the way and manner the highly centralized Nigerian federalism is run. From their arguments, we could notice that they are interested in regular receipt of federal allocation from the Distributive Pool Account. The idea of financial autonomy (resource control) to states in Nigeria is immaterial to them so long as they keep getting fat federal allocation (national cake) on the basis of population and landmass principles which according to them are God-made principles. It is obvious that the over bloated population and large landmass that the region parades may have explained why they have taken this kind of stance on the dysfunctional Nigerian federation. Odumakin however, took a swipe at those opposing restructuring. He argued that to northerners, there is no better use for land, a critical factor of production than using it to hustle for funds in Abuja [17].

Nevertheless, this paper posits that restructuring of Nigerian federalism is long overdue. The structure as it is currently constituted can no longer serve the purpose of encouraging unity in diversity in the Nigerian state. The successive Nigerian governments have virtually abused most of the core principles of federalism as has been extensively discussed in preceding sections. The kind of restructuring that can reduce to barest minimum the high level of agitations and protests in the country is that which is based on devolution of more powers and resources to the constituent states. The overwhelming concentration of powers and resources to the centre (federal government) should be reviewed to give room for co-operative federalism where the federal and state governments can relate as partners. As long as the federal authority continues to retain the largest portion of the country's revenues it will continue to control or lord it over the rest of the federating units. This has remained the case in Nigeria as the relationship between the federal and state governments has taken the form of superior – subordinate relationship. The reduction of powers of the federal government could be actualized by means of removing some functions from the exclusive list and introducing same into the residual list for federating units to perform.

Moreso, the paper advocates for resource control. Those laws that have given the federal government overriding rights to own all mineral resources found in any parts of the country should be expunged from the Nigerian Constitution. Mineral resources found in any location should belong to the state authority that has jurisdiction over the area. The state governments should thereafter be made to pay some percentages of their proceeds as royalties to the federal government. It is believed that this arrangement will usher in an era of fiscal federalism which is imperative to introduce competition among the federating units as each unit will begin to prospect and exploit mineral deposits in its domain to boost its revenue base. This type of arrangement was operational in the first republic which enabled the regions to compete among themselves and they eventually made landmark achievements in the provision of both physical and social infrastructure for good life of people resident in their respective domains. Former governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Victor Attah argued that there is no governor today that will lift a finger or put himself out to diversify when every month he can come to Abuja to collect his share of the booty. The only reason he would diversify is if he knows that the survival of his state depends on it [17].

For purpose of equity and fairness, there should be physical restructuring of the Nigerian federalism. Nigeria has six geo-political zones. One of the zones (Northwest) has the highest number of states (seven states) while the southeast has the least (five states). All other zones have six states each. We believe strongly that there should be equal number of states across the six geo-political zones in the Nigeria. The cries of marginalization and neglect are usually hinged on the few number of states created in a given zone (Southeast) in comparison with large number of states in other regions. In addition, the number of local government areas per state should be adjusted to be relatively same so as to avoid over bloated number of local governments in some states especially in Northern Nigeria.

Equally important is the strict enforcement of the federal character principle in appointment of people into key positions in public institutions. Federal character emphasizes the fact that there should be no preponderance of persons from a particular ethnic group in a given government institution. In other words, public institutions must be composed in a manner to reflect the heterogeneous character of Nigerian state. President

Muhammadu Buhari has been severally criticized for not strictly observing the federal character principle in most of the appointments he has so far effected since he assumed office. Observations reveal that all the major appointments are skewed in favour of the North while leaving other ethnic nationalities with little or no appointments.

For the chaos currently being witnessed in Nigeria to be a thing of the past, the main principles of true federalism should be strictly applied. To Odumakin, those opposing the calls for restructuring of the country were only interested in reaping from where they did not sow [17].

Methodology: This study adopted content analytical method. Data for the study were obtained mainly from secondary sources such as official publications, articles from reputable journals, internet materials, textbooks, newspaper publications, paper presented in conferences and workshops, etc. The above secondary source was augmented with data obtained from direct observation on the practice of federalism in the country. Data generated from the above sources were subjected to critical analysis with a view to addressing key issues underlying the study.

Theoretical Framework: The study is anchored on Co-operative federalism theory. Cooperative Federalism entered the dominant discourse during the 1930s in USA. [3], is a strong advocate of this theory. The proponents of the theory support a strong, active, national government. They equally support supremacy clause of the Constitution. There are three main assumptions of cooperative federalism: that the national and state agencies should work together jointly; that state and national governments should routinely share power and that powers should not be concentrated on any government level or in any agency. Cooperative federalism advocates for the supremacy clause, which says the highest law is the constitution. Every other law is inferior to the constitution. In effect, cooperative federalism emphasizes equal relationship between federal authority and the federating units in that each tier should perceive each other as partner and not as subordinate. This form of relationship could be made possible through sharing of powers and resources between the federating units so that each has enough resources to undertake its constitutional assigned mandates.

The relevance of this theory is that proper restructuring of Nigerian federalism will ensure that powers and resources are shared between the federal authority and the federating units so that each can adequately and comfortably discharge all functions assigned to it by the constitution. True federalism is key to engender national growth and development in Nigeria as it is capable of driving diversification policy of the present government.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The study revealed that the federal system of government operational in Nigeria is full of imperfections when compared with what obtains in other countries that practice true federalism. The Nigerian federalism is marked by over centralization of powers and resources at the federal authority to the detriment of the federating states (units). The constituent units could be best described as subordinate units which could be controlled and directed by the central government according to their whims and caprices. The defective structure of Nigerian federalism has been implicated for stifling competition and discouraging diversification of the Nigerian economy as every component part of the federation has refused to engage in productive venture to boost her revenue base. Every federating unit waits patiently to draw from the federation account. We therefore, posit that Nigeria should restructure in order to practice true federalism which will engender economic growth and prosperity as well as stem the tide of agitations, protests, chaos etc that could lead to dissolution of the country.

On the basis of the foregoing, we make bold to recommend as follows:

- There should be devolution of more powers to the federating units as their activities have overwhelming impact on the Nigerian populace.
- Nigerian federalism should be practised on the basis of fiscal federalism whereby constituent units should have control over resources found in their various localities while paying royalties to the federal authority. It is believed that it will encourage economic diversification and increase economic prosperity of Nigeria.
- For purpose of equity and fairness, there should be further physical restructuring of the Nigerian federation so that each geo-political zone will have relatively equal number of state governments and

local government areas. This is to guard against one section of the country holding the country to ransom.

- The federal character principle should be strictly observed in appointment and location of infrastructure facilities in all the component units of the federation.

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