

Assessment of the Implementation of Federal Character In Nigeria.

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I. Introduction

The inevitable temptation of the majority to impose its own language upon the rest of its fellow country-men has the tendency to waken or arouse a violent reaction, (Friedrich 1968).

It is therefore not unnatural that the divisive propensities in the contemporary; would, and, the universal trend toward pluralism in addition to economic pressures, reinforced by military necessities, forever larger units of effective cooperation should have provided the main support for the forward march of federalism. For instance, each basic human concern – a man’s religion, his language, his ideology, and so forth serves to form sub-communities within a large, more comprehensive community (or sustains them if a larger one is formed), a federal order is the only way to protect such autonomous self-realization in combination with others holding divergent views (Friedrich 1968).

Therefore, one global system of government ushered in by the multi-cultural society to safeguard cultural differences and instil the spirit of unity among the various nationalities as well as allowing for smooth running of state business in its designated form is federalism.

In view of the above, federal relationships may be utilized to provide a political order for a nation to be united out of separate and distinct entities, as was in the case of Germany in the nineteenth century, that of India in the twentieth century. Or federalism may serve as a means of combining several nations or nationalities into one political order, as is the case in Switzerland and Belgium. Federalism thus, provides the only voluntary approach to the task of coordinating different national elements. It is being experimented with all over the world, in India, as well as Nigeria and Congo and finally Europe (Friedrich, 1968).

Even though, the adoption of federalism by multi-lingual society is not an end itself but only serve as a building block to an ends. By and large, a relatively manifestation of domineering tendency is bound to rear its ugly head in most federal order. But it is hardly necessary to describe the situation in all complexity. It is as well to realize that it is in no sense unique in the recent politics of federal orders, rather it is an instance of a recurrent pattern of federal problems.

II. Significance Of The Study

This study is of great importance to stakeholders such as the government of Nigeria, the academicians and every Nigerian.

To the government of Nigeria, the effectiveness of its policy (federal character) in reducing the gap between the advantaged and disadvantages sides will be assessed and examined and comment will be made thereafter.

To the academic circle, this study has intellectual advantages in that it will expose the intricacy of the federal government policy in addressing marginalization and perhaps the study would add to the existing literature on the topic.

To every Nigerian, this research work would of course bring out the cases of marginalization among the sections of the federation and thus create awareness on how to curb it.

III. Literature Review

The phrase “Federal Character” came after a number of debates and dialogue that ensured the members of Constitutional Drafting Committee (C.D.C) inaugurated by General Murtala Ramat Muhammad military administration on the 18th October, 1975 to-drafts a new constitution with democratic face for Nigeria. The committee thus adopted the phrase “federal character” as a viable means of ensuring ethnic balancing in federation activities and therefore defined the federal character as;

“Distinction desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote National unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense, of belonging to” the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, cultural, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire, to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the federal republic of Nigeria”.

The phrase “federal character” was however incorporated in the 1979, 1989 and subsequently in section 14(3) (4) of the 1999 constitution and interpreted as;

(3) “The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies”.

(4) “The composition of the Government of a state, a local government council, or any of the agencies of such Government or Council or such agencies will be carried out in such a manner as to recognize the diversity of the people within its area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the people of the federation.

These two clauses are quite applause and can bring about, national unity if implemented to the core without any malicious intent on them by the implementers. The clauses stressed on the need for recognition of the divergent elements that constitutes the federation particularly on the sharing of all son of fruit so that all and sundry will feel part and parcel of the system of which in the long-run can build-national unity and national loyalty in the citizenry. But the implementations of these clauses hardly fare better and even appear to be attacking the major concern (national unity and national loyalty). People seem to deposit their sense of unity and loyalty with their parochial and primordial identity via-a-visa the national units, and national loyalty which was the aim.

IV. Data Presentation And Data Analysis

DATA PRESENTATION

The data presented below relate to the implementation of federal character in Nigeria of 2003-2005. The data however covered the area of manpower distribution from Grade level 01-17 in the federal civil service and political appointment within the categories of ministers, permanent secretaries as well as ambassadors bearing in mind the principle of fair representation of all states including the seat of the government (Federal Capital Territory, Abuja) of the federation.

JOB PLACEMENT

This deals with the consolidated manpower distribution by state of origin into federal civil service. The data showed the total job placement of each state including federal capital territory and their respective percentages.

TABLE 1:

Consolidated manpower statistics for 2003: Federal civil service
Staff distribution by state of origin from Grade Level 01-17

STATES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
ABIA	7,676	3.5%
ADA	4,955	2.2%
AKW	10,613	32%
ANA	6,956	4.8%
BAU	3,912	32%
BAY	2,067	0.9%
BEN	8,222	3.7%
BOR	4,768	22%
CRO	6,047	2.7%
DEL	10,937	5.0%
EBO	1,728	0.8%
EDO	10,004	4.5%
EKI	5,457	2.5%
ENU	5,673	2.6%
GOM	2,970	1.3%
IMO	13,177	6.0%
JIG	1,988	0.9%
KAD	7,997	3.6%
KAN	4,703	2.1%
KAT	4,429	2.0%
KEB	2,929	1.3%
KOG	10,571	4.8%
KWA	5,994	2.7%
LAG	6,879	3.1%
NAS	3,643	1.7%
NIG	5,396	2.4%
OGU	14,212	6.5%
OND	8,375	3.8%
OSU	7,626	3.5%
OYO	8,074	3.7%

PLA	6,261	2.8%
RIV	4,667	2.1%
SOK	2,357	1.1%
TAR	1,572	1.4%
YOB	2,357	1.1%
ZAM	1,572	0.7%
FCT	1,903	0.9%
NON	86	0.0%
TOTAL	220,263	100.0%

TABLE 2:

Consolidated manpower statistics for the year 2004: Federal Civil Service Staff Distribution by State of Origin from Grade Level 01-17.

STATES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
ABIA	7,506	3.5%
ADA	4,958	2.3%
AKW	10,525	4.9%
ANA	6,650	3.1%
BAU	3,651	1.7%
BAY	2,025	6.9%
BEN	8,270	3.9%
BOR	4,633	2.2%
CRO	5,951	2.8%
DEL	10,511	4.9%
EBO	1,651	0.8%
EDO	10,319	4.8%
EKI	5,443	2.6%
ENU	5,873	2.8%
GOM	2,882	1.4%
IMO	13,491	6.3%
JIG	1,802	0.8%
KAD	7,760	3.6%
KAN	4,345	2.0%
KAT	4,093	1.9%
KEB	2,670	1.3%
KOG	10,657	5.0%
KWA	5,712	2.7%
LAG	6,465	3.0%
NAS	3,334	1.6%
NIG	5,196	2.4%
OGU	13,510	6.3%
OND	7,977	3.7%
OSU	7,513	3.5%
OYO	7,639	3.6%
PLA	5,789	2.7%
RIV	4,454	2.1%
SOK	2,089	1.0%
TAR	2,996	1.4%
YOB	2,064	1.0%
ZAM	1,304	0.6%
FCT	1,590	0.7%
NON	70	0.0%
TOTAL	213,368	100.0%

SOURCE: 9TH Annual Report, Federal Character Commission Abuja.

TABLE 3:

Consolidated manpower statistics for the year 2005: Federal civil service Staff Distribution by state of origin from Grade Level 01-17

STATES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
ABIA	5,022	3.5%
ADA	3,257	2.2%
AKW	7,504	5.2%
ANA	5,079	3.5%
BAU	2,394	3.5%
BAY	1,499	1.0%
BEN	5,848	4.0%
BOR	2,951	2.0%
CRO	4,018	2.8%
DEL	7,291	5.0%

EBO	1,003	0.7%
EDO	6,914	4.8%
EKI	3,662	2.5%
ENU	3,899	2.7%
GOM	1,797	1.2%
IMO	9,235	6.4%
JIG	1,006	0.8%
KAD	5,144	3.5%
KAN	2,781	1.9%
KAT	2,865	2.0%
KEB	1,883	1.3%
KOG	7,459	5.1%
KWA	3,970	2.7%
LAG	4,419	3.0%
NAS	2,332	1.6%
NIG	3,744	2.6%
OGU	9,148	6.3%
OND	5,372	3.7%
OSU	5,045	3.5%
OYO	5,186	3.6%
PLA	3,839	2.6%
RIV	2,995	2.1%
SOK	1,226	0.8%
TAR	1,820	1.3%
YOB	1,335	0.9%
ZAM	829	0.6%
FCT	1,284	0.9%
NON	50	0.0%
TOTAL	145,195	100.0%

SOURCE: 10th Annual Report, Federal Character Commission Abuja.

DATA ANALYSIS

The consolidated manpower statistics distributed by state origin in the Federal civil service as well as the political office holders in the categories of ministers, permanent secretaries and ambassadors with the period of 2003-2005 are analysed below. The distributed is however measured against the prescribed formula of 2.5% lower to 3.0% upper limits of representatives by each state of the federation including federal capital territory, Abuja.

TABLE 7:

The table shows the distribution of consolidated manpower statistics of 220, 263 staff on GL 01-17 by state of origin in the federal civil service in 2003. The number of states in each percentage is shown in the table below.

Percentage (%)	0.7% - 2.4%	2.5% - 3.0%	3.1% and above
No. Of states	18	5	14

Sources: Research Survey, 2008

From the distribution above, eighteen (18) states constituted below the ideal range of 2.5% lower limit of presentation while fourteen (14) states each constituted above the 3.0% upper limit. Five (5) states however constituted a percentage within the prescribed ideal range.

TABLE 8:

This table presents the distribution of consolidated manpower statistics of 213,368 staff on GL 01-17 by state of origin in the federal, civil service in 2004.

The number of states in each percentage is shown in the table below.

Percentage (%)	0.6% - 2.4%	2.5% - 3.0%	3.1% and above
No. Of states	18	6	13

Sources: Research Survey, 2008

The distribution above, eighteen (18) states constituted below the 2.5% lower limit of presentation while thirteen (13) states each constituted above the 3.0% upper limit. Only six (6) states constituted percentage within the prescribed formulae.

TABLE 9:

The table shows the distribution of consolidated manpower statistics of 145,195 staff on GL 01-17 by state of origin in the federal civil service in 2005.

The number of states in each percentage is shown in the table below.

Percentage (%)	0.6% - 2.4%	2.5% - 3.0%	3.1% and above
No. Of states	1.7	7	13-

Sources: Research Survey, 2008

From the above, only seven (7) states fell within the ideal range of 2.5% - 3.0% representation. Seventeen (17) states constituted below the 2.5%, lower limit representation whereas thirteen (13) states constituted above 3.0% upper limit representation.

V. Conclusion And Suggestions

It is obvious that the feeling of marginalization by some parts of the country is hindering the spirit of oneness or united we stand which federalism we adopted seek to foster unity out of diversity. Given this fact, the government before two decades ago devised, appropriate measure to address the menace of marginalization in terms of running the state affairs through public policy pronouncement which gave rise to federal character of Nigeria.

However, in attempt to ascertain the effectiveness of federal character in creating ethnic balancing in the employment arena and political appointment into federal establishments, this research work discovered and conclude that federal character has not indeed achieve its objective in the areas and period covered by the study.

This is informed by lack of fair representation of the states in federal establishment as earlier prescribed by the formulae of about 2.5% to 3.0% representation by each state of the federation. Some states were noted throughout the period covered to be under-represented while some states were over-represented and only very few states were adequately represented.

Hence, unless and until positive effort is made in curbing this ill feeling (marginalization) otherwise the sustenance of the federal order in Nigeria future will be difficult if not greatly contemplated.

To this end, suggestions for improving the situation are expressed below;

1. The existing imbalance in the federal civil service needs to be addressed. This does not necessarily mean that a resort should be made to retrenchment policy but the gap can be bridged in the future by simply employing more from the under-represented states or sections and less from the over-presented states or sections. This will in due course bring a balance in the sectional or states representation in the federal civil service.
2. To provide a level play ground for merit to enthrone, efforts should be made to give equal access to education to all Nigerians, to bridge the educational disparities among the sections and to give opportunities for further training and education to serving staff.

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