

## **TRUE FEDERALISM AND RESOURCE CONTROL: A REMEDY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The focus of this study is to examine the relationship between resource control and sustainable development in a federal experiment and also to bring to the interconnection and interrelatedness of the two variables and to achieve a peaceful coexistence, political stability and sustainable development in Nigeria. Theoretically, this paper adopted the game theory as its theoretical framework; the study relied solely on secondary data which has qualitative information. The objective of this study is to carefully establish that true federalism is meant to allow the component states harness their own resources and pay a certain percentage of tax to the central government this was the practice in Nigeria during the regional government system that was destroyed by the military. And that resources control if allowed have the tendency of helping Nigerians economic pace of development and will stabilize in the polity and at the end will result to sustainable development in the entire Nigerian state. Therefore, true federalism should be practiced by Nigerian government, state should have the constitutional right to manage and control their resources and pay tax to the central government, the central government should from time to time intervene to render aids and technical assistance to any state that is in need, these will help to maintain peaceful coexistence and accelerate sustainable development in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** True Federalism, Resource Control, Remedy, Sustainable Development, Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

In the early face of the Nigerian federalism between 1954-1966 both political and economic powers were shared. This was the situation where the various region were managing and controlling their natural resources such as palm oil, ground nuts and cocoa based on the region the Eastern, Northern and Western respectively, and pay a stipulated percentage of tax was paid to the central government until the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil war in 1967-1970. After the civil war, the Nigerian military destroyed the region system by creating the twelve (12) states structure and reversed the federal formula to a unitary type of practice at the discovery of oil at Oloibiri the then Eastern region. The reversal resulted to the federal government taking over the control of the oil product and resort to paying insignificant derivation percentage to the oil producing states of the Niger Delta, and promulgated Decree four that appropriated all lands to the control of the federal government. This act of the central government has retarded the competitive tempo that had existed during the regional period instead of spurning states to concentrate on harnessing their own resources rather than depending on oil economy alone. The objective of this study is to illuminate the dividend

derivable when true federalism was practiced and states control and manage their natural resources as it ought to and remit specific percentage to the central government.

It is also reasonable to point out that there is need for improved true federalism which will take into account the way the fabric of the society is constituted and how power is perceived in such a culture. This means the adoption of a new form of federalism that would fulfill the aspirations of the people. In fact, true federal system which promotes co-operation also enhances the democratic process and gives it greater vitality.

It is plausible to argue that the socio-political conditions in which the federal system was introduced in the 1950s had built-in mechanism for failure, which led the country to drift from one crisis to another after independence the Nigerian political class must be judged a failure in terms of social engineering and nation-building since 1945.

In the present situation, it would be difficult for new institutions to induce appropriate changes unless the political culture of the society, with reference to the political system, is internalized by the population. This will undoubtedly enhance future political development.

Nonetheless, the problem, of the present also originate from the fact that structure of power is such that government rarely operates in accordance with the federal principle even though Nigeria's post-independence constitutions can be described as federal. The states must not be mere administrative units but political units with separate powers properly defined in the constitution.

The constitutional assignment of powers and functions between the central government and component states can take several forms but the distribution of powers remains an essential element. There is therefore, the need to reformulate the constitution of Nigeria on a truly federal basis which takes full account of Nigeria's social diversity. Such a construction would provide the legal framework for monitoring intergovernmental relations, enabling the society, through its representatives or monitoring agents, to focus attention on the problems and future of the federal system.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted the Games theory, the Game theory is believed to have been formalized in the 1940's however, it has a long prehistory, evidence of elements of game theoretic reasoning, proponent of the game theory was an American Mathematician John Von Neumann (1903-1957) and also abound in the works of Plato, Thomas Hobbes, Jean J. Rousseau and Dodgson, etc. Game theory is "the mathematical theory of situations in which two or more players have a choice of decisions (strategies); where the outcome depends on all the strategies; and where each player has a set of preferences defined over the outcomes" (Blackburn, 2005, p. 34).

The important area of this theory for this study is the bargaining theory and decision theory. The bargaining theory is concerned with a discipline ploy of reaching an agreement and understanding between parties over a product or resources while the decision theory is basically a matter of alternative optional choice of decision over loss or profitable benefits with

the understanding of the risk involved (Blackburn, 2005, p. 34). According to John Von Neumann, game theory created strategies that can be adopted during competitions or conflicts that will eventually result to series of consequences in war time, development process or decision-making process Bothamley, (1993, p.221), game theory according to Robert Abrarns in Bothamley, (1993, p. 222) is applied in the understanding of competitive games where “individuals and institutions pursue their rational and predict maximum self interests. They do so in a manner analogous to games players trying to calculate not only their own advantages, but the likely moves of their opponents. Game theory is conceptualized as a series of political thought about decision-making in a considerable manner wherever there is crisis and players interest are centered on benefits and losses.

### **Game Theory and Political Gaming**

Game theory, when applied to the field of contemporary political analysis is a theory of rational behaviour in the face of opponents who are equally expected to behave rationally. Rational behaviour means that each player has a set of well defined and mutually consistent basic objectives and will choose his actual policies in accordance with these objectives with any mistakes. The essence of game is that it involves decision makers with goals and objectives whose fate are inter-wined. Each player(s) is faced with cross purposes of optimization problem. His or their plans must be adjusted not only to suit his own desires and abilities but also to suit those of others. Each player has at his disposal some set of resources, values, beliefs and attitudes.

### **Basic assumptions of game theory**

1. There must be two or more people or groups with two or more competing interests.
2. Each agent or group has a choice of the subject which has alternative strategies.
3. The game involves a single choice of strategy by each of the groups or agents.
4. There must be units of evaluation.
5. The game must have a beginning.
6. The game must have an end or pay off.
7. The strategies adopted by the players determine the outcome of the game.
8. The players are programmed to be acting in a rational situation.
9. The game involved a single choice strategy by each of the agents.
10. The game has to do with best type of choices in any given situation.
11. In the process of the game any move made by a player is known as a capture and this capture determines the pay-off.

It is glaringly understandable that the game theory is the adequate to be used in analyzing the situation concerning true federalism and resource control considering all aspect of life which that of Nigeria's futurology is very precarious. The competition between the producing states and other parts of Nigeria based on self interest in the decision-making process concerning oil production is basically what is causing most of the violent crisis and conflictual agitation over the relegation of oil producing Niger Delta states. Therefore this work agree that there is need to reverse the process and maintain the true structures of federalism and natural resources management and control in Nigeria to guarantee the achievement of peaceful coexistence, political stability and more importantly sustainable development.

### **Importance of the game theory in this work**

Game theory is very useful in the analysis of coalition politics as well as in the analysis of international politics and foreign policy. Issues such as the under mentioned are usually vital in coalition politics.

- The political strength of such party.
- The strategies available to each actor
- Degree of risk involved
- The cost of entering the coalition, including the amount of resources to expend in the bargaining process.
- The values each coalition partner places on the various outcome payoffs and losses.
- What the overall outcome of the coalition for each partners is.

The theory is specifically relevant in the analysis of arms control and disarmament or of de-escalation between bitterly opposed ideological adversaries, this is because both sides could reap real gains from mutual trust, but these gains are outweighed by the tempting rewards for successful cheating and by the penalties for being trustful and cheated.

Be these as they may, game theory modes have been challenged as ones that needed improvements, which is difficult to come by. For these models to resemble more nearly the realities of politics both national and international improved game models would have to take explicit account of the costs of thinking and decision making. This is because in classic game theory, it is assumed that players can calculate all possible consequences, and that they can do so instantly, completely, and at no cost in time, effort or resources. But in political reality, this is not true. The limitations for politics, and for many other human decision situations are quite many; as in most of them, the total of combination of all possible moves and outcome for all parties is far too great to permit anything like exhaustive calculation within the time available. Deutsch, (1988 p.161).

Finally, as a result of the mathematical origin of the game theory, it underplays the influence of social and cultural; impulses in political decision making, especially at the international scene where societies and cultures interact through state power.

### **Federalism**

"Federalism itself was coined by British conservative Edmund Burke", Safire, (1978 p.63). And often the federal government does systematically encourage both the state and local governments to meet the needs and aspirations of the people instead of federal intervention which is what is called creative federalism. Historically, America, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, etc have the link to the trace of modern federalism respectively. In 1787, America adopted their constitution marking the emergence of a federal state, with the consideration to political, economic and social matters in conjunction with powerful influence over countries which are the most profound reasons why states come together as one sovereign state, Dode, (2008, p. 45)

A federal government is a type of political system in which the powers of government are divided between self-governing parts and the national/central government, each of these parts

operating within its jurisdiction or spheres as defined or laid down by the constitution. Mbah, (2018, p. 127)

Technically put, it is the distribution of power between the inclusive government and the federating units. In a federation there are usually two models in constitutional structure. The first model has an exclusive legislative list embracing items, which are reserved for the central government and a reserves clause stipulating that any item this is not in the exclusive list is reserved for the state. The second model is that, provides for exclusive legislative list embracing items reserved for the inclusive government and a concurrent legislative list where items on which the inclusive government and the federating units could legislate are included. Accompanying this model is a tacit provision that a central law, that is law made by the inclusive government would take precedence over laws made by the other tiers and a reserved law that states that items which are not in any of the lists would come under the competence of one of the units that make up the federation, Akinyemi, (1978, p.2) in Mbah, (2018, p.128)

In Nigeria, second schedule of the 1999 constitution (as amended) dealing with the legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria adopted the line of the second model. Here part 1 of that schedule dealt with exclusive legislative list containing sixty seven (67) items while part 11 dealt with concurrent legislative list which contained twelve (12) main items subdivided into thirty subsidiaries in which both the Federal or the Central and the State Governments can legislate upon (Mbah, 2018, p.128). Federalism is “a political system in which power is vested in an association of constituents, rather than in a central government set over and above them (Blackburn, 2005, Pp. 131-132). In addition, true federalism is authentically, described as a system of political organization uniting separate states or other units in such a way as to allow each to remain a political entity

A federal system differs from other methods of organizing states in being based on a contractual agreement by separate government to share power among themselves. Although it has been augured that there is no perfect existing federalism, that federalism is a utopic concept that is unattainable in real form rather, that every system organization of constituent states coming together as one is just a replica of federalism that they do practice (Ogali, 2012 p.123).

### **Federalism in Nigeria**

Federalism is a form of governmental pattern that focuses on with basic objective of unifying different independent regions or states into one recognized state entity that is availed with social, economic and political benefits strengthens the sovereign state. it has identifiable characteristics of power sharing among the different levels of government, a rigid, written constitution and relative independence of the component states among others. Although Nigeria got independent on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1960, Nigeria's federalism started from 1954 and maintained a true practice of federalism up to 1966 before the Army struck in a military coup'detat in 1966. During the Nigeria's regional era, there was proper federal division of political power between the federal and the regions accordingly. This federal system practiced by Nigerian government then was truncated by the military and turned it into one sort of unitary practice that culminated to the creation of the first twelve states by Gen. Gowon and more subsequently were created the Nigerian civil war in the succeeding military regimes in

Nigeria. However, Nigeria's federalism was an imposition by the colonial master (British) and not like the western federalism of Jeffersons, etc which were of rational outcome of individual group discussions concerning sovereign independent states that have the interest to come together as one to strengthen their political and economic powers and by extension, grant justice and good governance in unity for the benefit of all citizens. For federalism to have remarkable meaning, the individual freedom is the crux of political inquiry and such political research is been determined by the type of political governance that rules him as a citizen of the state, observe and obey that government's laws. This is why freedom, liberty, justice and equity are the cardinal features of true federalism as it is practiced in the west. For a country to have developmental orientation there must be strong institutions of government and rule of law that will always be a compass to drive the society towards a consistent and stable development that will culminate to sustainable development.

Furthermore, "federalism is a very big task", only a shared political culture cushion the troubles associated with a federal system of government hence federalism cannot remedy all things. In a federal system of government, there exist devolution of powers and authorities with designated function between the federal, state and local governments. Legally, they monopolize their various powers and authorities because it is constitutional based. This condition resulted to emergence of these pronounced levels of government operations in a defined federal state. Although their various laws varies in strength, implying that when a federal and state laws coincide, to its level of inconsistency, that of the federal laws reigns supreme while the state laws will be less valid or void. Therefore, in spite of the fact that both the federal, state and local powers are constitutionally protected does not mean that both have absolute equilibrium of governmental power rather it implies just equal status.

Finally, the Nigeria's experience speaks more clearly, because it was not a negotiable federalism that the people were involved in the decision to fuse the territories together, rather was an exogenous force and influence that culminated to that state. This situation resulted to adulterated federal practice that can be seen to be false practice of federalism that is prone to domination of the stronger over the weaker. Practices among others include; high level of less liberty, freedom and justice; selfish and unpatriotic leadership; invisibility of political obligation that commands disobedience to law; undermining rule of law and constitutional negligence both the government and some of the citizens, very strong central federal government with negligence on the welfare of citizens life and social security, protection of life and property etc.

### **Resource Control and Fiscal federalism**

Resource control stands for administration, dictative and powerful influential right over endowments within, inside and on a particular area of an environment or human person. However, viewing resources control from the South-South perspective, it stands for "the land, waters, forest, air and all other resources within and around them whether physical or spiritual. A control of this is one straggle that most nations have been involved at one point or the other. Thus, "resource control is now a term used to describe the desire and determination of the communities and people whose resources and or sources of survival have been taken away undemocratically and possibly violently and therefore unjustly", Douglas, (2001 p.3). it is worthy to note that the colonial masters were much more interested

in the wealth accumulation in line with the world economic system which after independence, those local political leaders emerged as the pioneers of political elites continued the implementation of the already drafted exploitative plan of the colonizers the proper development of Nigeria's economy and Nigerians as well. Given the pluralistic nature of Nigeria, with multiple ethnic nationalities, contest for power after independence becomes a dangerous struggle because the essence is purely to control political and economic powers, which by extension is to control all the natural resources and determine the pace, distribution and exclusion as the case maybe (Akinsanye and Ayode 2014, p.103).

Moreover, fiscal federalism is an entitle revenue generation influence and right to carry out functional projects allocated to the different levels of government from their generated revenue levied on citizens, organizations and cooperate firms in a sovereign federal state. Also, fiscal federalism in the words of Adebayo Adedeji is "the practice of true federalism and natural law in which the federating units express their rights to private control the natural resources within their borders, and make agreed contributions towards the maintenance of common services of the sovereign nation state to which they belong", Adedei, (2001, p.21). Whereas, considering the social aspect of fiscal federalism, Ariyo's concern is that "all social and political institutions should be established in a manner that upholds or positively modifies, the indigenous culture of a given society" Ariyo, (1999, p. 235) Again fiscal federalism is viewed as fiscal authority sharing between different levels of government in a federal sovereign state over taxations and expenditure administration and control (Oriakhi, 2004).

### **Sustainable development**

Sustainable development was conceptualized in 1987 by Brundtland commission of environment and development as "development that can meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs" Rogers, Jalal, Boyb, (2008 p.11). Sustainable development is an investment are properly managed to be able to consistently provide for both the present and the future demands without disrupting sustained status quo over time on technological development and institutional change. The most possible ways of achieving sustainable development in a society are to ensure that socio-economic development and environmental protection are strengthened.

Moreover, commitments geared towards achievement of sustainable development includes; guaranteeing technology transfer, advancement and human resource development through training, amelioration of poverty level and under development, gender equality and most importantly developed nations aid and technical assistance to developing countries. It is of necessity because developed countries to a large extent contributes to environmental degradation and high rate of unemployment that result to high level of poverty in the undeveloped countries of the South, especially Nigeria with an increasing unemployment rate of about 13.9% in 2015 to 14.2% in 2016 up to the present (Kazeem, 2017). Which later increased from 14.2% to 16.2% then to 18.8% in 2017 and it is still increasing much more presently (Tony, 2017). Sustainable development cannot be achieved when there is a high rate of unemployment which implies increase in the rate of poverty.

### **Political Stability**

In the dynamic stability and steady-development of the government and society Igwe, (2002 p.344) averred that a state can be said to be politically stable when the government of the day is carrying out her functions without a conspicuous violent conflict, rebel activities and incursion, politically motivated demonstrations by the citizens that is capable of disrupting the governance process. Whereas on the contrary, when all the above mentioned situations and more arise, such state is said to be politically unstable. Therefore, political instability is the outright disruptions of the governing process, development and societal peace in any state. It can be misconstrued and differently interpreted by the opposing factions because what appears to be good and peaceful political order by those at advantage might be seen and interpreted as instability in the polity by the rivalries which could amount to violent opposition to overthrow the government (Igwe, 2002). However, "the problems of stability and instability in most third world states can be inter-linked to three domestic and external sources: the usually arbitrary nature of colonialism (the colonial boundaries, the strange political institutions, the security arrangements and leaderships left behind, and the continuing post-independence policies of neo-colonial imperialism), bad leadership and endless external intervention (Igwe, 2002 p.335). Exogenous forces can ferment unfounded propaganda against any of the newly independent states if they see the leadership of their government as a threat to their interest, they will inspire and sponsor some unpatriotic and aggrieved citizens to destabilize the government as well as overthrowing the government. on the other hand, they can create hostilities or political encirclement so that the targeted country's neighbouring states will be in logger head with that particular state, all is just to ensure that there is unstable government so that they can there is unstable government so that they can have their ways (Igwe, 2002).

### **Resource Control and Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

In a true practice federal system, component states are in control of their resources and have a certain percentage paid to the central coffer, which the federal government uses at its own discretion and most often render financial aid to states that are in dare need of their assistance. This will encourage all states to strive and improve on their entrepreneurial flair according to their own strength with the realization that all fingers are not equal. It will equally lead to discoveries and radical thinking on technological advancement of production to concentrate, based on their comparative advantage, etc. implying that very many people at that point will be thinking out of the box to make things happen in a more creative manner with novel methodological approaches. Because not all countries are majorly depending on oil revenue as their source of survival, as it is in the case of Nigeria. Considering the rate at which technological advancement is making waves in developed countries, it is helping to ameliorate the degree of environmental pollution which is a basis constraint to the achievement of sustainable development globally.

Interestingly, it is justifiable to be in charge directly and manage your natural gift of God which one is directly or indirectly entitled to its management. It will build confidence in people's line of thought which will result to self-reliance, lack of injustice, tolerance and progressive development that will over time culminated to sustainable development. On the contrary, prior to oil discovery in Nigeria, there were resources from the different regions such as palm oil, cocoa and groundnut from Eastern, Western and Northern regions



respectively that sustained both the country and the regions as well. The discovery of oil at Oloibiri community, which is in the present Bayelsa State tend to spoil the economic structures on ground in Nigeria. It appears that the Nigerian State is adopting the British colonial strategy of exploitation and expropriation of a particular location to be used for the improvement of another location at the detriment of the former. This to a large extent, breeds rift, grudge and violent conflict that is destructive which resource control will definitely curb and restore harmony and co-operative existence among the different ethnic group that make up Nigerian State.

Finally, violent conflicts and political instabilities do not promote development rather, retard the pace at which its going. And the series of conflictual agitation by some states in Nigeria, especially those of Niger Delta areas are constraining the acceleration of development. Having clear understanding that development must be consistent over a period of time sustained without disruptions before sustainable development can be achieved. Sustainable development cannot be feasible then, where violent conflicts are destroying the environment quality economic growth, social equality and causing political instability because of the quest for resource control or restructuring to confirm to the principles of federalism in Nigeria

### **Conclusion**

In a federal system of government practiced in Nigeria that is more like a unitary system of government where powers are concentrated at the centre is posing a huge problem in the peaceful co-existence of the different groups in Nigeria. Countries that have federating units in the West, do rationally apply the principles and structures of a true federalist state quite unlike the African brand of federalism especially, Nigerian federalism where that has been militarized over the years and turned into a unitary kind of administration where states that are within the Niger Delta zone are agitating for resource control.

These series of resource control agitations have brought a lot of negative consequences on the economy of Nigeria, retard peaceful relations caused continuous political instability or political disorder. This in the end, has resulted to a slouch pace in the developmental strives, thereby making it very difficult for Nigeria to attain a sustained development over the years on record. The destabilizations have caused a lot of job loss and instead of decreased on the number of unemployed youths in Nigeria, rather, there is a continuous increase on the number of youths that are unemployed. The situation has increased the rate of hunger and starvation, sickness, deceases and death in Nigeria, hence, the call for true federal government to restructure the system and grant resource control to all states; which obviously will usher in peace and much more development that will be in continuum as to culminate to achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should create a special intervention fund for an increase in infrastructure base as to reduce poverty rate in Nigeria.

2. Government should indulge in executing big projects because it ignites a sense of purpose or choice of purpose to the youths as to increase employment by engaging the youths which will drastically reduce unemployment rate.
3. Nigerian federalism should be restructured to practice a true federalism as it were prior to the outbreak of Nigeria civil war.
4. Resource control should be granted to all states to have the constitutional right to manage and control their own resources to help ignite competition among states which will aid accelerated development in Nigeria.
5. A review of the Nigerian constitution is of utmost necessity to capture the issues that is causing most of the agitations.
6. There should be an advanced review of the age and qualifications in all ramifications for those intending to contest for political positions as aspiring political leaders for credibility and responsibility sakes.
7. Federal government should from time to time intervene on state and local government matters to render aids and technical assistance to them when necessary and in dire need as to fulfill creative federalism.
8. The study of entrepreneurial subject and courses in secondary schools and tertiary schools should be intensified and made compulsory for students as to be meaningful after leaving school.
9. Public and private sectors should try and absorb some of these unemployed graduate and other youths of different categories by building more industrial estates than living a flamboyant and superfluous life.

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