

**FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLE AND THE CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOME FEDERAL APPOINTMENTS UNDER JONATHAN AND BUHARI'S
ADMINISTRATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian state is heterogeneous both in character and content. Every effort to manage this diversity has so far not yielded desired result. This paper examines the Federal Character Principle as one of the instruments intended to manage our obvious diversity such that no part of the country is marginalized or feels marginalized or sidelined. The paper observed that the Federal Character Principle have not achieved its set objectives, which is national unity and loyalty. It draws from secondary sources and discovered that there are factors that make equitable distribution of public appointments difficult which is beyond the powers of the federal character commission. The major argument of this paper is that if the Federal Character Commission as an organization expected to enforce this principle is not restructured and given more power to sanction individuals and organizations that are found of circumventing the relevant guidelines in this regards, the hope of national unity and loyalty will continue to be a mirage. It concludes that national unity is necessary for the attainment of any sustainable development effort.

Keywords: Federalism, Federal Character, National Integration, Appointment, Sustainable Development, Diversity

INTRODUCTION:

The heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state, evidenced by over 400 lingo-cultural groups without doubt predicates the conflict and acrimonious character of the country. The Berlin conference of 1884, which partitioned the continent of Africa, without necessary consultation or understanding of the peculiar nature and character of the African people created artificial boundaries which today is the breeding ground for conflict and crises. Corroborating this view, Elaigwu, (2014), observed that Hausa's in Northern Nigeria with members of their family living in Niger republic were separated from their kith and kin through this artificial boundaries. The same goes for the Yoruba's in Western Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. The same fate befalls the Ewes in Togo and Ghana, the Somalis' in Somalia and Ethiopia; and the Masais in Tanzania and Kenya. Apart from these, what later became known as Nigeria comprised three colonial territories administered by the British Colonial administration, even though administered separately, (Ayoade, in Amuwo 2004). The colony of Lagos with its Yoruba hinterland was administered by the Colonial Office. By 1900, it became the colony and protectorate of Lagos. The Niger Coast Protectorate comprising the Bights of Benin and Biafra with their hinterlands was administered by the foreign office. Ayoade, in Amuwo (2004), further observed that, what later became the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and came under the Colonial Office. By 1914 when the Northern and Southern Protectorate was amalgamated, it was simply for colonial administrative convenience. No effort was made to integrate this obviously different social system. Agbodike, in Amuwo (2004) observed that the root cause of disunity in Nigeria can be traced to certain colonial policies and practices in the country, which includes piecemeal constitutional framework for the Northern and Southern segments of the country. He also pointed out that the introduction of the Clifford constitution in 1922 and the establishment of the Legislative council for Lagos which also legislates for the southern Nigeria with the exclusion of the North. In this regards, the southerners were incrementally brought in to participate in the legislative affairs of their region ahead of their Northern counterparts. This situation continues until 1947 when the North and the South were brought together under one legislative authority for the first time. This situation accentuates political diversities in an already diverse country, *This Week*, 14th, March, 1988. As if that was not enough, the Richard Constitution further splits the country into three regions The North, the East and the West. Each of these regions was dominated by majority Ethnic group, with the Hausa-Fulani, dominating the North, the Ibos dominating the East, and the Yoruba dominating the West. As the regions emerged loyalty now is more to the region than to the nation this is the real challenge of national integration. Regional loyalty was taken too far to the extent that each region nurse the fear of been dominated by the other and therefore there is mutual distrust.

The degree of distrust and mutual suspicion can better be appreciated during electioneering process, appointments of key national political positions and allocation of projects. The recently conducted 2015 general election in Nigeria, were the result embarrassed party calculations and boundaries, but rather follow regional sentiments and ethno religious affiliation is another sad reminder of the degree of our inability to embrace one another in spite of our diverse cultural and ethno-religious diversity. The implication is that our quest for development and sustainability will be seriously challenged. Rather than voting on the premise of competence and credibility of the aspiring candidate, votes will be cast on the altar of ethno-religious consideration; which may not deliver good governance which is necessary for sustainable development. This work is set to reveal issues that have made our national integration and unity impossible, it is also the objective of this paper to recommend systematic steps that can bring about the much desired national unity and integration. This paper is subdivided

into five parts. The first part which is the introduction, is concerned with the background of the study, next is the conceptual clarification. This avails us with the perception of different scholars on key words, after this is the third part which is analysis of data and discussion. The fourth part will focus on the research finding and conclusion while the fifth part will cascade on policy recommendation.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Federalism: Federalism is said to be a “compromise solution in multinational states between two types of self-determination: the determination to maintain a supranational framework of government which guarantees security for all in the state-nation, on the one hand, and the self-determination of the component groups to retain their individual identities on the other”, (Elaigwu 1984). This definition captures the real essence of federalism as it emphasizes the existence of at least two levels of government. A political arrangement that makes it possible for people of different culture, language, and identity to come together and form a central government that guarantees their future and security and at the same time ensures that their identity is not eroded. This view was corroborated by Inman, (2008), cited in Ogundiya, (2012), as he contends that “any form of government which brings together in an alliance, constituent governments, each of which recognizes the legitimacy of an overarching central government to make decisions on some matters once exclusively the responsibility of the individual member states”. The major contention of this view is that for any form of government to qualify as federal system it must have element of an alliance of probably a sovereign government, and at the same time acknowledge the fact that there is a central government that holds all the constituents parts together. Jackson, (2006), conceptualizes federalism when he opined that federalism is a division of jurisdiction and authority between at least two levels of government. This division is meant to ensure administrative effectiveness and efficiency in such a way that local issues are addressed without neglecting national concerns. However, Friedrich perceives Federalism as a process rather than a design. It is the process of federalizing as well as the particular pattern or design which the in-group relations exhibit at a particular time... (Friedrich, 1968). Scholars, like Anyebe, differ with this persuasion. He contends that the constitution provides for a polycentric political system where there are many centers of decision making; each centre being formally independent of the other and bearing responsibility for the basic social services, (Anyebe, 1995) cited in (Abdulkarim 2014). From the foregoing, it is apparent that the philosophy of federalism is innovative, dynamic and indeed sensitive to the need, aspiration and concerns that may not be apparent now but emerge for a stable and enduring politics of generations to come. This is in consonance with the view of proponents of sustainable development.

The doyen of federalism as a political philosophy, K. C. Wheare advanced a succinct view, “...by federal principle I mean that method of dividing powers so that general and regional government are each within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent. These principles are as follows:

- The division of powers among levels of government
- Written constitution inculcating these divisions
- Co-ordinate supremacy of the two levels of government with regards to their respective function.
- The power to amend the constitution to be exercised by both levels of government acting in cooperation

- The existence of an independent judiciary or body to adjudicate dispute arising from clash of powers between the federal and state governments
- Financial independence of both levels of government as “financial subordination makes an end of federalism”.

Livingstone’s reformation view does not agree totally with Wheares’, he reacted against what he described as Wheares’ judicial approach to the problems of federal government. In this regards Livingstone (1956), cited in Abdulkarim (2014) posits that the essence of federalism lies not in the institutional structure but in the society itself. Federal government is a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected.

In a nutshell, the views of these scholars find a common ground in the fact that federal system has at least two levels of government while one takes care of the issues that affects all, the other is concerned with issues that are specific to their constituency in other words general issues are the concern of the general government while regional issues are the preoccupation of the regional government. This is sometimes described as classical federalism. The main objective of this kind of system is to promote and ensure unity in diversity, in a manner that will create the enabling environment for sustainable development. It is important to emphasize that as desirable as sustainable development is, it require a conducive environment for it to foster.

THE FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLE

In Nigeria, the federal character was the brain-child of the constitutional drafting committee of 1975/1976. (Abubakar, in Amuwo, 2004). The committee aimed at coming up with a constitution that will bring about national integration and unity which over the years proved elusive. It is the work of this committee that eventually produced the 1979 constitution. The 1979 constitution section 14(3), defines the federal character from an operational and objective point of view. Thus

“the composition of the government of 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”. On the mind of the framers of the 1979 constitution was a strong desire to promote equity and unity. This was intended to be achieved by ensuring that every region and state has access to political and administrative position in the sector. A situation whereby one ethnic group or tribe dominates government or it agencies is no longer encouraged. Ahmed (2014) conceptualizes the federal character when he opined that “federal character is a mechanism for ethnic balancing; it is an instrument for ensuring unity in diversity by balancing official appointments between groups”. Corroborating this view, Adeyeri (2010), perceived federal character as “A principle of federation with instrumentality of ensuring unity in diversity by balancing official appointments, admissions and citing of government projects between groups, states and local governments in the public service”. This certainly will give every part of the country a sense of belonging. When every segment of the country has a sense of belonging, the process of nation building and sustainable development will be attained with less stress. As observed earlier Dalhatu, (2014) in Abdulkarim (2014), believed that the aim or objective of the federal character is to reduce the level of marginalization of some states,

minority ethnic groups among others in the appointment into public service civil service, Armed Forces, Police, Parastatals and admission into public institutions and citing of government projects in different parts of the country. In this regards, government is not oblivious of the fact that every ethnic and religious groups need to have a sense of involvement. This is actualized by the ministerial appointments, recruitment into the civil services, Armed Forces, Parastatals and admissions into tertiary institutions and colleges. The United States of America has a similar arrangement, it is called affirmative action. The federations of India call it the quota system. (Adeyeri, 2010). Therefore, it is a common practice by countries characterized with diversity and heterogeneity to solve the puzzle by a principle that can ensure unity in diversity.

The act establishing the Federal Character Commission, the body empowered by law to “promote, monitor and enforce compliance with the principles of the proportional sharing of all bureaucratic, economic, media and political posts at all levels of government” (Act 34, 1996). In a clear term the essence of the commission is first to promote proportional sharing of all bureaucratic, economic, media and political posts at all levels of government. This is why the same Act, section 4.1a, stipulates that the commission is expected to work out an equitable formular, for the distribution of all cadres of posts in the civil and public services of the Federation, the states are not left out. There are serious issues with this stipulation. One of the issues is that the law tends to perceive states equally both in terms of population and human capital development. As we see in table two and three bellow with the discussions that follow the table which shows that human capital development level is not equal across the states of the federation. The idea of treating unequal equally in the first instance in itself is faulty. As much as it is important to find a way of integrating the various ethnic nationally that make up the nation-state called Nigeria, it appears that the equitable distribution proposition need to be reconsidered. It also appears that the Federal Character Commission is under the control of the Presidency. The implication is that any time the country unfortunately has a leader who does not believe in the Principle of proportional representation, the commission may not receive the necessary political backing that may be needed for it efficiency.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

National integration can be perceived as a psychological process involving the development of a feeling of unity, solidarity and cohesion in the hearts of the people. It is a sense of common citizenship and a feeling of loyalty to the nation. However, scholars prefer to define national integration first by defining each concept separately (i.e.) National and then Integration. In this regards Elaigwu, (2012), posits that the concept of a nation may refer to at least three categories of human groups. First, it may refer to “a stable, historically developed community of people with a territory, economic life, distinctive culture, and language in common”. Secondly, it may refer to “people of a territory united under a single government; country or state. Thirdly, a nation may refer to a “a people or tribe. It must however be emphasized that the second view seem much more suitable for the purpose of this studies. It states that “a nation is the people of territory united under a single government, country or state”. It is also referred to as a geo-political entity such as United States of America, Nigeria, South Africa, etc. This definition agrees with the view of international law, which conceives a nation as a sovereign state. Elaigwu, (2012), smartly distinguished nation from nations, when he observed that nations can exist within the nation-state or states-nations. On the other hand, the notion of integration can be seen as the process if fitting into a community, notably applied to visible (ethnic immigrant...) minorities. In the word of Karl Deutsch cited in Eliagwu, (2012), “integration is the attainment, within

a territory of a sense of community and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful community”. From the forgoing therefore, we can conveniently assert that national integration is a process by which constituent communities in a nation- state strive to attain a common sense of community within the parameter of constitutional institutional and procesual arrangements. Eliagwu, (2012) exclaimed that though we belong to different castes, religion, region and speak different languages we acknowledge the fact that we are all one. In other words they have found a common ground of co-operation and unity in spite of our diversity. In the same vein, Agbodike, (2004), conceptualized national integration as a process leading to political cohesion and sentiment of loyalty towards a central political authority and institutions by individuals belonging to different social groups or political units. National integration in the context of this work refers to the process of bringing the various Nigerian ethnic groups to cohere, on a continual **andsustainable** basis. Another notable view of integration is what is known as elite-mass concept. This referred to the minimum value of consensus that is necessary for the maintenance of political system, (Bello, 2012). This may be specifically on the objectives which the system intends or method of achieving the set objective. In other words it referred to the minimum acceptable procedure for conflict resolution. In this regards, Weiner, in Bello, (2012), opined that integration has to do with legal norms, with the legitimacy of constitutional framework and the procedure which it should operate.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study relies on the structural functional approach to analyze the issues considered. The structural functional approach provides a significant mechanism for the analysis of various social processes. In this regards, a social structure is perceived on the basis of the functions it perform. Ekhato, (2002). Notable scholars of this school are Gabriel Almond, David Apter, Talcott Parsons and Fred Riggs. The arguments of this theory are that social structure does not exist for nothing but rather exist to perform specific functions. Social structure in this regards, can be either ‘concrete’ or ‘analytic’. The concrete structures are those which have identifiable form (Ekhato, 2002), e.g. The Federal Character Commission, The Bureau of Public Enterprise, National Youth Service Corps, all have one thing in common they have departments and offices. While the ‘analytic’ is only identified as power and authority. Although it is believed that it is difficult to draw a clear-cut dividing line between the two.

This theory is relevant to the study because, the federal character principle has a clear objective, which is to enhance national integration. The multicultural, heterogeneous and obviously diverse nature of the Nigeria state, have naturally compel the framers of the constitution to come up with this principle. It must be noted that apart from the federal character principle, there are other mechanism used in Nigeria to manage the heterogeneous and diverse nature of the country. These include but not limited to the followings: state creation, National Youth Service Core, National Sport Competition, and so on.

EVALUATION OF THE FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLES

There seem to be a serious gap between intent and actual practice of the principle. Talih, (1987), posits that the federal character is an attempt to build a nation where equal opportunities abound and where every individual must feel that he or she has equal chance to participate without bias of ethnic affiliation. However, several years after it operations of the

commission, it appears that ethnic inequalities and governance seem to be unabated. This however cannot be blamed on the inefficiency of the federal character commission. There are factors that make this imbalance to persist that the commission cannot handle. For example the commission cannot determine who the next head of state becomes; the commission cannot determine the number of people who get admission into post secondary school; the commission cannot determine the spread of the professionals (doctors, architects, lawyers, engineers etc) in different geopolitical zones of the country, etc.

Table one: List of Nigerian Leaders from 1960 to 2015

| S/NO | DATE | IDENTITY | STATE | REGION |
|------|--|-------------------------|---------|---------------|
| 1 | 1 ST October 1960 to 15 th January 1966 | Tafawa Balewa | Bauchi | North East |
| 2 | 15 th January 1966 to 29 th July 1966 | Agunyi Ironsi | Abia | South East |
| 3 | July 29 th 1966 to July 29 th 1975 | Yakubu Gowon | Plateau | North Central |
| 4 | July 29 th 1975 to February 13 th 1976 | Murtala Muhammed | Kano | North Central |
| 5 | 13 th February 1976 to 1 st October 1979 | Olusegun Obasanjo | Ogun | South West |
| 6 | 1 st October 1979 to 31 st December 1983 | Shehu Shagari | Sokoto | North West |
| 7 | 31 st December 1983 to 27 th August 1985 | Muhammadu Buhari | Katsina | North West |
| 8 | 27 th August 1985 to 26 th August 1993 | Ibrahim Babangida | Niger | North Central |
| 9 | 26 th August 1993 to 17 th November 1993 | Eanest Shonekan | Ogun | South West |
| 10 | 17 th November 1993 to 8 th June 1998 | Sani Abacha | Kano | North West |
| 11 | 8 th June 1998 to 29 th May 1999 | Abdulsallam Abubakar | Niger | North Central |
| 12 | 29 th May 1999 to 29 th May 2007 | Olusegun Obasanjo | Ogun | South West |
| 13 | 29 th May 2007 to 5 th May 2010 | Umaru Musa Yaradua | Katsina | North West |
| 14 | 5 th May 2010 to 29 th May 2015 | Goodluck Jonathan | Bayelsa | South South |
| 15 | 29 th May 2015 to date | Muhammadu Buhari | Katsina | North West |

Source: Sunday Tribune, 7th August 1994, pp7-9, Ibadan, updated by the author.

From the table above we could see very clearly that the leadership of this country from the time of independence has been dominated by the Northern hegemony. Ten out of the fifteen regimes so far were headed by a Northerner, while the South had rule only five times. This has actually affected the spirit and intent of the federal character principle. It is noted however that, whosoever occupies the position of Chief Executive Officer of this country, possesses enormous power. He controls the national resources, and he has power to appoint by discretion. Although the National Assembly screen and approve the appointment of Ministers, Ambassador and other key positions the sentimental approach to appointment of public office holders is apparent. For example during the regime of the Late President Umaru Yar’adua’s regime Northerners occupy His Kitchen Cabinet (Eya and Nwankwere, 2010). This created a lot of acrimonious reaction in the body polity of the regime. Unfortunately, Umaru Musa Yar’adua died and Goodluck Jonathan became the president, by the evocation of the doctrine of necessity; subsequently he won an election conducted in April 2011. In spite of the fact that this is the first time in the history of Nigeria that a South/South Ijaw man will be in the saddle of the country, the post-election violence in the Northern region is a sad reminder of how deeply divided the country is, how sentimental the elites and opinion leaders are. It must be noted that the Northerners also complained of the Southern domination of strategic sector of the economy, this is more apparent in the bureaucracy. In this regards Adeosun, (2011) observed, it is not a deliberate policy to marginalize the North. It is so as a natural consequence of the educational gap between the North and the South as the table below indicates.

Table 2: Post-Primary Institutions and admission to Nigerian universities by zone of origin, 2000/2001

| Zone | % of National Population (2005 Census) | Number of all post-primary institutions in 1989 (& of total. | Number admitted to universities | Percentage of total university admissions |
|---------------|--|--|---------------------------------|---|
| North-East | 25.56 | 567 (9.7%) | 2341 | 4.7 |
| North-East | 13.55 | 343 (5.9%) | 1979 | 3.9 |
| North central | 13.47 | 1022 (17.5%) | 5597 | 11.1 |
| South-West | 19.7 | 1575 (27.0%) | 8763 | 17.4 |
| South-East | 11.7 | 1208 (20.7%) | 19820 | 39.4 |
| South-South | 15.0 | 1114 (19.1%) | 11734 | 23.3 |

Source: adapted from www.jambng.com; Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2001; Tell, November 14th 1994, p15.

The educational disparity between the North and South indicated above is a reflection of the neglect of western education by the North. For example 1947, only 251 Northerners were in Secondary Schools the figure represents only 2% of the total secondary schools enrolment in Nigeria. In the same vein 1965 secondary school enrolment in the Northern part increased to

15,276 juxtaposed to 180,907 enrolments to secondary school in the South. (Coleman, 1958:134, Mustapha, 2004:12), (cited in Adeosun, 2011). The consequence of the above scenario is that the North may be backward in terms of the production of skilled manpower that is required for public service. Adeosun, (2011), observed that in the 1960s, the North had only 7% of doctors, 4% engineers, and accountants 3% in Nigeria. In the same vein, Mustaphers (2008) research indicates that the Northern zone with 53% of population had only 10% of engineers, 15% of the Professors, 10% of architects, 25% of the Lawyers, 8% of bank executives and less than 2% of Insurance Operators. The table below shows how this affects staffing of Federal Bureaucracies.

Table: 3 Ethno-religious tendencies in the staffing of Federal Bureaucracies.

| Zone | Percentage in all the bureaucracy | Zone | Percentage in all the Bureaucracy |
|------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| NW (25.6) | 10.4 | SW (19.7%) | 24.9 |
| NE (13.6%) | 8.6 | SE (11.7%) | 16 |
| NC (13.5%) | 18.4 | SS (15.0%) | 20.7 |
| | Percentage in the Directorate | | Percentage in the Directorate |
| NW | 16.8 | SW | 24.4 |
| NE | 12.7 | SE | 13.4 |
| NC | 16.4 | SS | 15.8 |
| | Percentage in the Technocracy | | Percentage in the Technocracy |
| NW | 7.9 | SW | 30.5 |
| NE | 5.3 | SE | 21.5 |
| NC | 12.8 | SS | 21.6 |
| | Percentage in the Police | | Percentage in the Police |
| NW | 12 | SW | 14 |
| NE | 12.7 | SE | 12.4 |
| NC | 22 | SS | 26.1 |

Sources: adapted from Mustapher: 2007

The table above shows that the North is lagging behind in filling of vacancies in the bureaucracies, as noted earlier this is as a result of the poor enrolment to post secondary school. Although, Mustapher, (2007), observed that the North has limited capacity to change the ethno-regional composition of the Federal bureaucracy, they have come up with strategy to dominate the executive arm from independence in 1960 to date. See, table one above.

This has thrown up the debate about sacrificing competence on the altar of regional balancing which scholars observed is not good for the development of efficiency of the public service. In this regard, Olaopa, (20:12), cited in Donasco, (2014), “observes that the federal character principle is one of the effective principle for managing the combustive diversity in Nigeria,...The principle has however eroded professional and competency capacity of the public service”

Table four: Ethnic distribution of very important and less important portfolios 1960-2004.

| | Hausa Fulani | Northern Minorities | Igbo | Yoruba | Southern Minorities | Total Numbers |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------|------------|------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Very important Portfolio | 49 (33%) | 37 (25%) | 17 (11.6%) | 24 (16%) | 20 (13.6%) | 147 |
| Less Important Portfolios | 6 (13%) | (11%) | 10 (22%) | 13 (28.9%) | 11 (24%) | 45 |

*“Very important Portfolios are: Finance, Agriculture, Internal Affairs, Education Fed. Capital Territory, Defense, Works, Transport, Communications, Petroleum, & Mines and Power. Less important Portfolios are Labour & Productivity, Information, Science & Technology, Sports & Social Development, Women’s Affairs, and Culture & Tourism. Due to incomplete data, the second Abacha cabinet, the Abdulsalami cabinet and the first (1999) Obasanjo cabinet have not been included. Their inclusion is likely to change the picture fundamentally.”

Sources: Mustapher, (2007)

The table above shows more clearly the dominance of Hausa Fulani ethnic group in the executive portfolios as a result of their dominance in the headship of the government in the country. To further show the skewness of political appointments in favour of the ethnic group the head of government comes from, the table below is presented thus;

Table five: President Muhammadu Buhari's appointment before the end of hundred days in office:

| S/N | Appointment | Name | Geo-Political Zone |
|-----|---|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Aide-de-camp to President | Lt. Col Abubakar Lawal | North West |
| 2 | Special Adviser, Media and Publicity to the President | Femi Adeshina | South-West |
| 3 | State Chief of Protocol/Special Assistant (Presidential Matters) | Lawal Abdullahi Kazaure | North-West |
| 4 | Senior Special Assistant, Media and Publicity | Garba Shehu | North-West |
| 5 | Accountant General of the Federation | Ahmed Idris | North-West |
| 6 | National Security Adviser | Babagana Mungono | North-East |
| 7 | Chief of Defense Staff | Abayomi Olonishakin | South-West |
| 8 | Chief of Army Staff | Tukur Buratai | North-East |
| 9 | Chief of Naval Staff | Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas | South-South |
| 10 | Chief of Air Staff | Sadique Abubakar | North-East |
| 11 | Chief of Defense Intelligence | Monday Riku Morgan | North Central |
| 12 | Director General, State Security Services | Lawal Daura | North-West |
| 13 | Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission | Prof. Mahmood Yakubu | North-East |
| 14 | Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority, | Habibu Abdullahi | North-West |
| 15 | Special Adviser Niger Delta Amnesty Office | Paul Boroh | South-South |
| 16 | Acting Director General Nigerian Maritime Administration, Safety and Security Agency NIMASA | Baba Haruna Hauro | North-East |
| 17 | Executive Vice Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Communications Commission | Umaru Danbatta | North-West |
| 18 | Executive Chairman Federal Inland Revenue Service | Babatunde Fowler | South-West |

| | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------|---------------|
| 19 | Director General Budget Office of the Federation | Aliyu Gusau | North-West |
| 20 | Secretary to the Government of the Federation | Eng. Babachir David Lawal | North-East |
| 21 | Chief of Staff to the President | Alhaji Abba Kyari | North-East |
| 22 | Controller-General Nigerian Customs Service | Col. Hameed Ibrahim Ali | North-Central |
| 23 | Controller-General, Immigration Service | Mr. Kure Martin Abeshi | North-Central |
| 24 | Senior Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly Matters | Senator Ita S. J. Enang | South-South |
| 25 | Group Managing Director Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation | Emmanuel Kachukwu. | South-South |

Source: Sotubo September, 2015,

Table six: Summary of table five

| S/N | Geo-Political Zone | Frequency | Frequency % |
|-----|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1 | North-West | 9 | 36% |
| 2 | North-East | 6 | 24% |
| 3 | North-Central | 3 | 12% |
| 4 | South-South | 4 | 16% |
| 5 | South-West | 3 | 12% |
| 6 | South-East | 0 | 0% |

Source: Compiled by the author

It must be noted that President Muhammadu Buhari has the constitutional power to appoint over four hundred individuals to different positions. Therefore, the frequency table above is only about the early appointments made by the President. It does not necessarily mean that the president is bias or sentimental in his appointments as been peddled in some quarters. President Muhammadu Buhari may balance the spread of his appointment as he makes other appointments. What concerns us in this work is that the Federal Character Commission does not have powers to determine the spread of federal appointments made by the President neither can it compel the Presidents to balance the spread of his appointment. However, it must be noted that this appointments are the way they are at a time when the President is from the North West, the Vice-President is from the South-West, Senate president is from the North-Central, Speaker of the House is from the North-East, Chief Justice of the Federation is from the North.

The South-South region of the country also known as the Niger-Delta and the South East are already feeling skewed out of the political economy of the country, this has lead to renewed agitation from different groups like: Movement for the Niger Delta Avengers, Niger Delta Red Squad, Adaka Boro Avengers, Asawana Deadly Force of Niger Delta, Niger Delta Revolutionary Crusader, Red Egbesu Water Lions, Reformed Ebgesu Boys of the Niger Delta, and many more. These militants blow up pipelines and other critical economic infrastructure which has lead to very serious shortfall in National Income. This situation has threatened the implementation of the 2016 National Budget. In this respect the Minister of Finance while answering question at the national assembly emphatically posit that “we have to borrow to implement the 2016 National budget”. The implication is that government effort to diversify the economy may be threatened. It is a known fact that sustainable development in Nigeria is impossible without economic diversification. A mono-cultural economy does not inspire hope of attaining much in the parameters of sustainable development goals. Another very serious implication of the restiveness in the Niger Delta region is the impact of the bombings to the environment. Oshodi, (2016), observed that “the bombing of pipelines has direct negative impact on the region as it increases pollution of the land and water. Oil spillage has been a major problem of the region, but spilling more wouldn’t make things better. The polluted waters affect the common man’s source of livelihood in the region as most men are either fishermen or farmers. The lands become oil-soaked as a result of the bombers.” Apart from this, it is also observed that the bombings will drive away potential investors from such areas. The ripple effect of all this is that it reduces business and employment opportunities in the region, and those who will suffer it most are the ordinary people.

All of these certainly jeopardize sustainable development goals not only in the region but also nationally. In specific terms, goal 8: “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full productive employment and decent work for all” ; and goal 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all level” may be the most affected.

Let consider the early appointments made by President Goodluck Jonathan:

Table 6: Early appointment by President Goodluck Jonathan

| SN | Appointment | Name | Geo-Political Zone |
|----|---|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Director General: Nigerian Meteorological Agency | Dr. Anthony C. Anuforum | South-South |
| 2 | Group Managing Director: Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation | Eng. Andrew Yakubu | North-West |
| 3 | Director General: National Pension Commission | Chinelo Anohu Amazu | South-East |
| 4 | Director General: Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency | Ziakede Patrick Akpobolokemi | South-South |
| 5 | Director General: Federal Road Maintenance Agency | Eng. Gabriel Chukwu Amuchi | South-East |
| 6 | Director: Department of Petroleum Resources | George Abiodun Osahon | South-South |
| 7 | Director General: Bank of Industry | Evelyn Oputu | South-East |
| 8 | Executive Secretary: Nigerian Content Development Agency | Eng. Ernest Nwanpa | South-East |
| 9 | Director General: Consumer Protection Council | Catherine Dupe Atoki | North-Central |
| 10 | Vice Chairman: National Communication Commission | Dr. Eugene Ikemefuna Juwa | South-East |
| 11 | Chief Executive Officer: Nigerian Airspace Management Agency | Nnamdi Udoh | South-East |
| 12 | Executive Secretary: Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority | Eng. Akikuotu | South-West |
| 13 | Managing Director: Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria | Mr. George Uriesi | South-East |
| 14 | Rector of Nigerian College of Aviation Zaria | Chinyere Kalu | South-East |
| 15 | Director General: Security and Exchange Commission | Arunah Oteh | South-East |
| 16 | Chief Executive Officer: Sovereign Wealth Fund | Uche Orji | South-East |
| 17 | Director General: National Agency for food, drug Administration and control | Paul Orhil | South-East |

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| 18 | Director General: Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi | Dr. Mrs. G. N. Elemo | South-West |
| 19 | Rector: Maritime Academy | Joshua Okpo | South-South |
| 20 | Director General: Railway Corporation | Seyi Sijuwade | South-West |
| 21 | Director General: Nigerian Tourism Devt. Corporation | Sally Mbanefoh | South-East |
| 22 | Director General: Budget Office of the Federation | Dr. Bright Okogwu | South-East |
| 23 | Executive Secretary: Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council | Prof. Godswill Obioma | South-East |
| 24 | Director General: Nigerian Export Import Bank | Mr. R. R. Orya | South-West |
| 25 | Director General: Standard Organization of Nigeria | Dr. Joseph Odumadu | South-West |
| 26 | Director General: Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation | Emeka- Nkem Mba | South-East |
| 27 | Director General: Industrial Training Fund | Prof. Longmas Wapmuk | North-Central |
| 28 | Executive Secretary: National University Commission | Prof. Julius Okojie | South-East |
| 29 | Director General: Millennium Development Goals | Precious Gbenio | South-South |
| 30 | Surveyor General of the Federal | Peter Chigozie | South-East |
| 31 | Statistician General of the Federation | Dr. Yemi Kale | South-West |
| 32 | Accountant General of the Federation | Mr. Jonah Otunla | South-West |
| 33 | Auditor General of the Federation | Samuel Yonongo Ukuto | North-Central |
| 34 | Director General: National Orientation Agency | Mike Omieri | South-East |
| 35 | Director General: News Agency of Nigeria | Ima Niboro | South-South |
| 36 | Director General: Bureau of Public Procurement | Emeka Ezeh | South-East |
| 37 | Managing Director: Nigeria Export Processing Zone Authority | Olugbenga Kuye | South-West |

Source: Compiled by the author

The tables above show that the President of the country has enormous power of appointments. This power is not in any way influenced by the federal character commission. The application of the federal character principle is also at the discretion of the president. President who has nationalistic leadership acumen will certainly apply the federal character principle without been compel to do so. Unfortunately, Nigeria is yet to have such a leader. This may be the reason why Nigeria have not been able to produce a nationally acceptable leader like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Nelson Mandela Of South Africa and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. At the time when other African countries have a rallying national leader Nigeria rather have a regional/Ethnic champions. This is the reason why national integration remains elusive apart from other reasons.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This paper discovered that the federal character principle is a desired integrative principle considering the fear of domination of the minority by the majority ethnic nationality and the tendency of domination that has characterized the public service especially in the distribution of national opportunities and appointments. The Federal Character Commission, the agency of government, saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that the principle is adhered to have not been able to perform its role as effective and efficient as may be desired. The reason for this failure is that there are several factors beyond the control of the commission that have made proportional equity difficult. One of the factors is that the commission cannot determine who becomes the next President of the country. Therefore if one Ethnic Nationality rules the country forever the Federal Character Commission cannot do anything about it. The federal character commission cannot influence the President of the country in his appointments. In other words, if the president decides to make all his appointment from one region of the country, the commission cannot do anything about it. For the purpose of emphases it should be noted that the commission is responsible and answerable to the President, which makes the commission to be at the beck and call of the President. Another factor worth mentioning is that the commission cannot in anyway determine the distribution of the various competencies available among the federating unit or geo-political-zone. It must be noted that the Federal Character Commission cannot alone bring about the so much desired national integration. What is required for national integration is a holistic approach to nation building where justice reign, basic needs of the poor man is met and the gap between the poor and the rich is not like heaven and earth as it is today, or as darkness and light.

The paper also discovered that the agitations in the country especially in South-South and South-East is not unconnected to the perceived marginalization and exclusion from the political economy of the country as presently configured. Consequently, goal 2 and goal 8 of sustainable development goals, among others may not be realized both at regional level and national level, if the agitations going on in the Niger Delta, and other parts of the country is not halted. One of the ways to put an end to this hostility is to give people of this region a sense of belonging, by federal appointments and allocations. The role and contribution of the Federal Character Commission cannot however be ignored if the following recommendations are taking seriously

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to make the work of integration of the country easier for the federal character commission, we hereby recommend the following:

Considering the fact that federal character commission cannot determine who becomes the president of the country, we recommend that the constitution should be amended to provide for zoning of the position of the president among the six geo-political zones of the country. The constitution should also provide for which zone provides the vice president if a particular zone is providing the president.

The constitution should also be amended to stipulate that not abiding by the federal principle is an impeachable offence. This will help in reducing the president's veto power and the tendencies for nepotism, ethnicity and favoritism which political office holders commonly exhibited.

The Federal Character Principle should be implemented in such a way that ensures that competence is not sacrificed on the altar of equal representation, this is critical because it is only competent public officers that can ensure efficient and effective service delivery. In this wise, quality education should be made a priority in all the zones of the country to ensure the availability of competent candidates for any public office.

The Federal Character Commission should be made independent to enable it perform its functions. The Commission should not be under the control of the presidency but rather under the control of the National Assembly to the extent that when the President appointments are seen as been lopsided the National Assembly can through the Federal Character Commission call him to order.

All public office holders who have violated the provision of the principle of quota system should be prosecuted and those found guilty should be made to face the full wrath of the law. Every act of nepotism should not be treated with kit glove but rather condemned no matter who commits the offence.

The appointment of the commission chairman should be the sole responsibility of federal executive council subject to senate approval to avoid it being a toothless bulldog which cannot perform its constitutional functions in the hands of the sitting President. The process of removal of the chairman should be through the two-third majority of the senate to make it difficult for political interference in the activities of the commission.

The federal character commission cannot initiate legal action without the authorization of the Attorney-General and it has limited its power to perform its constitutional function. We recommended that Federal Character Commission should be given power to initiate legal action without recourse to the Attorney-General's office.

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