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## Political Restructuring and Resource Control: Panaceas for Good Governance in Nigeria

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### Abstract

Apart from the Boko Haram and Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP) terrorism, banditry, kidnapping for ransoms, armed robbery, ritual killings, cybercrimes', attacks from unknown gunmen and Fulani herdsmen militancy, there is no issue in Nigeria in recent times that has attracted greater concern than the contestation for political restructuring and resource control conceived by many as panaceas for good governance. It is within this premise that study examined the fundamental causes of these contestations or agitations, and ascertained whether restructuring will serve the purpose for good governance in Nigeria. Descriptive analysis was adopted and qualitative method of data collection was utilised to gather materials for the study. This study finds it apposite to adopt Structural functionalism as its theoretical framework which its development is traced to Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx, among others. The findings of this study revealed that the deepening contestations for political restructuring, resource control, constitutional amendment, and restoration of regional government by different groups, including professional bodies, trade unions, regional based groups and some section of the civil society is targeted at installation of true-federalism which is described by many as a panacea for good governance across the regions of the country, thus, this study finds it necessary to suggest that the government should overhaul the country's political structure and provide constitutional backing for resource control to sub-national governments. There is also the need for decentralisation of the central which guarantees good governance at the grassroots levels.

**Keywords:** Political Restructuring, Resource Control, Good Governance, Panacea, Nigeria

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### Introduction

Every region in Nigeria is endowed with vegetative or other natural resources which makes it necessary for the proponents of political restructuring and resource control to continue with their crusade for restructuring which becomes intensified since the return to civil rule in May 1999. Perhaps, the current political structure which takes its root in Sir Arthur Richard's 1946 Constitution is reason for administrative deficiencies in the country. Right from inception, the 1946 British colonial constitution was faulted for its asymmetrical or lopsided structure which favoured the central government. A repeat of this development reflects in the independent constitutions, especially in the 1999 Constitution which is the reason for the contestation for resource control from the Niger Delta region, and outcries for marginalisation and ethnic-tribal and regional discrimination, and most importantly, the debates for political restructuring (Anugwon, 2005; Dickson & Asua, 2016; Omeje & Ogbu, 2021).

True-federalism and autonomy to sub-national governments no doubt promote national unity and political integration in heterogeneous state like Nigeria; yet, it has remained one of the major issues for contestations between the political class in northern and southern Nigeria, described by many as the antagonists and the protagonists respectively. It has also been described in several discourses as a necessary requirement for good governance since it conforms to the philosophy of a modern society. The functioning of any civil society inarguably depends largely on the workings of its political structure and efficient management of its human and natural resources. Equitable distribution of national commonwealth also guarantees national unity and socio-economic development in any country. A critical probe of the practice of federalism in Nigeria shows that the imperfection in its practice is the reason for the persisting debate for political restructuring and resource control in the country. Adagbabiri and Okolie (2018:304) express the view that the contending issues in Nigeria are not limited to restructuring and resource control but include revenue allocation, state creation, federal character question and leadership crisis, though resource control has remained the most contentious issue among the levels of government.

In a very simple manner, Odje (2000) as cited in Okolo and Oziezi (2021:41) averred that a true federal state practices resource control which makes resource control function very well in a true federal state, therefore, resource control is an indication of the practice of true federalism. This throws open the gap in the practice of federalism in Nigeria and other countries that practice it, such as USA, Switzerland, Brazil and India. It is on this basis that Nwafor-Orizu, Okoro and Eze (2018:23) described the practice of federalism in Nigeria as a non-federalist practice, pseudo-federalism or false federalism camouflaged as true-federalism. In a similar manner, Abdullahi and Abraham (2021:1) described the practice of federalism in Nigeria as that which has remained a nightmare because of the asymmetric nature of the relationship between ethnic, religious and regional groups, and the component units in relations to power sharing and resource allocation, which the consequences rear mistrust and contestations among various social interest groups for power position

and access to resources at various levels of government. The conception of true federalism in Nigeria, perhaps, has eluded the people, resulting in persisting calls for devolution of powers of government and amendment of the sections of the 1999 Constitution (Nkire, 2017; Okereka, Orharo & Oluka, 2022).

In recent times, the call for restructuring has taken different dimensions, including the demands for resource control and new revenue allocation formula in the Niger Delta, and pro-Biafra agitation in South-East, and the creation of Oduduwa State in South-West, Arewa State in the North and Anioma State from Delta State in South-South geopolitical zone. Nwafor-Orizu et al. (2018), Babalola and Onapojo (2019), and Iwegbu and Uwaifo (2020) cleave to the view that Nigerians are becoming more agitated because of the failure of governments to comply with the demand for restructuring through constitutional means following the structural deficiencies in the 1999 Federal Constitution. Bin Othman, Nazariah and Mohammed (2019) however contend that restructuring and resource control are now critical issues in the restructuring contestation in Nigeria because they are the bedrocks that determine regional autonomy, and intergovernmental, political and socio-societal relationship among the component parts of the federation.

Mukhtar (2023:143) described the persisting debate for restructuring in Nigeria as a political process that involves changing the existing administrative and constitutional framework of the regions and the country through reforms aimed at improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of government institution, as well as change in distribution of power, and resources among the different regions, ethnic groups, and political actors. Interrogating the fundamental reasons for the intensified agitation for political restructuring in Nigeria, Nwafor-Orizu et al. (2018:19) faulted the 1999 Federal Constitutions, and the obvious political and economic marginalisation of some of the regions. Olanrewaju (2016) and Daly (2020) identified chronic corruption, tribalism, sectional representation, mediocrity and the continuum of insecurity as reasons for the aggravated political restructuring debate in Nigeria.

Odike (2005) as cited in Nwafor-Orizu et al. (2018:22) holds the view that the true nature of any federal state is centered in functional distribution of state powers, as well as autonomy of its constituent. However, the regional arrangement of the 1960s and 1970s seen to favour resource control and autonomy to the regional governments that is currently denied the states system under the 1999 Constitution. Even the recent executive pronouncement first by the former president, Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari, and now President Ahmed Tinubu, and subsequently, approval of financial autonomy to Local Governments by the National Assembly the contestation for resource control and restructuring remains intense across the country. It is this arbitrary arrangement in the current political structure that gave rise to the insistence for restructuring and resource control that is believed by many as panaceas for good governance.

### **The Nature of the Problem**

From the era of military regime to time Nigeria transitioned to civil rule in May 1999, the contestation for political restructuring, constitutional review and resource control have resulted in assemblage of national reform conferences, amendment reforms, and constitutional making processes, such as the National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) held in Abuja in 2005 (Stanford University Libraries, 2005). The trajectory of Nigeria's fiscal federalism and imbalances which predates independence continued to undermine peaceful co-existence among the ethnic and religious groups, and national unity. These circumstances constitute the underlying national issues in Nigeria despite efforts of governments over the years, though, first, creation of regional governments, and secondly, creation of state system from the regional arrangement, and additional states and local government by the military governments to accommodate the existence and recognition of the minority and marginalised groups. From 1966 to 1999, though, with interregnum from 1979 to 1983, the military governments left behind undisputed legacies that now impact positively on the current structure of the country's federalism (Nwokolo, 2020:172). As Dilichukwu (2019:15) puts it, "the ferment associated with renewed clamour for the restructuring of Nigerian state tends to be snowballing into the "yugoslavisation" of the country.

Daly (2020) and Okereka, Orharo and Oluka (2022) confirmed this progression when they stated that the regime in its efforts to decentralise the powers of the federal government and bring governance closer to the marginalised groups across the country, the military government expanded the numbers of states and local government areas which unfortunately did not resolve the problems of marginalisation and ethnic consciousness in Nigeria. Also within the period, the country witnessed a civil war which its consequence is the emergence of the secessionist movements based in the South-East geopolitical zone, and now manifest in different forms, including the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Eastern Security Network (ESM), among others (Daly, 2020; Okereka et al., 2022). This imbalance in the Nigerian system is one of the factors that re-enforced the persisting contestation among the various ethnic and regional groups in the country for restructuring and resource control (Jinadu, 2005). Farayibi (2017) argued that apart from the genuine reason of using political restructuring and resource control as mechanisms for resolving the Nigerian political marginalisation and socio-economic problems, some of the agitators including those that have regional affiliations, such as MASSOB, IPOB, Niger Delta Avengers, etc., and those associated with professional bodies and the political elites see these developments as opportunity to gain recognition and achieve their selfish interests that are now detrimental to the genuine reasons behind the contestation for political restructuring and resource control. Others, including the nationalists and opportunists used it to score political points that favour their selfish interests (Farayibi, 2017; Okereka et al., 2022).

This conceived relevance of using restructuring and resource control in reshaping Nigeria's political system by many has polarised the country into north and south divide, with the southerners as the protagonists and the northerners as the antagonists. While the protagonists believe in the virtue of justice, fairness and equity in derivations of resource control and management of their resources since they bear the consequences of oil explorations, including pollution caused by oil spillage and gas emission, the antagonists from the north argued that oil exploration in the south was funded from agricultural proceeds from the north, therefore, status quo should be maintained (Yaqub, 2016; Ahmed, Norafidah & Knocks, 2017). Ojo (2022:49) observed that while some people see restructuring in Nigeria as a means for equitable distribution of resources of the state, and government powers between the constituent states in the federation, others see

it as a move by to disintegrate the entity called Nigeria. This divide no doubt has resulted in conflict of interest along ethnic, religious and regional lines, and in extreme cases, physical violence, and has exacerbated political differences in the past and present in Nigeria.

Eze (2016) averred that most of the conflicts in Nigeria find their root from ethnic and tribal consciousness, and the north-south divide planted by the British colonial authority that now promote all manners of conflicts in the country, including the Nigerian-Biafran civil war of 1967-1970, the MASSOB Vs federal government conflict of 2005/2006, IPOB Vs federal government conflict of 2014/2015 till date, Lagos State Vs federal government conflict of 2006/2007, the Anambra State Vs Kogi State boundary dispute of 2016, the Niger Delta militants and Niger Delta Avengers Vs federal government conflict of 2003/2004 till date, the Boko Haram and ISWAP Vs federal government conflict, among others. In spite of several efforts by the successive administrations, from President Olusegun Obasanjo to President Muhammadu Buhari to resolve these national issues cause by Nigeria's self-styled unitary-structured presidential system, and what some political analysts described as quasi-federalism, these problems persist, leading to intensified contestation for resource control, restoration of regional government, constitutional review and political restructuring from the civil society, trade unions and professional bodies, members of the National Assembly and some State Governors, especially from the southern part of the country, notably the Niger Delta and a number of other states in the country. These developments seem to have no end soon even with the recent financial autonomy granted the 774 local government council areas in the country. Also identified as problems is poor governance and systemic corruption which has become intergenerational problem in the country.

## **Literature Review**

### **Restructuring and Political Restructuring**

In this study, it has become imperative to provide conceptual clarification for the key variables; restructuring, political restructuring and good governance. Although, these concepts are not new but providing clearer conceptual framework will no doubt help expected readers to understand what they stand for, especially in discourse of this nature. The term 'restructuring' though not as old as moderns' day dictions, but it has lately taking over debates in academic space in Nigeria due to its regular use for contestation for adjustment and reorganisation of the constitution, power and revenue sharing formula and resource control for better functioning and performance of the whole political system in Nigeria. However, to restructure means to change existing status quo for the purpose of making it more functional and effective for all the central and sub-national governments. For this reason, Iwegbu and Uwaifo (2020:4-48) described term 'restructuring' as the act of re-organising, re-arranging and re-planning of all the existing institutions and structures of the government, and a panacea for sustainable economic and political organisation and development which are indicators of good governance.

Hornby (2010) described restructuring as a process which involves total reorganisation of something, system, place, things, or an institution for a better performance. Azubuike (2018) described it as that which stems from "true-federalism", a system that operates based on shared responsibilities of the constituent units while maintaining a central government that binds them together as a sovereign entity. Iwegbu and Uwaifo (2020:50) sees it as; Re-defining and re-organising the current federal structure in Nigeria involves readjustment to true federalism which is a common practiced all over the world. It also involves a demand for the ownership and control of natural endowment find in state, such as crude oil and natural gas, etc (Akpan, Nwokah & Aendem., 2018). Also in the Nigerian context, Ali and Sani (2018:6) described restructuring as "a consistent call and move for political reorganisation of Nigeria's federal structure, the system of government, and other aspects desired for a constitutional amendment".

It therefore follows that political restructuring entails reconfiguration and devolution of state powers to the constituent units (Ahmed, Norfidah & Knocks, 2017). This re-organisation and re-arrangement depend on the nature of resource ownership and control by the various governments and regions in the country (Najakku, 2016). In the context of this study, political restructuring entails a systematic reform and re-organisation of Nigeria's political structure to determine whether the state governments should control the resources located in their domain. This means that restructuring entails total overhauling of the political, social, cultural, economic, education and health sectors, all of which are indicators for good governance. It also addresses some obvious abnormalities in existing political system for the benefit of the component units of the system. It is targeted toward ensuring a balance in governance in a political system found to have some defects.

## **Method**

The method of this study is historical research design. This design is qualitative and explorative in nature. Sources of data for historical research design are often obtained from extant literatures. It implies that secondary source of data collection refers to materials that are not originally from the researcher but from existing literatures such as textbooks, journal articles, government official documents, dailies and periodicals, and internet materials.

## **Results and Discussion**

Because of its modest effort in determining the extent to which the structures and institutions of a government work together in order to allow for peaceful existence of the state and the citizens, Structural functionalism theory is adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. The theory also has within its tenets how best the component units of the existing state structure are interconnected, and how they work together to maintain stability and sustainability of the whole. Also known as functionalism, the origin of the theory is traced to the writings of an English philosopher and biologist, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) who compared the functioning of the human body to the functioning of the society. Furthermore,

Spencer holds that the component units or sub-national governments in a federal state work in the same way the organs in human work. This unity of possess is what keeps the entire state structures functioning. Therefore, to maintain stability in a state/country requires all the institutions of government to maintain equilibrium and to achieve equilibrium depends solely on the practices in the system. If there is a crack in one of sub-systems of the whole (federal system or federation), there is the likelihood of the others affected. Each part therefore must serve specific function to maintain equilibrium and stability in the same ways the organs in the human body do (Turner, 1985; Elwell, 2013; Kimberly, 2021).

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Karl Marx (1818-1888) and George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) contributed to the development of the theory in different ways. The point of correlation in the work of these social scientists is that all of them based their emphasis on the description of the interrelativeness or interrelationships between the social phenomena in a society as they are conceived in recent times (Wallace & Wolf, 1991; Turner, 1991; Elwell, 2013). Robert King Merton (1910-2003), describe by many as Durkheimian also contributed to the development of the theory. He argued that all the social structures of a country can only be analysed in terms of its stability and dynamics. His notion of the structural functional theory is the intermittent changes that occur in the structures and organisation of states' policies and programmes (Elwells, 2013:3). From the perspective of Robert Merton, every organised community is not immune from dysfunctional situations often times cause by tension, contradiction and disagreement between the people and government. A situation of this nature is the reason the functionalist theorists focus their attention on changes in the society and how best to manage and adapt to these changes in order to maintain stability and equilibrium. This form of interaction is what is missing in the current federal structure in Nigeria. Over the years this imbalance in the federal system created dissatisfaction in a larger section of the country, and consequently, one of the major reasons the agitation for political restructuring and contestation for resource control that have taken different dimensions over the years. The resturctural defects in the Nigerian federalism and failure of governments to overhauling of the political, social, cultural, economic, education and health sectors which are indicators for good governance is the reason for the prolonged agitation for restructuring and resource control in Nigeria. To address these obvious abnormalities in the existing political structure in Nigeria in ordre to enhance good governance means the government has to restructure its self-styled federalism for the benefit of the component units.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Reasons for the Contestation for Restructuring and Resource Control in Nigeria**

After independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, most of the new states in Africa sought for ways to solve the problems of ethnic consciousness and fragile political structures instituted and inherited from their colonial masters, hence, the retention of a federal system with some transformations which made it possible for the leaders to address the problem of ethnic issues arising among the diverse ethnic nationalities. In Nigeria, region authorities were created among which are the Northern, Western, Eastern and Mid-Western regions, and subsequently, the creation of states from these regions by the military government. Elaigwu and Akindele (1996) and Elaigwu (2007) held the view that in the Nigerian context, the adoption of federalism in itself is not the end, but a means to an end. Ogunine (2017) cited in Ejumudo and Ikenga (2021:193) pointed out that, "the federal arrangement in Nigeria was established without genuine desire for a union of the large size of ethnic nationalities, and thus, the union has been questioned both domestically and internationally, which unfortunately is the fundamental reason for the current problems in the country nation".

Nwafor-Orizu et al. (2018) and Abdullahi and Abraham (2019) argued that the root cause of the current issues in Nigeria started during the colonial rule, with the merger of the northern and southern protectorates in 1914, and Sir Arthur Richard's Constitution of 1946 as fundamental reason for the contemporary Nigerian problems. Anugwon (2005) and Dickson and Asua (2016) argued that the fundamental cause of the current contentious issue of resource control in Nigeria vis-à-vis political restructuring are unfortunate legacies of colonial rule in Africa, following the lopsided nature of the political structures they left behind. Adeyeri (2010) as cited in Dickson and Asua (2016:3) averred that the federal system in Nigeria which has swing backward and forward between excessive regionalism that marked the first republic (1960-1966) and excessive centralisation of the military era, and relatively the post-military era (1999 till date) as the foundation upon which the thorny issues and challenges in Nigeria founded. Perhaps, these contradictions, including colonial factors, structural imbalance, over-centralisation of state powers in the hands of the central government and military rule, have overtime perpetuated these national issues in the country, including the contestation for restructuring and calls for resource control (Dickson & Asua, 2016:3).

Similarly, Ako and Okonmah (2009) averred that agitation for resource control as a very long history which is traced to 1807 after the abolition of slave trade where the local traders in palm oil engaged in agitation for resource control struggle in order to participate actively in domestic trade for the produce. Ekwuruke (2005) and Izuagie (2016) noted that the new era of agitation for resource control, in particular, was when it was reflected in the highlights of the representations of Ijaw ethnic nationality to the Sir Henry Willink Ninority Commission and Nimority Rights of 1957, which shaped Nigeria's decolonisation process. Ekwuruke (2005) revealed that aside the presentation before the Willink Commission, as soon as General Yakubu Gowon military government created a twelve state-federal structure on 27 May 1967 from the former four regions, the agitation for resource control championed by the oil-rich Rivers and Eastern State, and Lagos reached its crescendo. There are also other notable committees and commissions, from the colonial to post-independence era, such as the Chicks Commission of 1946, Hicck-Phillipson Commission of 1950, Chicks Commission of 1957, Binns Commission of 1964, Dina Commission of 1969, Agboyade Technical Committee of 1977, Okigbo Commission of 1979, among others to address the issue of revenue sharing formula in Nigeria, but yet again, contestation for restructuring and resource control continued till date (Elekwa, Mathew & Akume, 2011; Ewatan, 2012; Ali & Sani, 2018).

In 2014, former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan inaugurated a committee chaired by Justice Belgore to review the sections under contestation in the 1999 Constitution covering the period between 2001 and 2014 which became necessary following persistent agitation for restructuring and constitutional amendment across the country (Nwokolo, 2020:178). From this moment onward the demand for the control of the natural resources found and extracted from the Niger Delta increases with several dimensions to it. Onuoha (2005) and Hembe (2005) argued that the post-independence social

composition in cultural, ethnic and regional diversity shaped the pattern of Nigeria's national politics, structural arrangement and mode of sharing national resources, which consequently encouraged the current situations in the country described by many as a nightmare. Avbuere (2019:67) argued that the scenario of mistrust conceived during the colonial period is certainly a contributing factor to the persisting contestations for political restructuring, constitutional amendment and resource control in Nigeria. Additionally, Avbuere connects these national questions to the jettisoning of the previous regional resource control arrangement. He argued that because of excessive revenue from crude oil exploration in the 1970s and 1980s, the government and the people of Nigeria jettisoned commercialisation of agricultural produce such as cocoa, groundnut, palm oil and rubber that were the mainstay of the country's economy before the oil boom, and now the reason for agitation for resource control and true federalism (Avbuere, 2019:68).

National Think Tank (2017) and Nwokolo (2020) identified as a problem the fractious politics and competitive interests among the people of Nigeria as reasons for the debates for restructuring and resource control. The fractious politics and competitive interests among the people of Nigeria are also reasons for the restructuring debate which precedes the country's independence. Farayibi (2017) argued that outside the restructuring debate which is based on a genuine reason for resolving of political and economic structural problems in Nigeria as well as to promote national unity, some analysts, political elites and gluttonous bourgeoisie believe that it is a mere tool for self-recognition by some people in the country to achieve selfish gains. The fractious politics and competitive interests have also been conceived as reasons for the contestation for restructuring debate which precedes the country's independence. Inarguably, the issues of marginalisation, political restructuring, amendment of 1999 Constitution, resource control and restoration of regional government, and the perils of Boko Haram, ISWAP, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, ritual killings, and activities of Fulani marauders, unknown gunmen, IPOB and ESN have generated the most challenges and tension in the country in recent years, resulting in political uncertainties with no end in sight soon.

### **Challenges of Political Restructuring and Resource Control**

The restructuring debate in Nigeria which is an ongoing issue in the last 25 years has not received the needed attention from the federal government in recent time to bring it to actualisation despite its inherent benefits. Obviously, a number of the political elites and gluttonous bourgeoisies benefiting from the status quo do not want it to change to enable them continue to explore and exploit the resources of the nation. Ujah and Agbakwuru (2017) noted that one of the reasons the elites are shunning the call for restructuring and resource control is because of the financial benefits they get from these resources through appointments into federal government agencies to manage the key sectors of the country's economy. Oluka and Igbini (2020) affirmed this position when they argued that the fear of not partaking in what is regarded as 'national cake' by the elites is also a reason for the denial of restructuring and resource control by the federal government. Also, a reason for resistance is the fear of shifting most of the financial responsibilities of the federal government to the state which could make the central less attractive and the states highly competitive for the political elites. However, the recent contestation for restructuring and resource control in Nigeria is a clear indication that the country needs good governance which has been challenged by several factors such as corruption, tribalism, mediocracy and godfatherism, among others.

Nwafor-Orizu et al, (2018:18) argued that the debate for restructuring and resource control in Nigeria is an old song that has trended since 1966 after the first military coup and intensified after the civil war that ended in 1970 and increases in dimension since the return to civil rule in May 1999 till date. Otite (2002:13) traced the root cause of the contemporary Nigerian national questions to the nature of its pluralism, such as ethnicity, religion, class differences and demography. Dele and Hakeen (2019) hold the opinion that the call for restructuring has become a strategy in elite politics for power and associated material opportunities for selfish gain. Furthermore, it is elite-driven, having the tendency to lead to endless agitation for change. It is not the solution to the problems of Nigeria, rather the overriding concern of everyone should be with the practice of good governance to address the countless problems affecting the people (Dele & Hakeen, 2019:41). By implication, the contestation for restructuring and resource control in the Nigerian context is shrouded with controversies, from expression of redistribution of allocation of power and resource control, bringing to relevance the argument made by the antagonists from the northern part of the country that restructuring is an attempt by its protagonists from southern part of the country to pursue ethnic and regional political interests rather than promote good governance at all levels.

### **Political Restructuring and Resource Control as Panaceas for Good Governance in Nigeria**

Dealing with the problem of restructuring and resource control in Nigeria is sensitive and complex because it has a long historical background, from colonial rule and amalgamation to independence and post-independence era. While some of the issues surrounding the politics of restructuring in Nigeria are not new, its manifestation in different forms and dimensions is new. While it is targeted at achieving true-federalism, there is no doubt that its actualisation will enhance good governance and socio-economic development in Nigeria. It is also one of the bases for sustenance of national unity, and eliminates the sentimental and counterproductive rhetoric that are now commonplace in the country. Essentially, there will be shared national obligation of the federating units to sustain the central core by paying royalty to Abuja. It implies that core national interests will be funded by the royalty of the states to the federation account making the federal government less attractive and the struggle for the seat of power in Abuja will be very minimal (Okereka, Oluka & Igbini, 2020).

Actualisation of restructuring and resource control also has the capability of turning around and bringing about prosperity and development at the grassroot levels. In addition, devolution of power and resource control that comes with restructuring and constitutional amendment would free the central government most of the functions in its sixty-eight (68) items exclusive list by releasing some to the states and local government, and allows the sub-national governments to explore and exploit mineral resources in their localities thereby increases the revenue base of the sub-national units (Deiniteim, 2020). Azubuike (2018) affirmed that the benefits of restructuring cannot be underestimated because it will go a long way to solve some of the critical challenges in Nigeria, such as the issues surrounding the calls for decentralisation

of the central government, power or electricity generation problem since the constituent units will have the power to manage independent power sources. Restructuring will also promote self-reliance of states and independence from the central government. Also, with restructuring there will be devolution of power to the states to manage internal security arising within their domain.

Deinibiteim (2020:30) also expresses confidence that restructuring and resources control in Nigeria will not only enhance decentralisation of security operations, particularly the police force and prisons service, but will also provide opportunities for the sub-national governments to generate revenue and create wealth for productive activities that will enhance good governance in the Nigerian societies. Harry (2016) and Najakku (2016) expressed the view that restructuring which involves constitutional review would allow the sub-national governments in Nigeria (i.e., the state governments) to explore and exploit mineral resources within their domains, and subsequently make revenue available for developmental projects and programmes which are indicators of good governance. Omeje and Ogbu (2021:21) hold the view that restructuring which is the most contested issue in Nigeria will certainly benefit the country in promoting national integration and stability, fairness among the ethnic groups, economic stability, and purge the problem of uneven distribution of allocation which are criterion for which good governance. In essence, political restructuring and resource control in the country will not only foster development projects but also promote interdependence of state governments and national unity.

## Conclusions

This study which centered on political restructuring and resource control as panaceas for good governance in Nigeria maintained the fact that these items are cardinal principles of federalism but are being suffocated in Nigerian federalism. It is however interesting to note that state governments and the civil society have joined regional agitators in the call for restructuring in Nigeria. The struggle for restructuring has gone beyond the perceived marginalised South-South and South-East to other geopolitical zones, including the South-West and the Middle Belt, joining in the struggle for restructuring. The criteria for the creation of the 36 states including the federal capital territory, FCT, Abuja and the 774 local government area councils by the military has been subjected to questioning by Nigerians following the unrelenting contestation for restructuring and resource control. The failure of government over the years to resolve the issues emanating from the call for restructuring is now the concern of all. It is no longer regarded as a sectional agitation because every region in the country feels the same way and seeks readjustments in the constitution. There is however no doubt that the current federal structure in Nigeria has created more problems than benefits to the people and government, yet, nothing has changed. Ethnic consciousness and tribal differences are in the increase. As a consequence, unity in diversity is being suffocated. It is now under constant threats from several groups, including agitators from the Niger Delta and secessionist movements from southeast, IPOB and ESN whom major targets are a return to true-federalism, resource control and separation from Nigeria respectively. The identified that the refusal of the fourth republic administrations to call for referendum to determine the faith of the nation, and answer the question of whether restructuring is the best approach to settle the challenges of disunity and poor governance in the country. This study, thus, concludes that states should be allowed to take ownership of the resources in their domain as they pay royalty to the federal government.

## Recommendations:

- a. From findings of this study, it is obvious that restructuring of the current federal structure in Nigeria does not only require devolution of the powers of the state, but also transforming the roles of the federal, state and local governments. This study therefore advances the need for restructuring and resource control as panacea for good governance which will immediately address the problem of marginalisation and ethnic bigotry.
- b. As long as the Nigerian society is in constant need of peaceful co-existence among the different ethnic and religious groups, and social security and development that can only be achieved through a well-structured and organised political system, there is the need to suggest that the government should overhaul the country's political structure and provide constitutional backing for resource control to sub-national governments.
- c. This study also advances the need for decentralisation of the central which guarantees good governance at the grassroots levels.
- d. In developed nations, national questions threatening peaceful co-existence of the different groups and the sub-units are settled in a referendum. However, the question in the minds of every Nigerian which answer has not been provided is the reason for the refusal of the present administration to call for referendum to determine the faith of the nation. There is therefore the need for government to call for referendum or restructure the current political structure to accommodate the areas under contestation in the constitution to end the series of problems in the country.

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