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## **Nigerian Federalism: The Ethnic Question**

by

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### **Abstract**

*This paper attempted a theoretical explanation of ethnicity problem in the Nigerian Federalism. It looked at the centripetal and centrifugal factors of federalism. It also looked at the roles of colonialism, the colonial masters and the Nigerian nationalist leaders in the evolution of the Nigerian Federalism. The politics of ethnicity and population census in holding on to political power for economic gain was also portrayed. More so, the cataclysmic effect of ethnicity on the national integration and cohesion is manifestly vivid. For the politics of ethnicity not to destroy Nigeria, control of resources by the state and the Amilcar cabral model in Guinea Bissau was suggested to help Nigeria out of the problem of ethnic jingoism in Nigeria.*

**Key words:** *Federalism, Ethnicity, cultural diversity and minority.*

### **1. Introduction**

Federalism is the system of government based on the concept of autonomy of states, and the allocation of power to a federal authority. It is thus an association of states established by the consent or agreement of the states involved. The federating states maintain their independence and identities in certain matters, but collaborate with one another in respect of other matters. The powers of the government are assigned constitutionally among the states and central government (Oyeneye, Onyenwenu and Olosunde, 2006). These powers of government are usually divided into the exclusive list (federal government), the concurrent list (federal government and state government) and the residual list (state government). The items on the exclusive list include defence, citizenship, currency, custom, census, immigration, prisons, passport and visa, drugs and poison, mines and mineral, posts and telegraphs, banking, copyright and maritime, police, aviation and foreign policy (Anam-Ndu, 1998). The items on the concurrent list are education, agriculture and fisheries, tourism, civil service and judiciary. The residual lists are whatever that are neither mentioned in the exclusive nor in the concurrent and fall within the states. It must be noted that where there is a conflict between a federal law and a state law in regard of the concurrent list, the federal will prevail and that of the state will be null to the extent of that inconsistency.

But in Nigeria, the colonial administration encouraged communal and ethnic sentiments among Nigerians (Coleman, 1958). It sized every available opportunity to spread the myth and propaganda that they were "separated from one another by great distance, by differences of history and traditions, and by ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers" (Nnoli, 1978). In fact, in 1920, Sir Hugh Clifford, the colonial Governor of the country at that time, made it abundantly clear that his administration would seek to secure "to each separate people the right to maintain its identity, its individuality and its nationality, its chosen form of government; and the peculiar political and social institutions which have been evolved for it by the wisdom and the accumulated experiences of generations of its forebears" (Coleman, 1958). This encouragement was reflected structurally by the administrative systems of indirect rule and regionalisation. Indirect rule started out as an instrument for overcoming the pervasive financial, personnel, and communications problems of the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria and ends up as a means for reinforcing communal identity where non-existed, and providing a new symbolic and ethnocentric focus for the urban population. In the view of James Coleman, "the overwhelming emphasis has been upon greater tribal integration... there can be little doubt that it has complicated the task of welding diverse elements into a Nigerian nation" (Coleman, 1958:53). Compendiously, indirect rule widened the social distance among the communal groups in Nigeria, thereby reinforcing the ethnocentric factor in the emergence of ethnicity in Nigeria (Nnoli, 1978: 113).

This paper is concern about Nigerian Federalism and the ethnic question. Since federalism emphasizes non-centralization of power. Each component unit of the federal system has its powers and functions demarcated and guaranteed in the constitution of the country. The classical clasicus of federalism is adumbrated by K. C. Wheare (1994) who posited that "federalism is the method of dividing powers so that the general and regional government are each, within a sphere coordinate and independent" (Wheare, 1964: 10). But in Nigeria, as additional states were created to meet the demands of sub-national groups for greater autonomy, the greater the number of states, the stronger the federal centre, and the more imperative its role as a centre for taking necessary harmonizing actions in matters transcending each state (Elaigwu, 2007). As a result, each ethnic group will do everything possible to grap power at the centre so that it can use it to further its ethnic aggrandizement.

## **2. The Factors that Necessitated the Adoption of Federalism in Nigeria**

Neither history nor politics nor economics has given the cause of "federalism" in Nigeria a smooth ride Federalism is that form of government where the component units of a political organization participate in sharing powers and functions in a cooperative manner through the combined forces of ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity, among others tend to pull their people apart. Delicate arrangements of this kind, where carefully worked out, provide sufficient room for the co-existence of centrifugal forces and centripetal forces (Tamuno 1999: 13).

The factors that necessitated the adoption of federalism in Nigeria includes the following:

1. **Cultural Diversity:** The country is made up of people of diverse ethnic groups, religious, customs, traditions and languages. There are over 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 language groups in Nigeria (Uwachue, 1991: 1445). These ethnic groups adopted federalism in order to retain as much as possible their

identity. More so, these diversities created problems for the adoption as a unitarism.

2. **The Size of Nigeria:** The country was too large in territory and in population for a unitary system of government to be adopted. Nigeria is over 356,000 square miles (Umoh, 2005:3). It is said to be the size of Belgium, France and United Kingdom put together and bigger than France and Germany (Awolowo, 1966:24). There was thus the need to decentralize the government and federalism became inevitable for administrative convenience.
3. **Economic Factor:** In Nigeria, there is no state without a natural resource. The essence of people subjecting themselves to the authority of two or more governments is the maximization of their welfare. Particularly for multi-ethnic and large countries like Nigeria, the federal option, though more complex and expensive than unitarism, is especially well-suited. The availability of abundant human and material resources especially oil, was expected to have made its practice in Nigeria relatively easier (Ehwarieme, 1999:56).
4. **The Desire for Unity:** The quest for unity of groups within Nigeria where one would not be in strife with another that was controlling the centre responsible for the adoption of federalism in Nigeria. This would enable each group to have some economic and political autonomy without fear of domination.
5. **The Desire of the British:** The desire of the British was to preserve the unity of the country. The British were not interested in the disintegration of Nigeria and thus encouraged the division of the country into three regions, each with some autonomy from the central government. This made Ademoyega (1981) to argue that, "Nevertheless, there was one evil that outlined British administration namely, political non-advancement. When the British came, they forcibly rubber-stamped the political state of the ethnic groups of Nigeria, and maintained that status quo until they left. Upon their departure nearly a hundred years later, the people resumed fighting for their political rights" (Ademoyega, 1981: 1). But the British felt they could bring such diverse people together under colonial rule so that they could remain together after independence.
6. **Security:** The need for internal security and warding off of external aggressors led to the coming together of the component units into a federation. The units together as a federation would be stronger and more stable than individual units.
7. **Fear of Domination:** The fear of domination of one dominant ethnic group by another necessitated the adoption of federalism in Nigeria. The dissatisfaction of Nigeria nationalists with the level of Nigerian participation in government led to a number of constitutional reforms between 1951 and 1957. These reforms saw the gradual federalization of Nigeria's unitarist colonial state. As the prospects of independence became clearer, Nigerian politicians withdrew into their cocoons and geo-ethnic group to mobilize for competitive politics. Mutual fears and suspicions of domination among ethnic and geo-ethnic groups generated intense pressures on the colonial administration for a federal Nigeria (Elaigwu, 2007: 11).
8. **Large Population:** The large population accounted for the adoption of federalism in Nigeria. We realize that before the British invasion, occupation and amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914, the composite nations - the Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa - Fulani, Idoma, Efik, Itshekiri, Ibibio, Ijaw, Tiv, Edo and a host of other cultural groups numbering over 250 with their distinctive boundaries were autonomous (Okibe, 2000: 151).

9. **Constitutional Breakdown:** The breakdown of the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 led to the adoption of federalism in Nigeria. In the making of the 1951 constitution, series of conferences at various levels were held before the General constitution conference which met in Ibadan on January 9, 1950. During the period, eight provinces (five and three respectively in the East and West) were in favour of federalism or federal system, ten provinces (six in the North, three in the West and one in the East) suggested modification of present boundaries to tackle more effectively the problem of balkanization; while six provinces (five in the North and one in the East) condemned the federal idea outright (Osadolor, 1999:39).
  10. **The Desire of the Northern Nigerian Elite:** In spite of the problem of North-South dichotomy in the legislative council, the general trend of thought was that of a bias for a federal system which became an interesting theme of debate. Mallam Tafawa Balewa expressed the mind of the North when he said:  
*I am beginning to think, sir, that Nigeria's political future may only lie in a federation, because so far as the rate of regional progress is concerned, some of the regions appear to be more developed than others... (NAI, NL F2. Legislative Council Debates. Second session, March 10, 1948:453 quoted in Osadolar, 1999:37).*
  11. **The Political Disagreement which arose from Chief Anthony Enahoro's Motion for Self-rule in 1953 helped in Leading to Federalism:** From the pattern and nature of discussion at the conference, it was clear that the Northern leaders were suspicious of the intentions of leaders from the Southern Regions.  
The position of the North on the question of 'self-government for Nigeria in 1956' was dictated by the fear of the Northerners of Southern domination. The Northerners favoured the policy of gradual changes that would delay the transference of power to Nigerians by the British until such time when they would have enough available resources for mobilization so that they would be in a strong position to compete on equal basis with the South (Anifowose, 1982:47). On March 31, 1953, Chief Anthony Enaharo moved in the House of Representative that "this House accepts as a primary political objective the attainment of self-government in Nigeria, in 1956". Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and leader of NPC, moved an amendment to the above motion by changing the words "in 1956" to "as soon as practicable" (Anifowose, 1982:48).
  12. **The 1953 and 1954 Constitutional Conferences:** The desire of Nigerians to live together through their mutual endorsement of the 1953 and 1954 constitutional conferences necessitated the adoption of federalism (Oyeneye *et al* 2006: 172).
3. **The Problems of Nigerian Federalism**
- Ademoyega (1981) has argued that Nigerian's political problems sprang from the carefree manner in which the British took over, administered, and abandoned the government and people of Nigeria. Some of the problems of federalism in Nigeria includes:
1. **Boundary Disputes:** The various localities are often involved in one form of dispute or the other and this has claimed thousands of lives and destroyed

property worth millions of Naira. For example, we have the Ikot Umo Essien Community in Akwa Ibom State and Ngwa people in Abia State, the Oku Iboku people in Akwa Ibom and the Ikot Offiong people in Cross River State, some communities in Cross River State and those in Eboyin State, the Aguleri and Amuleri in Anambra State. We also have the Ife-Modokeke crisis among others which have claimed thousands of lives and destroyed invaluable property (Akpuru - Aja, 2007:73).

2. **Acceptable Census Figures:** Another major upheaval in Nigeria was the controversy over the census of 1962 - 1963, the first population census since independence. The last population census 1952 - 1953 showed that Nigeria had a population of over thirty-one million people (Anifowose, 1982). The political significance of the 1952/1953 census was that it assured the dominance of the North in the Federal Government, seats in the Federal House of Representatives being allocated on a population basis. A census was taken in May 1962, but was cancelled because of the disagreement over the results which favoured the Southern Region (Anifowose, 1982). This is so because while the two Southern leaders, that is, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe aspired to gain fellowship in the other regions, the Northern leader, Sir Ahmadu Bello only strove to keep his grip on the North. How could such a grip alone ensure his political aspirations? The answer to this question could only be found in the tripartition act. By this act, the British deliberately placed a greater percentage of the land and people of Nigeria in the North, putting the percentages of the population at 54.5 (North) 20.0 (West) 23.0 (East) and 2.5 (Southern Cameroon which was then part of Nigeria). As a result, the British gave the North 55% of the federal constituencies which ensure that if the NPC succeeded in maintaining its hold on the North (which it actually did with the active support of the British, it would be in control at the federal level (Ademoyega, 1981). This was how population census was politicized and the North is holding on to that till date.
3. **Revenue Allocation:** The issue of revenue allocation is one of the fundamental problems facing Nigeria. Revenue allocation has to do with the method and procedure of sharing the revenue generated by the country between the federal, states and local governments. The need for an acceptable formula for revenue allocation has pre-occupied the minds of succeeding governments in Nigeria and this has led to the various commission set by successive government to find a solution to this problem. These commissions include: Philipson Commission (1946), Hick Philipson Commission (1951), Chiks Commission (1953), Raisman Commission (1957), Binns Commission (1964), Dina Commission (1969), Aboyade Technical Committee (1977), Okigbo Presidential Commission 1980, Danjuma Commission (1989) (Akpakpan, 2003:13). More so, various laws and decrees were also enacted on revenue allocation which includes Decree 15 of 1967), Decree 13 of 1970, Decree 9 of 1975, Decree 7 of 1975 and Allocation of Revenue (Federation account) act 1981 (Adeneye *et al*, 2006:175). Despite all these attempts the problem of revenue allocation is still very much with the Nigerian federalism.
4. **Corruption:** Corruption, is a social malignance that is due to the depletion of the trust components of moral capital manifesting in misallocation of wealth from owner' s intended purpose to the personal gain of an agent, resulting in compromise of economic capacity to produce, distribute and accumulate wealth

in a society. Primarily, the problem of corruption arises as a result of social relationship, which naturally requires trust. The misappropriation of the trust or the subversion of such trust by a party in a social relationship for some private economic gains by the trust-abuser confers some elements of corruption and this phenomenon has permeated through the entire fabric of Nigeria's social, economic, political and religious life. (Akpan and Okon - Akpan 2017: 1).

5. **Minority Issue and Creation of State:** Nigeria is a plural society that is made up of three major ethnic groups of Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo. Apart from these three major ethnic groups, there are over 250 other groups (Uwachue, 1991: 14 45). While the three major ethnic groups are struggling for dominance at the centre, there are many minor ethnic groups in each of the major ethnic groups also struggling for relevance in the region. Ethnic pluralism led to the development of minority nationalism in Nigeria which in turn led to the demand for autonomy. In the North, the Bornu Youth Movement, demanded for a separate union, the non-Ibo in the East demanded for autonomy of Calabar - Rivers - Ogoja (C. O. R.) state while the non-Hausa group in the North through the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) demanded for a separate Middle Belt State. In the West, the non-Yoruba speaking people of Asaba, Warri, Benin, Urhobo, Ijaw, Edo, Irsekiri demanded for a separate Mid-Western Region (Ademoyega, 1981:5).

To allay the fears of the minority, the Sir Henry Willink Commission was set up in 1957 to look into the grievances of the minority groups and their allegations for separate states. The agitation for creation of more states continued until on the 23 March 1962 when both houses of parliament passed a two-thirds majority motion for the creation of the Mid-Western Region. The demand for more states continued under the military rule which led the then Head of State, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon to create twelve states out of the former four regions on the 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1967. The Murtala - Obasanjo regime created seven state to make it nineteen states in 1976. The Babangida regime created Akwa Ibom and Katsina in 1987 and created another nine states in 1991 to make it thirty states. Then in 1996, General Sanri Abacha created six more states to make it thirty-six states, and the agitation for more states is still ongoing.

6. **Conflict over Revenue Allocation Formula:** The various commissions, laws and decrees on revenue allocation are put in place because of the constant disagreement by sections of the country with the way the national resources are allocated. Any of the criteria used at any time would favour one group and disfavour the other groups. For example, derivation was highly favourable to agriculturally buoyant areas because it produces cash crops when crop was the major resources, the agricultural areas prefer population, need, national interest, and land mass as the bases for revenue allocation, while the oil area prefer allocation (Adeneye, 2006: 175).

Some of the fundamental principles adopted to ameliorate this problem includes derivation, need, independent revenue or fiscal autonomy, percentage division, regional financial comparability, national minimum standard, basic need, balance development in the allocation of the state's joint account, equality of access to development opportunities, absorptive capacity, fiscal efficiency, national minimum standard for national integration, population, social development, internal revenue effort, diversity, equivalence, centralized

stabilization, correction of spill over effects, mini-fiscal equalization, locational neutrality and centralized redistribution (Ekpo, 2007:99)

7. **Secession:** The Nigeria's first military coup of January 15, 1966 imbroglio led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and the secession imbroglio that followed the secession of General Ironsi, between General Yakubu Gowon and Lt. Col. Chkukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu over the most senior military officer Brigadier Ogundipe and the killing of the Ibos in the Northern part of the country. Although General Ironsi had been swept away by the morning of July 29, 1966, the counter-coup of the Northern officers and men did not end there. It continued to sweep away more and more officers and men from the East and Ibo speaking parts of the Mid-West (Ademoyega, 1981: 1 19), and Ojukwu declared his secession on May 30, 1967 (Ademoyega, 1981). The only secession threat that was carried out in Nigeria since independence was that of the Eastern Region in May 1967 which made the Eastern Region to be declared as the Republic of Biafra. The civil war which ended in January 1970, was fought for 30 months and at the end of the war, the former Eastern Region still remain part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
8. **Nigeria Federalism: The Ethnic Question:** The rivalry among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria evolved from the unevenness in social, economic and political development of the component units of the federation. The early contact of the Yoruba with European missionaries and traders put them in an advantageous position in Nigeria commerce, politics and senior positions in the federal civil service. The Igbo felt insecure with this and formed the Pan Igbo Union in 1944 to promote Igbo culture and the people's social and educational advancement. The Southern Igbo and Yoruba were also advanced in Western education unlike the northern Hausa-Fulani, which made the northerners also fear the domination of the Southern Region and its unity as a single force also threatened the Northern elite (Adeneye *et al* 2006: 176).

Adeneye *et al* (2006) further argued that:

*This was why ethnic associations developed a lot, like Warri National Union, Bornu Youth Movement, Ibibio State Movement and Egbe Omo Oduduwa. Even the first political parties that were formed were largely dominated by one group or another. These included the Northern People 's Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG) and the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC). This practice has tended to continue in one form or the other, mainly because Nigerians believe whichever group controls political power will favour its people to the detriment of others (Adeneye et al, 2006: 176).*

Throughout the development of Nigeria from a colonial territory to a Republic, it has been rare, except for a small politically conscious elite, for Nigerians to think of themselves first and foremost as Nigerians, rather than as Hausa, Yoruba, Tiv, Igbo, Ibibio and so forth. (Anifowose, 1982:36). The foremost Nigerian historian, Prof. J. E. Ade

Ajayi (1961) reacted thus:

*...the driving force of nationalism in Nigeria was not loyalty to Nigeria as such, but racial consciousness as Africans. However, the dream of African nationalism soon gave way to tribal nationalism, expressed in efforts to recapture the glories of a particular tribe. For some time, the feeling of Nigerian nationalism did develop but as inter-ethnic rivalries and political manoeuvres became more intense with the approach of self-government, those who called themselves Nigerian nationalists came to behave less as Nigerians than as representatives of their various ethnic groups. After the achievement of independence, the lust for power and personal aggrandizement revive the myth of ethnic exclusiveness (Ade Ajayi, 1961:196-209).*

A glance at the remarks of Nigerian politicians, scholars and government officials will convince that Nigerian politics and federalism cannot do without ethnicity. A Nigerian politician, Chief H. O. Davies described ethnicity or tribalism thus:

*Tribalism is to make a fetish of one 's own tribe at all times whether they are right or wrong. It follows that the tribalist is the fellow who sees nothing but good in his tribe 's people who supports, defends and encourages his tribesmen even if he is palpably wrong, who joins in a fight for no reason than that someone is fighting a member of his tribe who as a Minister, Board Chairman, manager awards jobs, contracts, or scholarships on the basis of tribal origin and not on merit, efficiency or entitlement such a one is a tribalist. To him, the highest slogan is my tribe right or wrong (Ohonbamu, 1969:114).*

It is discernible from Chief H. O. Davies postulation that tribalism or ethnicity is a sentimental allegiance generally felt by Nigerians towards an ethnic group to which they belong and contemporaneously is a way of life, a culture and heritage of Nigerians.

'Tribalism' has gained notoriety in Nigeria because of the uses to which it has been put by Nigerian politicians in the struggle for political power, public offices and scarce economic resources. The problem for Nigerian politicians was that, while they purported to believe in nationwide political parties, they felt obliged to appeal to ethnic loyalties every time their position was threatened by their rivals (Anifowose, 1982). Anifowose (1982) gave a few examples of statements made by Nigerian politicians as a conscious instruments of politics, that is, intentionally calculated for political ends. Sir Adeyemo Alakija said:

*The big tomorrow (for the Yoruba) is the future of our children; how they will hold their own among other tribes of Nigeria... how the Yorubas will not be relegated to the background in the future (Minutes of Egbe Omo Oduduwa, Monthly Bulletin I, December, 1948: 4)*

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe a frontline nationalist on his part said:

*It would appear the God of Africa has created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of*



*the ages... The martial prowess of the Igbo at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adopt themselves to the role of preserver... The Igbo nation cannot shirk its responsibility from its manifest destiny (West African Pilot, July 8, 1948).*

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, another Nigerian nationalist and leader of the Action Group as if reacting to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's assertion, posit that:

*It seemed clear to me that (Azikiwe 's) policy was to corrode the self-respect of the Yoruba people as a group, to build up the Ibo as a master race (Awolowo, 1960:135).*

Anifowose (1982) argued that the increasing use of ethnic loyalty as a resource for political mobilization leads Himmelstrand (1969) to observe that:

*The Nigerian tribalism of recent years is mainly a political tribalism stemming not from primordial ethnic loyalties as such but from politically exploited and reinforced reactions to contemporary African societies, conflicts of an economic nature involving different ethnic groups became infested with tribalism as a result of the competitive strain of modern political and economic structure (Himmelstrand, 1969:81 - 103).*

This ethnic sentiment does not only affect the major ethnic groups of Yoruba, Hausa and Ibo, but it also affects the micro ethnic groups within the states. In Anambra State, as we have seen in the case of Christian Onoh's redefining the "language of relationships" within Anambra State, all elements of prebendal politics and ethnoclientelism are brought into play in such efforts. Just as, on the national level, Azikiwe was viewed as being certain to enter party politics if it became necessary to "stop Awolowo" (and the sectional group identified with the later), so also Azikiwe's intervention can be seen as undermining Onoh's gambit at the sub-ethnic level. What Azikiwe, and his successful courtier and client, Jim Nwobodo, had to draw upon in their battles with Onoh, Ezenwa and others, was the logic that was most persuasive among the Igbo people in 1978 - 1979 namely, that the battle to bring sectional popular weight to bear on decisions at the federal had to take priority over all other decisions, actual or potential, among them (Joseph, 1991:108).

In 1978, Chief Adisa Akinloye would make the following overt public appeals to these past confrontations which had won for the region the epithet of the "wild wild west", "we support a party which can deliver the goods and... the ability of a person to hold an office. We should ask why Bola Ige has been imposed on Ibadan people. It is the same old A. G. Policy and we will not go where we are not wanted" (The Punch, 24 November, 1978). Chief Akinloye's remarks are only slightly less blunt than the following by another Ibadan politician, Chief Lakan Salami: "remember that Chief Richard Akinjide is your own son, so you must all vote for him as Governor of Oyo State" (The Punch, 21 February, 1979).

In Akwa Ibom State between 2007 and 2015 during the regime of Chief Godswill Akpabio as governor, we saw how ethnicity played out in the construction of infrastructure, employment and even political assassinations between the Ibibio and the Annang ethnic groups. The last recruitment exercise that Akpabio conducted in Akwa Ibom Civil Service was the recruitment of 1,800 teachers; his Annang ethnic group

which is a minority got 1,500 slots, the Ibibio majority ethnic group got 200 slots and Oron got 100 slots.

At the federal level, in every administration, we can see ethnic interplay in projects and appointments. President Goodluck Jonathan preferred to build a new Maritime University in Warri instead of upgrading the Maritime Academy in Oron which is the first in West Africa, to a full-fledged university. Recently, President Buhari has appointed a retired SSS Officer, Yusuf Magaji Bichi from his tribe to take over from the most senior staff of the state security service, Mr. Mathew Seiyefa from Bayelsa State, despite the criticisms that followed the appointment, that appointment remained.

The Nigerian federalism should follow the Lagos State example where people from other tribes and states are allowed to contest elections. There are people from the Ibo tribe in the Lagos State House of Assembly and some also represent them at the House of Representative. During the regime of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the Governor of Lagos State, he appointed Engr. Rauf Aregbesola from Osun State as his Commissioner of Works, Barr. Bamidele Opeyemi from Ekiti State as his Commissioner of Information and people from Edo State and other parts of the country were given appointments. Every other part of the country should follow this step so that ethnicity in our federalism can be relegated to the background.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

I will conclude this work in the words of Ugbana Okpu:

*To the extent that the structural imbalance derived from an arbitrary division into three 'natural' regions with diverse ethnic groups, many of which resented their 'inferior' status and challenges the right of the major political parties to a monopoly of political leadership and the distribution of the national cake, the presence of ethnic minority groups and the refusal to grant them equal status was a sine qua non for the structural imbalance.*

From the discussion so far, it is discernible that the solution to the problem of ethnicity in Nigeria's federalism are:

- i) All the ethnic groups in the country should be given autonomy and be treated as equal.
- ii) Every state should be allowed to control her resources and contribute a specific percentage to the federal government.
- iii) Every state should be allowed to generate her revenue and stop going to Abuja every month to get allocation.
- iv) A national language should be developed for the entire country, for example, Julius Nyerere was able to develop Swahili as a national language for Tanzania which has a similar ethnic problem like Nigeria. Nigeria should be able to develop the pidgin English as a national language for Nigeria.
- v) There is a need for social re-orientation of the people from parochial ethnic bigotry to the values of national integration.
- vi) There should be a reduction in the size and cost of governance at the national, state, and local government level in Nigeria. The government activities at the national level should be more of foreign relations, security and currency.
- vii) We should confront ethnic consciousness with class consciousness like Amilcar Cabral did in Guinea Bissau. The Amilcar Cabral's experience is illuminating:

*You may be surprised to know that we consider the contradictions between the tribes as a secondary one... Our struggle for national liberation and the work done by our party have shown that their contradiction is really not so important; the Portuguese counted on it a lot but as soon as we organized the liberation struggle properly the contradiction between the tribes proved to be a feeble secondary contradiction (Cabral, 1974.:436).*

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