



# **Ethnic Politics and the Agitation for Restructuring Nigeria: Implication for National Development and Dialogue Initiative**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The evolution of Nigerian state is shrouded in cultural complexities that are built on linguistic variations and ethno-religious discontents. As a product of the British imperialism, the 1914 amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates saw the emergence of what became an independent Nigerian State on October 1, 1960. Thus, the activities of these imperialists led to the birth of Nigeria's nationalism which was couched on ethnic nationalism rather than true pan Nigerianism. This ethnocentrism has advertently deepened Nigeria's problems and led to the evolution of several regime systems that manifested into resource control, independent movement and ethnic militants. Scholars and policy-makers alike, have over the last two decades tried several workable political systems without actually arriving at any possible solution thereby stoking the flame of ethnic based crises that fraught Nigerian sovereignty. Against this background, the proclamation of the sovereign state of Biafra was celebrated with the attended war that followed therein. Therefore, it is understood that the aftermath of that war still lingers and gave birth to Indigenous People of Biafra. While it could be said that the buck of Nigeria's resources are committed to finding solution to the existing political structures, it is obvious that the weightier problems arising from corruption, prebendalism and lack of true federalism that resulted to the evolution of ethnic militias are still neglected. Therefore, the study identifies corruption, favouritism and nepotism as the major problems of ethnic politics in Nigeria while applying thematic and historical analytical method as a method of analysis.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ethnic politics in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon. It is a concept that was introduced by the Colonial Government for administrative convenience and for establishing a colonial state. It aided the Colonial Governors such as Sir Clifford who separated Lagos colony and the southern protectorate from the North on the ground that the Legislative Council in existence at the time of his assumption of office lacked the requisite capacities to foster the unity needed in the country. In his opinion, a good administration demanded an awareness of public opinion and reactions and since the Nigerian Council as constituted was incapable of serving as an effective vehicle of public opinion such council is moribund and dead. To that extent, he substituted the Nigerian council with a new Legislative Council whose jurisdiction covered the whole of Southern protectorate as the North was to be governed by the proclamations emanating from the Governor. In fact, it could be understood here that the Colonial Governor did not consider the North competent in the composition of the Legislative membership hence; he asserted that

a council sitting at Lagos could not be properly entrusted with the responsibility of legislating for the Muslim emirate. In its obvious deceit, the Governor pointed to the sheer size of the country and poor communication facilities as the bane for limiting the competence of the Legislative Council to the south thereby stoking the tribal sentiments that guided the formulation of Sir Macpherson constitution in 1951. In that way, Sir John Macpherson while avoiding the mistakes of the previous administration encouraged a wider consultation of cooperate bodies including village groups, divisional and provincial conferences before enacting a new constitution. The conferences were held in three Regional Centers of Ibadan, Enugu and Kaduna respectively. The conferences' recommendations favoured federal system with slight modifications that could service regional interests. This recommendation not only provided room for regional considerations but also exacerbated and encouraged the disunity that plagued Nigerian politics up till date. For instance, while Bernard Bourdillon could be appreciated for his untiring support for the unity of Nigeria, it could well be understood that his position further strengthened disunity among the three regional groups.

At first instance, Bourdillon in a clear statement acknowledged that the inability of many of the Northerners to speak English and their unfamiliarity with parliamentary procedures (as the north are still governed by proclamations) would not only turn them into 'sleeping members' but might lead to friction between them and the educated southerners (Olusanya, 1998:527). This was a clear indication of the ethnic sentiments that thrilled the struggle for the independent Nigerian state. Indeed, since the new constitution with its regionalism seemed to be the most logical one in view of the divisions within the country, it did appear that speaking about unity would probably appear an effort in futile since, there was division not only between the North and the South but also between the East and the West. This division has become clear since the split in Nigerian Youth Movement in 1941.

Within the political history of Nigeria, each region had favoured regional interests against national interest so much so that attempt at uniting diverse ethnicities through constitutional making exacerbated the ethnic politics. For example, in 1945, Sir Arthur Richards acknowledged that a number of British officials in Northern Nigeria were propagating disunity in the country. According to him, it is true that a number of British officials in Northern Nigeria were openly critical of the constitutional proposals on the ground that it did not provide adequately for the differences between the North from the South and even went to the extent of advocating the separation of the North from the South (Olusanya, 1998:527). It is important to know that regional consideration guided the period of constitutional making as this was exemplified in the Richards constitution in Nigeria up to 1954 Lyttelton constitution which regionalized judicial and public services that proceeded Nigerian independence.

During the independence struggle and in spite of the stiff opposition demonstrated by the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons later National Council for Nigerian Citizens against the non consultation of Nigerian public opinion when on December 1944, a new constitution was launched by Sir Arthur Richards, more political parties based on ethnic sentiments were formed rather than seeing NCNC as a rallying point for projecting national cohesion. By this time, the Nigerian Youths Movement had lost its popularity and could no longer foster peace among its members particularly as the void created by Dr Kofo Abayomi's resignation created dissension in the party. The dissension made Zik to withdraw his membership as the party executive and favoured Ernest Sessi Ikoli against Samuel Akinsanya who had majority support to his candidature as a replacement to Dr Kofo. Zik's resignation forced other Igbo members to resign too and according to G. O. Olusanya "the fact that all the Igbo members resigned with him gave other members food for thought" (Olusanya, 1998, 560).

In fact, they reasoned that given Igbo unity against the divisive units of other regions would amount to Igbo domination and against this background the Action Group was formed in 1950. However, the NYM had been speculated as a Southern party notwithstanding its diverse membership. In 1951, another regional based political party- Northern People's Congress was formed. These parties had the patent to promote regional interests as NCNC, AG and NPC were seen as the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa parties respectively. There were again other regional minority based political parties like the Northern Elements Progress Union and the United Middle Belt Congress.

On the military recruitment, the declaration of Independent Status to Nigeria on October 1, 1960 abrogated the Royal Nigerian Military Forces to become Nigeria Military Forces. The introduction of the Nigerian Republican Constitution in 1963, however, brought in far – reaching legal consequences on the position of the Queen. She ceased to be designated “Queen of Nigeria”, but she remained Head of the Commonwealth, while the erstwhile office of the Governor – General of Nigeria, as Her Majesty's representative in the Federation of Nigeria changed to President and Head of State of the Federation of Nigeria and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria (Okoro, 2016:474). Consequently, the Royal Nigerian Military Forces was thereafter re-designated the Nigerian Army. The trouble now was the composition and recruitment of the Nigerian officers' corps and apart from the predominance of the British expatriates in the office corps, the bulk of the soldiers of the Nigerian Army were recruited from the area formally called Northern Nigeria. Thus, from the period 1946 to 1958, the statistics of the recruitment of Nigerian indigenes into the Army showed about 62. 25 percent constituted people of Northern Nigeria origin; while 37.5 percent came from Eastern and Western Nigeria combined.

By 1966, when the first military coup d'état took place in Nigeria, the situation was not any different from the status quo. In fact, the percentage of Igbo and Ika-Igbo officers had risen to 65, while the rest of the country comprised the balance. This position was not to remain unchallenged for too long. The need to have what was referred to as “fair proportion of representation of the various ethnic groupings based on population census or region of origin” began to be urged and canvassed from different quarters. Northerners began to express some concern about the numerical superiority of Army officers from the Eastern Region, canvassing equal regional representation. The most vocal of the protagonists of this idea, Abdullahi Magajin Musawa made the point vividly in a house of Representative debate:

*I am appealing to the Hon. Prime Minister, that we in Nigeria should be united in diversity. I think it would be good idea if we equalize our Army Officer... So that the officers in the Eastern Region, the Northern Region and the Western Region are equalized (Okoro, 2016:477).*

To further underscore the ethnic consciousness among Nigerians, the Igbo and the Yoruba began to argue that the Northerners had dominance as rank and file and in order to dislodge the imbalance, they strongly urged that enlistment should be made in accordance with certain basic educational qualifications. Thus, they canvassed for enlistment on grounds of merit. It is on record that Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a Northerner, openly accepted recruitment based on qualification. But because the Northerners were predominantly illiterate, it was argued in favour of people of Northern Nigeria that recruitment into the Nigerian Army be based on a quota system. As championed by the British, approval was eventually given for recruitment on quota: to wit-50% recruitment from the North and 25% each from East and West. This domination together with the outcome of 1966 coup d'état where the premiers of the North and West were executed thus, fueled more ethnic nationalism

and set pace for cut-throat politics in Nigeria. The coup was in some quarters of Nigeria seen as an Igbo coup and on July 15, 1966, a counter coup was plotted by a group of Northern soldiers mainly against the Igbo soldiers. The result of which was the execution of Thomas Agu Ironsi and the host of others consequent upon the Igbo pogrom in the North. Coming at the heel of this problem was the disagreement between Colonels Ojukwu and Yakubu Gowon over the secession of Agu Ironsi. This problem culminated into the proclamation for the Republic of Sovereign State of Biafra on July 6, 1967 at 5 am thereby heating up the polity and its attendant instability.

### **CAUSES OF ETHNIC POLITICS IN NIGERIA**

Ethnic politics in Nigeria is caused by a lot of factors. These factors ranged from ethnic marginalization, discrimination, domination to favouritism and have advertently contributed to the ethno-religious crises affecting Nigerian state. Despite the prolonged ethno-religious crises, there are other factors arising from ethnic politics that affect Nigeria. These include ethnic agitations for separation, resource control and state creation. It is imperative to note that the Nigeria's federal arrangement presently is structured to favour one region against the others, thus, encouraging regional agitations. At the moment, Nigeria operates six geopolitical zones. These zones comprise of North-East, North-Central, North-West, South-East, South-South and South-West zones. Among these zones, only the South-East has five states; the rest has six except the North-West that have seven states. Against this odd, the South-East zone has continued to demand for an additional state to balance the six state structures in Nigeria without result. This has contributed to the growing agitations that manifested in several separatist groups within the zone.

One of the states demanded by the zone is Ekiti State. This state was not created till ascension of President Goodluck Jonathan into power who called for national conference to discuss issues of ethnic marginalization. The result of the conference was a recommendation to create one more state for the zones and two states for the south-east zone. By this, Vande (2012) maintains that at a Conference in Lagos recently, the Deputy Senate President, Senator Ike Ekweremadu noted that ethnic minority fears, search for equity and speedy developments as well as quest for political empires and influence by the elites are key factors determining the clamour for more states.

Within these geopolitical zones, Nigeria has maintained that power must rotate between the North and South as a justification for the British amalgamation that created Nigeria from North and Southern protectorates and never among the geopolitical zones. Surprisingly, appointment to key positions such as security chiefs, Directors of commissions, parastatal and agencies today is based on zones. This sentiment led to the introduction of federal character and quota system to help and patch-up sentiments arising from ethnic domination and marginalization of some zones.

Therefore, the worst form of this ethnic politics is the favouring of one ethnic nationality against the others. For example, among the security chiefs, one two are from South-West and South-South and none is from South-East. Within the executive arm of the government, only South-East has never produced president for more than fifty-four years now and has never been appointed a Minister into the Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources and Federal Capital Territory among others.

### **Corruption in Nigerian Politics**

The history of corruption or political corruption in Nigeria is as old as the evolution of Nigerian State. Political corruption is quite difficult to trace but scholars particularly of the contemporary writings have argued that the origin of corruption in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonialists when the most striking feature of the politics of colonization was the deftness with which the British colonialists arranged to perpetuate themselves in a dominant position over the wealth of Nigeria and its accumulation process by putting in place a spurious power-sharing arrangement or partnership between themselves and their monopoly enterprise on the one hand, and the Nigerian fledgling bourgeoisie on the other hand (Ejovi, Mgbonyebi and Akpokighe, 2013). In this regard, the Odondiri (1995) maintains that corruption is endemic in our body polity. Nowadays, almost every discourse about Nigeria centers more on the high ascendancy of corruption in our public life. There is the very strong perception that in Nigeria, corruption is institutionalized and it is not that officials are corrupt but corruption is official. By this, its practice shows that corruption did not come as an accident but rather started with the weaknesses of law to really punish the corrupt officials who exploited the opportunity to perpetuate corruption. Ironically, several measures that range from anti corrupt practices and agencies such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Independent Corrupt Practices Commission, Code of Conduct Bureau and Department of State Security among others have been charged with the responsibilities of combating corruption, unfortunately these anti corrupt agencies have failed in their responsibilities. Most worrisome is the fact that the commission became independent in its practices of corruption like the ICPC.

Moreover, political corruption takes place at highest levels of political authority and it affects the manner in which decisions are made. It is a phenomenon where common goods are converted into personal or private-regarding payoffs. The phenomenon often results in a situation where some formal standards or rule of public officers are violated. A striking feature in this study shows that there is different between political corruption and other forms of corruption such as bureaucratic and administrative corruption which takes place in hospital, schools and even in the course of interaction with the police. Political corruption in Nigeria grew out of ethnic conflicts in pursuit of politics for appropriating political space and resources among factions of the political elite. It was in pursuit of this agenda that various elections conducted in the period of 1963 to 2015 were characterised by allegations of electoral fraud such as rigging. This situation has been the worst kind of political corruption in view of the fact that it leads to a situation where wrong or the weak leaders, who were never chosen by the people were foisted on them. This act was aided by the growing oil revenue and nurtured by greed, the result of which is the concentration of political power in the executive arm of government that grave room for the phenomenon.

In fact, the sharing of the government powers has been regionalized to promote certain ethnic interest. Between 1966 up to 2011, Nigeria's leadership has been dominated by Hausa-Fulani and partly Yoruba. The South-east and South-south with their resources have been employed to promote the hegemony of the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba and to keep them in power as long as they want. This scenario continued till when Jonathan consequent upon divine providence ascended to power for the first time. This was meted at with great opposition from the North who in a consummate effort rallied to support Muhammedu Buhari against Goodluck Jonathan's bid for reelection. The troubles of ethnic marginalization foisted on Jonathan as the then president of Nigeria to call for the National Conference in 2014 to discuss about the political System of country. Sixty-five percent of the attendees favoured restructuring even though this was not achieved before the irate North voted him out of office. By 2015, the presidential election was contested by President Goodluck Jonathan of PDP and Muhammedu Buhari of APC. The outcome of the elections saw the South-east and South-south giving

Muhammedu Buhari only thirty-five percent votes as they wanted their brother back in office. The electoral umpire declared Muhammedu Buhari the winner of that poll after several distractions from politicians to rig the vote for Jonathan.

Within nine months of his swearing in, President Muhammedu Buhari appointed the cabinet members of the Federal Executive Council. The composition mainly favoured the Northern ethnic group with ninety percent of the services chiefs, five percent from West, five percent from South-south and none from South-east. The exclusion of the southeasterners as members of the service chiefs reignited ethnic agitation for liberation and secession from Nigerian government thus, orchestrated the emergence of IPOB and conspicuous agitation for restructuring Nigeria in order to balance the alleged fear of marginalization of some tribes. Against this background, a conference of National Committee meeting on restructuring was called by the past administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the resolutions were not implemented and he was voted out of office.

### **Ethnic Politics and the Rise of Ethnic Militias**

What becomes responsible for the evolution of ethnic militias and uprising of dreaded Boko Haram insurgent could be attributed to the state failure and lack of workable political system. Boko Haram emerged as a challenge to the ascension of Goodluck Jonathan as the President of Nigeria in 2009. The sect had been invisible since 2004 but surfaced on the political landmass of Nigeria immediately Goodluck Jonathan became the president after the demise of Musa Yar'Adua in 2008. Yar'Adua's death created a gap in the political calculations of the North who had sought to prevaricate the news so as to continue parading a dead corpse as the President of the country. This development wasn't palatable to the Northern politicians who wanted another northerner to complete Yar'Adua's tenure as against the collective demand of Nigerians to allow the vice to take over. The unwillingness of some northerners identified as cabals and their readiness to circumvent a peaceful transition of government culminated into more ethnic agitations. In South-south, Henry Okah and his Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and the Niger Delta Avengers had begun to make unconditional statements that if Jonathan fails as the president the country will collapse. To save the situation, the provision of the constitution was evoked and Jonathan emerged the president thus, heralding the emergence of Boko Haram.

Boko Haram emerged to demand for the creation of Islamic state through its dreaded activities of killing innocent people particular the Igbo whose businesses were targeted for bombing. In other words, the activities of this mindless sect have threatened the security of the nation and several Igbo people had begun to call their kith and kin in the North to come back home. In the East, each attack on Igbo settlement in the North was often responded in Aba and Ontisha where the activities of MASSOB have taken prominence. By 2012, the Indigenous People of Biafra had emerged.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a separatist organization formed by Nnamdi Kanu in 2012. The group wants the South Eastern states of Nigeria consisting mainly of the Igbo ethnic group to break away from Nigeria and form an independent nation of Biafra. To achieve this, the group is calling for referendum to settle the issue of Biafra in a civilized and democratic manner. Their activities have largely been non-violent but the Nigerian military have unleashed their might on the group killing armless civilians as reported in various Amnesty International Reports. On 20 September, 2017, a Federal High Court in Abuja granted the Nigerian Federal Government an interim injunction proscribing the group and its activities. This decision has been challenged by the group in the Nigerian court of law. The decision was

seen as an injustice to the people who are seeking for self liberation from the political marginalization of the Nigerian government. Amid the controversial proscription of IPOB as against Boko Haram whose activities are likened to that of terrorists, the leader of the group urged its members to shun Anambra State general elections as a sign of patriotism and commitment to Biafra struggle. The group cited marginalization as a bane of this agitation.

According to C. N. Ogbu, the plight of Ndigbo in the Nigerian Federation and their cry against unprecedented marginalization since the end of the civil war is well known to all Nigerians. No other ethnic group has a greater stake in the Nigerian project by virtue of tens of millions of Ndigbo who live and invest everywhere in Nigeria outside Igboland. But yet they are victims at every turn: every now and then, threats to their lives and property as well as brazen discrimination and marginalization in critical areas of national interest. This has made Igbo youths to agitate for self-determination. He further maintains that some of the causes of marginalization in Nigeria are structural and some stem from administrative decisions against some sections of the country (Ogbu, 2018:3)

The implication of the above assertion is that ethnic politics in Nigeria arises from the way Nigerian society is structured and deliberate attempts to marginalize some sections of the country which to a large extent has come with a lot of ill-feelings such as separation, subjugation, discrimination and marginalization. It is against this background that restructuring of Nigeria to integrate all the components and sections of the country into administrative governance of Nigeria becomes important. This amounts to giving each tribe her due opportunities to contribute to nations building.

#### **ETHNIC POLITICS AND THE AGITATIONS FOR RESTRUCTURING OF NIGERIA**

The desire to restructure Nigerian society is born out of the ethnic politics arising from the marginalization, discrimination and favouritism of some tribes. The consequences of this ethnic politics in Nigeria are more conspicuous among the Igbo speaking people and possibly other minor ethnicities like Tiv, Ibibio, Jekun, Effik and the Middle Belt. Much of the resources for governing the Nigerian state are provided by these people, yet their regions remain the most impoverished. However, the outbreak of the Nigerian-Biafra war in 1967 which continued up to the 1970 was prosecuted on ethnic sentiments and politics mainly for domination, supremacy and control of all the apparatus of the government. At the end of the war, the military government under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon declared the outcome of the war as “no victor, no vanquished” implying that the two parties were to be re-integrated under one political entity-Nigeria. Since then the allocation of government resources and distribution of power has remained largely the same. Appointment into basic offices of prominence has always been against the Igbo. There is no Igbo man that has been appointed into the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief of Army Staff, Defence Staff, Ministry of Agriculture and many others till 2011.

From 1999 up to 2007, the positions of President and Vice President have always been exchanged between Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups. It was only in 2007 elections that Yar’ Adua/ Jonathan were elected under the PDP platform as President and Vice President respectively, marking the first time a South-south man was elected the Vice President of Nigeria. In 2011 elections, Jonathan/ Sambo were elected President and Vice President, the outcome of the election was widely criticized in some quarters of the country, particularly by the selfish Northern politicians. The emergence of Jonathan as the president spurred a political gang-up of Northern politicians to unseat him. As a pre election build up of 2015, the North congregated under APC having support of some politicians from other zones and politically routed Jonathan in the presidential election to returning the status quo.

In the economic sector, the distribution of government projects and award of contracts have been concentrated in the North and South-west regions with small “eye-service of Federal Government Contract” awarded to South-east and South-south. This discrimination and marginalization call for the restructuring of the Nigerian State. Restructuring as a change process, entails amending, adjusting, modifying, revising, changing, correcting and improving all these factors that form the social structure to abet the actualization of human potentials. The important element about restructuring is changing to improve. Abah (2017) maintains that we have been restructuring, we had a three regional government and we have had a parliamentary system... when people are talking about restructuring, I hope that they understand history and the sort of thing they are referring to. According to him restructuring does not include the re-organization of Nigeria’s government or its political system to ensure equitable representation of all the ethnic groups in the act of governance of Nigeria. Of course, the political landscape of Nigeria is full of events of experimentations and trialing that has led to different political systems, regimes, practices, and behaviours. Unfortunately, more than five and half decades after independence, Nigeria has not perfected a suitable political system which has resulted in the numerous cacophonies being made about restructuring. Sadly again, restructuring has diverse meanings as there are diverse peoples that make up the country. Therefore, by restructuring means that that the entire facet including our moral attitudes must be restructured. Hence, Ibrahim (2017) maintains that the agitation for restructuring of Nigeria centered around three things: marginalization, dominance of others in their regions and resources, and opportunity for distribution.

### **THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA**

The rise of IPOB in Nigerian political scene is not a recent phenomenon. It came with changes that have occurred within the Biafran struggle. This is why Emekesiri, (2012: 332), opines that the Biafran struggle is, on another plane, a resistance to the Arab-Muslim expansion which has menaced and ravaged the African continent for twelve centuries. It arose consequent upon the marginalization meted out the Igbo people to demand for the sovereign state of Biafra. Non-violent separatist organization, its members are drawn from the five states of Biafra with minor percent of membership from the South-South region.

It broke into Nigerian scene in 2012 as an independent body of the Movement for Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) that started another demand for Biafran independent after the 1967-70 Biafran war. It was founded by Nnamdi Kanu after he had gained fame from his broadcasts on Radio Biafra that was established in 2009. The station transmits from London on account of freedom for the Biafrans and criticizes corruption in Nigeria. Its activities and popularity made the federal Government of Nigeria to proscribe and declare it terrorist organisation on September 18, 2018 (Siteadmin, 2018:13).

### **THE IMPLICATIONS OF ETHNIC POLITICS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Development as a concept has suffered myriad of definitions based on its usage or reference to a particular situation. In that, Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011:237-41) opines that the concept has aptly been described as a victim of definitional pluralism. What this means that, development cut-across all spheres of human life and it is used to several variables that contribute to the growth of man hence, we can talk of political development, economic development, religious development, social development and agricultural development just to mention but a few.

Development is most often conceived from the economic standpoint to refer to the level of improvement on one’s economic practice or system. However, it has much to do with politics

because the growth and development that are prevalent in one's economy is permeated by politics. Therefore, Gboyega (2003) notes that development implies improvement in material well-being of all citizens, not the most powerful and the rich alone, in a sustainable way, such that today's consumption does not imperil the future; it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to good things of life be removed or drastically reduced, it seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods, and expansion of life chances. Implicit in this definition is that development is quite associated with positive change. It highlights physical changes in one's society and helps to determine the extent of these changes to the development prevalent in other societies. This implies that generally, economic development is different from national development even though, there is interconnection between them.

National development refers to nationwide development of a nation-state. Idike (2014:162-170), maintain that it implies the well-being of a convert majority of the citizens in material terms, it implies decreases in inequality levels. Thus, national development implies the guarantee of security of lives and property in a nation-state. In other words, national development implies the elimination of inter-ethnic bitterness and antagonisms in the inter-group relations of a nation-state (Okeke and Idike 2016:72). In fact, by this definition, it is imperative to note that ethnic politics in Nigeria has affected Nigeria's national development as it contributes to the destruction of basic infrastructures and break-down of order for ethnic control, domination and marginalization.

In this practice, national cohesion and integration have been sacrificed for ethnic cohesion and agitation. This has led to several political crises as each ethnic group tries to force its presence for recognition. Thus, heralding the cut-throat politics that manifest in ethnic militias thereby attacking and destroying government property. This has contributed to low development in Nigeria.

### **CONCLUSION**

Nigeria's politics today is occasioned by number of factors among which is the ethnic loyalties pursued by the various ethnicities of the country. These ethnic loyalties led to the discrimination and marginalization usually meted out one ethnic group or the other. The marginalization however, has continued to fan ethnic sentiments that are factored in the agitation for dividing Nigeria along ethno-cultural and religious lines. Although, being unrealistic and impossible to achieve division for Nigerians, its sentiments further exacerbated the agitation for restructuring Nigeria consequent upon the evolution of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Against this backdrop, arguments raged about whether or not Nigeria, as presently constituted, is in a structural form that will enable her manage her affairs better and possibly achieve sustainable development.

While some are on the side of effecting changes to the structure of the system to unbundle the latent energy and release development on the Nigerian scene-restructuring, others opine that Nigeria is running well as presently constituted, thereby supporting the peculiar brand of Nigerian federalism against the consequences of the first phase of military rule in Nigeria between 1966 and 1979 that distorted Nigerian federal structure and forced it into unknown territory. Since then, Nigeria has been in search for true federalism in which government allocation and resources are to be equitably distributed with each region being placed on the same footing with others. It is against this backdrop that this study concluded that development in Nigeria is far-reaching arising from systemic failure, corruption, political crises and ethno-religious crises.

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