FRACTURED STRUCTURE, CREDIBLE ELECTIONS AND THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA

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─**Abstract** ─

The emergence of ethnic nationalities and their violent demands in Nigeria within the past decade shows that the social structure upon which Nigeria is erected is beginning to be split slowly but surely. The ethnic nationalities cut across all the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. They include *Oodua* People's Congress (OPC) in Southwest Nigeria; Moment for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the South-South; *Egbesu*Boys in the South East; *Alakio* in the Middle Belt of Nigeria and Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. Aside the ethnic nationalities, ethnic socio-cultural and sometimes political groups have raised consistent alarm over the years for the convocation of Sovereign National Conference to determine the existence or otherwise of Nigeria and to discuss how Nigerians should relate and live with one another. The subtle demands of the socio-cultural groups, such as *Afenifere* in Yoruba region, *Ohaneze* in the Igbo region and the *Arewa*in the Hausa/Fulani region; the violent demands of the ethnic militias indicates the inherent fracture of the structure of the nation Nigeria. The paper argues that there is no amount of credible elections conducted in such a fractured structure that will deliver good governance, effective political accountability and enable Nigerians fulfil their hopes and aspirations as the desires of several ethnic nationalities agitate for a National Conference. Elections have been held in the past and it has failed to meet the yearnings of the majority of the people as reflected in the demands in the groups over the years, because of the structural defects. The paper

concludes therefore that it is only a structural change and transformation that addresses the structural defects and meets the desires of the people that can secure the future of Nigeria before any credible election can be of any useful importance as a tool of transiting from one government to another.

Key Words: *Ethnic nationalities, socio-cultural groups, change, transformation*

JEL Classification: Z10

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a sovereign state, with about 170 million people, located in West Africa with 36 states, 774 Local Government Areas and the Federal Capital Territory, is a melting pot and a combination of diverse nationalities, ethnic groups, cultures and religions beliefs. The social structure of Nigeria in reality is a complexity that is derived from its heterogeneous nature upon which people's dreams; realities, aspirations and frustration are being expressed daily. The frustration of the different Nigerian ethnic nationalities is captured in the report of the National Conference 2014 where it is observed that: 'The country has had a history of national dialogue that has impacted on its constitutional and political development. In different phases of the 100 years of Nigeria as a nation from the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates on January 1, 1914 to the convocation of a National Conference in March 2014, the nature, character and prospects of national conferences have been turning points in the history of the country. Each phase has had a defining moment as a result of the issues, demands, struggles and movements peculiar to it' (Conference Report, 2014:).Indeed the phases of the agitation for national conference, covering a period of 100 years, that began after the amalgamation in January 1914 to January 2014.

Nigeria is therefore a country whose very continued existence has become questionable because of the persistent call for federalism, equity, transparency de-marginalisation and social justice. The sovereign state of Nigeria according to Osaghae (1998) in his book *The Crippled Giant* is plagued by various factors that have prevented the country since its independence in 1960 from becoming the giant that its resources (natural and human) and location in the global political system is entitled to be. More so, famous playwright author and distinguished scholar Chinua Achebe in his "*The Trouble with Nigeria*" (1984/2000) stated that Nigeria's problems lie with its corrupt leadership amongst other social vices that are perpetrated daily. In addition, Ogbeidi (2012) asserted that several political leaders in Nigeria have been accused of corruption. He further stated that "corrupt practices among the political leadership class have also resulted in undermining the growth and stability of the nation's trading and financial system" (Ogbeidi, 2012:21). Hence, Nigerian leaders have failed the people and have not provided exemplary leadership. The consequence of the disunity is a fractured structure that has become dysfunctional to hold the system together efficiently. The fractured structure of the Nigerian state is a product of disintegration in a common ideology which is absent among the peoples and cultures of the Nigerian state. Perhaps an attempt to redefine a future for Nigeria led to the convocation of the National

Conference in year 2014. 'A National Conference is a formal platform for dialogue by constituent units of the nation convened by the national government of a country to discuss issues or problems that inhibit national progress or challenge national cohesion. A National Conference is expected to proffer appropriate solutions that will assist in moving the nation forward' (Conference Report, 2014:3).The 2014 National Conference is therefore expected to lay much stronger foundation for faster development by building a more inclusive national consensus on the structure and guiding principles of state that will guarantee the emergence of a more united, progressive, just, peaceful and prosperous Nigeria'(Conference Report, 2014: 23).

This paper highlights the concept of a fractured structure which is reflected in the Nigerian state. The paper argues that there is no amount of credible elections held in a fractured structure that can lead to a future that is promising and prosperous for all its inhabitants, and it concludes on the need for a total restructuring of the nation before any meaningful progress can be achieved.

2. ETHNICITY IN NIGERIA

2.1 Ethnic Nationalities and the Nigerian State

In the aftermath of 1914, the coming together of various nationalities in existence to form the sovereign nation state after 1960 called Nigeria. This was an indirect and forced reality in which diverse ethnic cultures were brought together to exist as one. Ethnic nationalities in Nigeria today have emerged into different groups and factions even within the same regions. In the South-West, the Odua People's Congress (OPC) is one of the major ethnic nationalist groups that was formed in 1999. Popularly known and referred to as OPC based on its acronym, the group was s founded by Frederick Fasehun, but another faction later emerged under the leadership of Ganiyu Adams. The OPC has been known to perform different roles within communities in the South-West states. The OPC also acts as vigilante in communities to protect members and the entire Yoruba Ethnic group from gang activities and armed robbers. The emergence of OPC and many of its likes in other regions of Nigeria was a direct response to the failure of the Nigerian State to fulfil the constitutional responsibilities to provide security and many other roles for the citizenry.

In the South-South and South East of Nigeria, Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and *Egbesu* Boys are other ethnic based groups that have emerged within the past decade and a half. They fight against

injustice and claim to represent the people of these regions against all forms of marginalisation and deprivations unleashed on them by the Nigerian State. The *Egbesu* Boys was formed around year 2004, while MASSOB was established much earlier. Both groups also support the notion and call for the sovereignty of the people of Biafra to become an independent nation-state. But more recently, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is another ethnic group that has emerged in support of the call to create an independent nation-state for Biafrans. Their agitation is formed along the same ideologies as those of MASSOP and *Egbesu* Boys that were earlier formed in the region. More so, the emergence of IPOB and more recently the Niger Delta Avengers indicates the multicultural division present in the current social realities of the Nigerian state of year 2016.It is also a very indication that 2015 elections have failed to address the demands of the ethnic groups in Nigeria. If anything the new administration of President Muhammad Buhari has been adjudge to failed woefully in many of his election promises to the people particularly the south-south and south east region(Premium Times, July 14, 2016), which perceived to have voted massively for the opposition party- the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the last general election of 2015.

Furthermore, the Northern part of Nigeria also is not left out as ethnic nationality groups, where groups such as Shiites, Boko Haram and the Fulani Herdsmen were formed to express the views of some Northerners towards the Nigerian state. Over the years some of the Northern ethnic groups have evolved into terrorist groups. Boko Haram which means 'western education is sin' have committed several forms of atrocities within the Northern states of Nigeria. Unlike the groups in the South West/South East/South-South, Boko Haram has repeatedly carried out attacks on the Northern people and in some parts of the middle belt of Nigeria. Today Boko Haram is not only a northern Nigerian based ethnic group but has links with international terrorist groups such as ISIS. In addition, the Fulani Herdsmen also have carried out some attacks on rural communities within the North, middle belt and South East regions of Nigeria. Unlike Boko Haram that is an Islamic based and ideologically founded fighting group against the Nigerian state. The Fulani Herdsmen simply carry out attacks on rural farming communities and other sub urban areas. The northern ethnic groups have been known to be destructive even towards people in the North of Nigeria. These groups which are ethnic nationalities that have risen against the Nigerian state further depict agitations towards the existence of the country.

According to Ayatse and Akuva (2013:187), "It will be highly deceptive for anybody to think that ethnicity is not harmful to Nigeria and its quest for development". All the ethnic groups across the regions of Nigeria with different ideological positions indicate that the present Nigerian structure is not supportive of any unity that is required for progress of a nation that is heterogeneously divided as Nigeria. Perhaps a perceived consensus among all the groups is the fact that from May 1999when the democratic rule and the new Constitution came into effect, many had challenged as a lie, the preamble to the Constitution which states: "We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria having firmly and solemnly resolved, to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation under God, dedicated to the promotion of inter-African solidarity, world peace, international co-operation and understanding; and to provide for a Constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country, on the principles of freedom, equality and justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people; do hereby make, enact and give to ourselves the following Constitution."(Nigerian Constitution,1999).The various agitators have continued to challenge this lie about 'we the people...' they seem to be challenging the fact there was never a place where we Nigerians actually come together to arrive at the current Constitution upon which we are now being governed.

None of the groups will insist on dismembering Nigeria, if their interest is fully taken care of by the present structure. It is a failure of the social structure that led to the present fracture noticeable in Nigeria. And within such a fractured social structure, no form of democratic election can produce the right environment for development initiatives because forms of "power inequity, poverty, and the denial of basic human rights" (Dukes, 1999:157). This was why Alliyu 2015 raised alarm about the 2015 general election and the desperation attached by the major stakeholders when he argued that: While the individuals are desperate for a change (a change that its direction is not particularly defined); the PDP is desperate to hold on to power at all cost and the APC is also desperate to snatch power at all cost. This triangular desperation will definitely bring about a change come year 2015 (Alliyu, 2015) but certainly not a change that will necessary improve the quality of lives of Nigerians or quality of governance. The change that Nigeria needs is a well-defined change that will alter the present structure and sustain the harmony of interest between all political parties and ruling elites against the common Nigerian. Nigeria needs a change that will alter the dynamics and chemistry of the Nigerian system in order for it to survive the present state of

less impressive status. Nigeria cannot afford to have a change for change sake or a change for politics sake in the year 2015. It is a change that must go beyond chameleonic change, which only exhibits temporary and available excitements that lead nowhere in particular (Vanguard Newspaper, 2015). The solution therefore lies in the redesigning of the foundation of the nation to accommodate the various interests of the component units of the federation.

2.2 Ethnic Nationalities and the Quest for National Recognition

All the past and present existing ethnic nationality groups in Nigeria possess a similar element which is their quest for national recognition. These groups believe their cause is important and somewhat supersedes that commitment of the Nigerian State to their respective cause. In the search for national recognition, some of those groups have approached issues both from a violent, protest and political point of view. Also because these groups assume to be the representative of the voiceless and marginalised in each region of the country, their quest for national recognition within the Nigeria polity seem justified. Therefore the role of these ethnic nationalities contributed to the need for a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) which has been held in previous years within the Nigerian state. According to Dike (2000:1), given the presence of politically assertive ethnic groups, the stability and survival of the present democratic politics depends on how the leader controls the potential ethnic disputes that would result.

The quest for National recognition has made these ethnic groups highly prominent such that their legitimacy has been gradually accepted among Nigerians. The OPC in the South-West, MASSOP and Egbesu Boys in the South-East and South-South, Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen in the North is a clearly indication of the disunity that exists within the Nigerian polity among the various ethnic groups. Hence, these various ethnic nationalities groups in operation are a clear indication of the differences which exist among the various regions that need to be resolved in order for the country's existence to remain unthreatened. In addition, ethnic nationalities and the quest for national recognition remains a vital issue that must be tackled as more and more groups emerge daily such as the Niger Delta Avengers who lay claim to end the deep rooted marginalisation that have affected the Niger Delta region which produces the crude oil that sustains the Nigerian Economy.

2.3 Emergence of Ethnic Socio-Cultural Groups in Nigeria

Despite the presence and existence of different ethnic based nationalist groups, there also exist ethnic based socio-cultural groups in Nigeria. The culturally

defined groups also act as representatives of each region of the country; these culturally based social groups are legally recognised as corporate entities in Nigeria. In the South-West, *Afenifere's* presence is being felt as the groups seek to support the interest of *Oduduwa's* descendants and the entire Yoruba race. *Afenifere* which was established in the south west region, is a product of concerned Yoruba elites/elders states men (late Pa Abraham Adesanaya and late Chief Bola Ige) among others whose stake are high in the Nigerian state. *Afenifere* has been associated with non-violent activities and conduct but more recognised as the carryout agitation against all forms of injustice from the Nigerian state towards the people of the South West. *Afenifere* continues to remain relevant as some of its representatives have become well accepted by the people of the South West, "as Yorubas success in politics is reinforced by the group" (Olarinmoye, 2007:023). The emergence of *Afenifere* is also an indication of the disunity that exists within the Nigerian State.

Another socio-cultural group in Nigeria is the *Ohanaeze Ndigbo* which is based in South East. This group speaks for and represents every known Igbo person on Earth. As a group, their spread goes beyond Nigeria as Igbo's abroad often times refers to them as "Ndigbo" (Thisday, August 8, 2016; Egbochue, 2015) and then assume of a form of unity because they come from the same ethnic group. However, the presence of *Ohanaeze* does not indicate that all Igbo's are united in one voice, because there are diverse self-interest even within the same region among states and people of the South East. But the presence of *Ohanaeze* is an indication that the people of the South East are nationally represented within the Nigerian state. *Ohanaeze Ndigbo* was established in 1976. *Ohanaeze Ndigbo* as a socio-cultural group is a clear indication that the Igbo people must be heard, especially their request for a Biafra state. However, the approach of *Ohanaeze* on this issue has been approached throughnon-violence as they "serve as social pressure groups that seek to influence the structure of power in the country" (Ojukwu, 2009:188).*Ohanaeze* remains a recognised group in Nigeria whose sole purpose is to stand against any form of injustice towards the Igbos of the South East of Nigeria.

In the Northern region of Nigeria, the *Arewa* Consultative Forum (ACF) is a clear indication that across the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, socio-cultural groups exist. The ACF was established in 2000. As a group, they tend to speak against the marginalisation of both Hausa's and Fulani's in Nigeria. The ACF is nationally recognised such that the representatives are core northern leaders and clerics. The ACF through its youth wing also stands up for the right of

Northerners in the country. However, the ACF has been widely criticised, because they appear not to represent the down trodden people of the North but simply a northern agenda to combat other socio-cultural groups such as *Afenifere* and *Ohaneze Ndigbo*. The *Arewa* Consultative Forum (ACF) continues to exist in the North and its presence is also an indication that Nigeria's existence is a mere geographical expression with different agitation from each region on the continued existence of the Nigerian Project.

2.4 Ethnic Socio-Cultural Groups and the Clamour for a Sovereign National Conference

All the existing major socio-cultural groups in Nigeria have expressed the need for a sovereign national conference (SNC). For each group all forms of marginalisation that each region has experienced over the years can only be resolved through this medium. According to representatives of *Afenifere* a SNC will not only create a platform for minority voices to be heard but for all Nigerians, especially the existing smaller ethnic nationalities to express their grievances towards the Nigerian state.

Furthermore, the various socio-cultural groups have shown that through a SNC issues will be brought to bear and resolved through dialogue to ensure the continued existence of Nigeria as a sovereign state. These socio-cultural groups have openly engaged in dialogue within their regions on how important a SNC is to reduce all forms of tension that have been expressed towards the Nigerian state by the various violent, non-violent ethnic national groups. The clamour of the various socio-cultural groups for a SNC led to the convocation of National Conference instead of a Sovereign National Conference. A Sovereign National Conference is the convocation of by and large, civil society organizations, workers' unions, political parties, professional associations, religious denominations, and government representatives to discuss and chart new ways forward for the nation (Aborisade, 2013). As the word 'sovereign' suggests, the conference is not subject to the authority of the state and its outcome may supplant and sweep away existing order while heralding an entirely new order. It has the capacity to take effective decisions relating to the tenure, survival and/or limits of power of the existing regime. This means that a sovereign national conference is interpreted as a transitional phase in the process of a mass struggle to carry out system or regime change (Conference Report, 2014: **XXX**).

Afterwards smaller consultations were held in different parts of the country, and under the leadership of former President Goodluck Jonathan, a National

Conference (NC) was held in 2014. The recent NC was result of the clamour by the existing socio-cultural groups and other representatives of the people of Nigeria. The outcome and implementation of the NC held in 2014 remains doubtful under the current administration of Muhammadu Buhari. But the continued clamour for the implementation by all socio-cultural groups has shown clearly that what Nigeria need presently is beyond election and party politics. In fact it has become imperative that the fractured structures within the Nigerian state must be surgically operated on before any future aspirations of the country and its people can be realised.

3. THE CONCEPT OF A FRACTURED STRUCTURE

In Nigeria, the fractured nature of its basic social structures is linked with the multiple actions of its power elite (political class, economic class, military class, technocrats and bureaucrats) whose selfish interest has caused the country to become a fractured state. According to Miguez, (2005:100), a fractured social structure tends to increase the levels of marginalisation, such that the social consequences pave the way for high and persistent unemployment, crime rates and domestic violence. Within a fractured state, the economic system becomes dysfunctional and this impacts on the society such that economic growth and human development is impeded. A state of "*fracturedness*" as being experienced in Nigeria can be linked to the abyss in the political structure that is enshrined in corruption and continues to exhibit negative social actions. Such actions include the lack of political will to sincerely improve health care delivery, reduce poverty, improve electricity supply to all Nigerians, reduce the country's dependence on importation of refined oil products, make educational system more effective in terms of quality output and research outcomes, support the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and regress from using the state apparatus against the will of the people.

The concept of a fractured structure is a contemporary reality that is being experienced in the Nigerian polity today and across some other sub-Saharan Africa states. The fractured structure in Nigeria has equally affected the electoral system and process such that its credibility remains questionable despite the outcome of the 2015 national elections. All these however, is a reflection of the fractured structure in which progress is set to be achieved in with little outcome that actually is seen in the lives of Nigerians. More so, the development crisis within the Nigerian state can be linked closely with fractured social structure. This

"development crisis has become a recurring phenomenon" (Olanrewaju, 2015), making development goals and initiatives unattainable.

3.1 National Credible Elections in a Fractured Structure

According to Fadakinte (2013:284) "election crisis in Nigeria, indeed, is a problem that reflects one of the attendant problems of state formation in emergent democracies". More so, no form of credible elections can hold within a society whose political existence is always hinged on ethnic division. This is the case for a peripheral state such as Nigeria whose lections are often times mired in crisis. Therefore, credible elections cannot be democratically conducted in a society whose social structures are plagued by corruption, nepotism and disunity among its social actors. Awofeso and Odeyemi (2014:251) further stated that "embezzlement, misappropriation and monumental fraud, directly and indirectly, have come to summarise all the social ills that the Nigerian society has manifested". This hinders the conduct of credible national elections within the country.

At present, the conduct of elections (national, state or local) remains a core process within its political system. From the first republic as an independent state unto the fourth republic, elections have been held. These elections including those that took place under military rule have emerged with one form of discrepancy and allegations from the losers towards the winners. Globally, elections are held within different democracies at intervals of at least four to five years. That is, for democratic states that adheres to the principles of separation of powers and the rule of law. Elections in Nigeria are a requisite for the transference of political power from one government unto another. However, elections within the country have had to deal with issues of rigging, ballot box snatching and other forms of electoral misconduct. That is why elections in Nigeria sometime end with violence and crisis. Therefore to conduct credible elections in Nigeria remains a challenge for electoral body that is the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). INEC from its inception have had to settle some electoral matters and dispute through the law courts and this continues as a trend even till this day. The challenges confronting the electoral commission in Nigeria are a result of the fractured structure in which the commission operates. This fractured structure permeates into every aspect of social life which includes the political process in the country.

A fractured (political) structure cannot produce any form of credible election unless the political system is surgically operated leading to more transparency in

the political electoral process. But in a situation whereby the political structure remains fractured, corrupt and express a high level of nepotism and political bigotry, such cannot produce any form of credible national election outcome with all parties in agreement and acceptance of the results. Because over the years, the Nigerian political system has been dominated by actors whose self-interest supersedes national interest, the electoral system has been fractured with gross irregularities. According to the International think tank Crisis Group in their report titled *Nigeria's Dangerous 2015 Elections: Limiting the Violence* (2014), they stated that the "factional feuds within both parties All Progressive Congress(APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) could degenerate into violence during their national and state primaries. Competing claims to the presidency, between northern leaders and their Niger Delta counterparts, could also result in violence in either or both regions, particularly after the polls". This is a result of a fractured structure being tasked to conduct free and fair elections, of which its outcomes will only be unfair, unjust and undemocratic with rampant political violence.

3.2 Election Outcomes in a Fractured Structure

If the foundation be destroyed what can the righteous do. This expression represents an obvious truth among Christian faithful's. But within the context of politics in Nigeria, if the structure is fractured, what kind of function or what forms of election outcomes will the country have? This question explains that within a fractured (political) structure, most election outcomes will produce unjust, unfair and an untrue presentation of the people's will. According to Crisis Group (2014), violence during 2015 elections in Nigeria are high, despite its elections being traditionally a fierce contest among opponents and political parties from the local to the state and the national levels.

In addition, election outcomes within a fractured structure often times does not reflect the will of electorates as widespread irregularities tend to affect the process. In some fractured democracies, election outcomes are sometimes determined ever before the actual election takes place. In many fractured democracies the election outcomes are products of the poor value system that persist within the country, and often times high level of corruption that is pervasive within the entire social structure and networks which exist in those countries. Among the electorates, their choice of a particular candidate over the other is a result of who pays best for their votes. In such circumstances, there exists no national philosophy or consciousness that every vote counts and

people's vote must never become a commodity for pricing which can be bought by the highest bidder. Fractured democracies most often times produce unfavourable electoral outcomes.

4. RESTRUCTURINGAND THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA

Within the Nigerian structure, the future for some is bright, for others it's not. This is because the beauty of the entire nation's dreams within a fractured structure appears bleak. Therefore the need to restructure the entire polity is important. Various advocacy groups and individuals have called on the present government to restructure the Nigerian social system. A step towards restructuring is the immediate implementation of the recommendations of the 2014 S National Conference. This document is indicative of the aspirations of Nigerians through their various representatives at the conference.

Outcomes from the 2014 NC presented possible way forward based on the 20 areas for Nigeria to explore and become self-sustaining as a sovereign state. Therefore, restructuring the Nigerian polity will ensure equity, fairness and social justice for all based on the outcome of the 2014 NC. Also, a new Nigeria is destined to reflect and actualise the dreams of the people for a better society. In a restructured Nigeria, all regions and ethnic groups will be adequately catered for and represented in the new structure because all forms of marginalisation will have been addressed. The future of Nigeria is dependent on the implementation of the 2014 NC because it lays the wishes of the Nigerian people. Some of the very profound recommendations are presented here for example. Conference therefore settled for a home-made model of government that effectively combines the above attributes of the Parliamentary and Presidential systems of government. It code-named it: The Modified Presidential System. Conference unanimously decided that a Modified Presidential System of Government be adopted for the Federation, and that the core element of the *Modified Presidential System of Government is that The President-Elect shall select a Vice-President from the Legislature.*

The above recommendation is a fundamental one (from the outcome of the 2014 confab report) because of the consistent level of acrimony between the Executive and the Legislative arms of government in Nigeria. It is hoped that if implemented a better understanding and mutual respect and robust relationship will be established between both arms of government for the good of the nation. On the issue of immunity enjoyed by some government officials like the president and the governors, the conference acting on the current level of abuse by previous occupiers of the offices as submitted in the various memoranda submitted to it, it

recommended that: i) The immunity in civil and criminal matters as enshrined in Section 308 of the Constitution for certain public officers should be removed; ii) Where corruption cases are brought against these public officers, Conference decided that the investigation of these cases be done outside the ordinary criminal processes. In this case Conference recommended the establishment of the office of an Independent Grand Jury (IGJ). While the conference recommended a removal of immunity for certain public officers in the 2014 conference report, the National Assembly was proposing immunity and life pension for her key national officers (Punch, June 22, 2016). This kind of selfish attitude of public office holders is one of the major reasons why it has been difficult to implement the report. It is a report they consider as a means to liquidate their existence politically and loss of control over the masses of the people of Nigeria.

Finally, on the issue of religious sponsorship and pilgrimages, the conference also recommended that: a) The apex religious organizations in Nigeria be allowed to handle all matters relating to pilgrimage through Pilgrims Commissions duly managed by them under a law to be passed by the National Assembly which will regulate their functions and protect pilgrims, b) In consonance with Section 10 of the Nigerian Constitution 1999, National Conference decided resolved (2014 Confab Report) that Government, at all levels, shall not utilize public funds to sponsor any religious pilgrimages for any category of citizens and government functionaries, c) Conference also decided that Government shall discontinue the sponsorship of official Government delegations on any pilgrimage, for the same reasons as stated above.

The recommendation of the Conference is based on the level of profligacy of Nigerian government when it comes to religious matters. In spite of the recommendation Nigerian government in the 2016 Hajj exercise through the Central Bank of Nigeria subsidised the exchange rate of intending pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. It was reported that: The Central Bank of Nigeria "issued circular instructing commercial banks to sell dollars to Pilgrims going to the Hajj at an exchange rate of N197." The apex bank explained "that the sale of the forex will be funnelled through commercial banks that are then mandated to sell to pilgrims at N197. Pilgrims are expected to purchase a minimum of $750 and a maximum of $1000 per pilgrim." The interbank rate is about N320/USD and the exchange rate is almost 400 in the black market. It would cost Nigeria an estimated N7.9 billion ($25 million) to subsidize the dollars for about 70,000 pilgrims (News Rescue, 2016).

The current structure supports this high level of profligacy and religious bigotry at the expense of the Nigeria Economy. Certainly and unfortunately the multiplier effect of the monies spent on none reproductive religious exercise is felt abroad and the Nigerian economy suffers a de-accumulation effect that translates into underdevelopment or retardation, poverty and squalor. The structure that supports such must therefore be changed completely and be replaced by another that will promote development in all ramifications. That was why Alliyu(2015) warned that the change Nigeria need was a change that will see to the; removal of immunity for governors in Nigeria; Require legislative work to be done on part-time basis without salaries, but sitting allowances; see to the full autonomy of the third tier of government and so on; and Restructuring of revenue allocation. (Sunday Vanguard, 2015: 39).

Over one year after the call by Alliyu, it was reported that: Eminent Nigerians supported the call for the restructuring of the country along regional lines as canvassed by former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar. "The former vice-president had, on Tuesday, advocated the restructuring of the country to ensure the development and growth of the federating units. Atiku had said the country should be restructured in order to address the feelings of marginalisation by component units that make up the country. "Agitation by many right-thinking Nigerians call for a restructuring and a renewal of our federation to make it less centralised, less suffocating and less dictatorial in the affairs of our country's constituent units and localities", the former vice-president had said at a book presentation, "We are all Biafrans", in Abuja. Yoruba socio-political organisation, *Afenifere* and the pan-Igbo umbrella body, the *Ohaneze Ndigbo* also supported Atiku's call on Tuesday, asking the President Muhammadu Buhari led government to implement the recommendations of the 2014 National Conference on the restructuring of the country. A former Secretary-General of the Common Wealth, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, and an ex-chairman of the Nigerian chapter of Transparency International, Maj. Gen. Ishola Williams (retd.) on Wednesday believed the restructuring of Nigeria would facilitate stability and development. (Punch, Thursday June 2, 2016).

The call for the restructuring is almost becoming deafening in the last few months in the second year of the current administration of President Muhammad Buhari, who a while ago, expressed his personal view that the report belonged to the archive (Vanguard News Paper, 2016).The position of the President notwithstanding eminent Nigerians continued to join call for the restructuring of Nigeria.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Those calling for restructuring a year after the 2015 General Election, where President Buhari was overwhelming voted for include retired (Punch, Thursday, June 2, 2016) Army Generals (like Generals Alani Akinrinde and Adebayo); Politicians across the three major and ethnic regions, a former vice-president (AlhajiAbubakarAtiku); Ethnic socio-cultural groups (such as *Afenifere* from South-West, Nigeria, *Ohaneze Ndigbo* from South East, Nigeria). Southern Nigeria Elders Forums; World leaders such as former Common Wealth Secretary – Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Civil Society across the three major ethnic regions of Nigeria, professional bodies such as the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Religious bodies like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) that has consistently raised alarm of its fear for hidden agenda to Islamise Nigeria by the Buhari Administration; very influential Nigerians like Pastor Tunde Bakare. Academics repute across Nigerian Universities in the likes of Nobel Laurite Professor Wole Soyinka, Dr.NurudeenAlliyu an Associate Professor of Sociology; Traditional rulers from different ethnic units across the country; the student body at national and regional levels and of course the Mass Media.

A call from these categories of people is a peaceful demand and a representation of the people's desire and aspiration, which is currently being violently presented by the ethnic militants from the three major regions of Nigeria in an event where a peaceful restructuring or change is made impossible by any means by anybody; it may make a violent change inevitable. Going by the quality of Nigerians, the number of people and the frequently of the demands for restructuring a year after the general elections of 2015, which was not contested in court by the looser in the tradition of Nigerian politicians, it is crystal clear that Nigerians want something else beyond election. Elections have failed to give Nigerians the future they desire and aspire to have in the last 100 years. A restructuring is therefore the way to go as to lay another foundation solid enough to build and erect a new Nigeria that humanity can be proud of. A fractured structure cannot produce any credible election. Therefore the Nigerian structure must be re-structured and the instrument of restructuring is already put in place arranged in the 2014 Confab Report waiting for implementation.

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