

# **TOWARDS A TRUE FEDERALISM IN NIGERIA: AN APPLICATION OF JOHN LOCKE'S LIBERALISM**

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## **Abstract**

The Nigerian Political system and society has been plunged into a serious quagmire and instability as a result of an abysmal political foundation or a subverted foundation. Some of the imperial masters' constitutions especially those of Clifford and Littleton laid the foundation for true federalism in Nigeria and was brought to its full vigor by the 1963 post independence constitution. However, this federalism as it is in itself was destroyed by the military intervention in the Nigerian politics. After the 1966 military coup, a unitary constitution was devised by the military junta which took away autonomy from the regional governments and the right to develop themselves with their resources was also eroded. Every power then was concentrated on the government at the center and this has given an undue advantage to some sections of the state at the detriment of the other sections. It has also opened doors to a lot of political and social vices in the state. It has eroded the sense of patriotism in those in the political echelon, encouraged corruption, tribalism, fuelled religious conflicts, poverty and economic dwarfism. The resources of other regions are appropriated for the benefit of the 'Big three' according to M. Chris Ali. The minority groups' interests are not adequately protected, rather what is theirs are taken away or appropriated for the welfare of others leaving them impoverished and their ecosystem destroyed making it impossible for them to earn a living. These and many other anomalies and misnomers are the challenges facing the Nigerian federalism which this research exercised will expose in detail and its solution sought by the application of the principles of John Locke's liberalism to properly position the Nigerian federalism match up to its counterparts in others states like America and Canada whose federalism are considered a true federalism.

## **Introduction**

Federalism is a system of Government which is only possible within the ambience of liberal democracy. One cannot think of federalism that is devoid of liberal democratic principles, like the ones propounded by the erudite English philosopher, John Locke. Federalism outside liberal democracy is simply a unitary autocracy, like the one practiced currently in Nigeria. When we talk about liberal democratic principles, we are simply referring to a body of social contracts that give equal rights and opportunities to all citizens and at the same time hold as sacrosanct and untouchable, their rights to private property. They champion and protect the individual property of the members of the commonwealth, property which according to John Locke, is natural to man and a part of his being. Ifeanyi Onwuazombe put it thus;

Human rights are rights which all human beings have by virtue of their humanity, such as the right to life, dignity of human person, personal liberty, fair hearing and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. They provide a common standard of behavior among the international community. They are natural, rational, inviolable, and unalterable, the deprivation of which would constitute a grave affront to one's sense of justice. For John Locke, this property include man's life, his liberties and his estates, and the security and protection of this man's property was the reason for the formation of the commonwealths and governments exist only for this purpose. Also, federalism is a social contract on the second order, it is a social contract of social contracts in the sense that already existing independent commonwealths, to further enhance the security of their sovereignty and territorial integrity from external aggressions, and also for economic reasons, came together to forge an umbrella commonwealth or larger commonwealth to further guarantee their safety, independence or autonomy and speedy economic development.

However, in the process of this second order social contract, the commonwealths which constitute the federation handover, some of their individual rights and authority to the government at the centre which has the right to guarantee their security and the security of their individual properties, just as in the first social contract, when they newly left the state of nature for civil societies with their governments to whom they bestowed their individual rights to protect themselves according to the law of nature. The principles of federalism must be complete and holistic in every system before it is qualified to be approximated or estimated as a federal government. It is an aberration to run a federal system with despotic or autocratic principles just as we experience it in Nigeria.

Nonetheless, the problems of the Nigerian federalism started as previously observed in the year 1966, when the Nigerian military bloodily overthrew the constitutionally instituted government and took over the leadership of the commonwealth by the force of arms and ammunition. When they took over political power, they put aside the 1963 constitution which holistically contained in it the thorough principles of true federalism and introduced their principle of rulership by decrees and commandments which often express the will of very few members of the supreme military council or worst still, the will of one man as in the case of Abacha's regime. This square peg in a round hole has led to gruesome violation of citizens' rights or property as Locke put it. Nigerians have never since then stopped clamoring for the restoration of true federalism or what in recent times referred to as restructure. This clamour for true federalism and right to maintain individual components of the federation with what they ordinarily have had spelt doom for a lot of persons collectively and individually especially those from minority ethnic groups. These were what prompted the Ogoni and Odi Massacre.

These people were killed because they were asking for what rightly belong to them. One of the principles of federalism stated that the people have the right to develop themselves according to their own pace with what they have. The oil in the Niger Delta belongs to the Niger Deltans, so it is not unbecoming or wrong if they ask for the fair share of what is theirs which is in line with the political system we adopted. According to John Locke's liberalism whatever anyone appropriates from nature through labour belongs to him and it is against the natural law to take it from him. Propounded that everything in nature belongs to all but if one goes out to appropriate any of these through the labour of his hands, that belongs to him and it is unlawful to deprive him or her the right to enjoy this his or her product of labour. He claimed for example that "the water in the fountain belongs to all but if one goes out to fetch some of the water with his bucket, that water automatically becomes his." The Niger Deltans by the virtue of their possession of the land under which this oil accrued have the right over the oil and cannot be killed for asking for a fair share of it. It is through labour they acquired the Niger Deltan territory, therefore, everything that is contained in it belongs to them as their property which its protection was one the reasons for the formation of the government.

However, as a result of this misnomer and the malfunctioning of the Nigerian federalism, this work will be juxtaposing the Nigerian federalism and John Locke's liberalism with an aim of repositioning the Nigerian federalism in the path and direction of true federalism or federalism as federalism.

However, John Locke as we have previously observed, is the father of federalism not overtly but covertly because all the principles of federalism are all appropriated from his philosophical liberalism. Though, in his concept of social contract he never postulated the covenant or contract between independent nations but independent individuals who according to the law of nature had the sovereign right to govern themselves and punish those who contravened the law of nature. This power to punish offenders of the natural law, however, they conferred on the government of the commonwealth to protect their property which according to John Locke involved their lives, liberty and estates. However, federalism is a step further in the empirical application of John Locke's philosophical liberalism which involved the social contract between commonwealths of people who have left the natural state of man. The reason for the larger contract is to ensure the territorial security and the integrity of their sovereignty. In a true federal state, the individual autonomy which people enjoyed in the state of nature, here becomes the basic rights of the individual components of the federal commonwealth and at the same time the right to individual property which people enjoyed in the state of nature and in their individual commonwealth also, is given to every component of the federal state to develop themselves according to their pace. The federal government or the government at the centre is a limited government; its major duty is to ensure the security of the commonwealth. However, in the Nigerian federalism all these qualities which are found in the true federal commonwealth are absent. As a result of these inadequacies and anomalies found in the Nigerian federalism, John Locke's philosophical liberal principles will now be used as surgical fingers to set it aright or repositioned for the infusion of the characteristics of true federalism.

### **Man's Natural Right for Self Governance**

In federalism the component government could be said to be enjoying that natural individual right of man to govern himself and make a pursuit of whatever makes him happy within the ambience of the societal law or the natural law as it was in the natural state of man or the state of nature. The denial of the component government the right of self determination or autonomy in a federal system of government is as misnomer as denying the individuals the right to other their lives in the commonwealth. One of the tenets of true federalism is the autonomy of the state or the regional government. This autonomy enables the state government to make policies for the well being of its area of jurisdiction without any recourse to the government at the centre and this makes the development of the regions speedy and the commonwealth in Nigeria. The United States of America as result of its strict adherence to the tenets and the principles of John Locke Liberalism has made a lot of advancement politically and economically. Speaking of the influences of John Locke's liberalism, Mark F. Griffith said,

John Locke, one of the most influential writers in history, profoundly affected the principles upon which the government of the United States was founded. He leaves a legacy of thoughts on human understanding, religion, economics, and politics that still influence the structure, environment, and operation of public administration today. He is most noted for his concept of separation of powers and for his ideas about property as the basis for prosperity.

AS John Locke's liberalism stated the second Treaties of Government that the individual the state of nature has the sovereign natural right to govern himself and pursue the exercises that make him happy without reference to anyone. This principle of autonomy which in a federal system is also enjoyed in reference by the component government as the individuals in the state. This autonomy is fully enjoyed by the component governments in the United States Federalism. Axtmann Roland puts it thus; “ **State governments of the United States** are institutional units in the United States exercising some of the functions of government at a level below that of the federal government. Each state's government holds legislative, executive, and judicial authority over” its jurisdiction. The above expression portrayed elements of autonomy to determine oneself by the component governments in the United States and the shows true federalism. However, the pre-independence Nigeria enjoyed some air of true federalism bestowed on it by Clifford, Littleton and the independence constitutions. Moreover, this was thwarted by the military coup of 1966 when the military took over the Nigerian government and suspended the constitution that gave Nigeria the air of true federalism. Hence negating Daniel Weinstock's saying that “in multination states, federal arrangements will also be necessitated by considerations of equity and the right to self-determination.” Aishatu Ahmed Aliyu puts it thus;

From October, 1954, Nigeria under the institutional framework of the Lyttleton's constitution and in recognition

and official acceptance of the diverse nature of its people, land and resources began to operate federal system of government in which powers were constitutionally shared among the federal (central), three Regions (East, North and West) and later in August, 1963, the Mid Western Region (curved out of the former Western Region of Nigeria). There was a federal Prime Minister and an Executive Council for the federation, Regional Premiers as government leaders and Executive Heads, their Executive Councils and Ceremonial Governors who were above politics for each of the regions. Under that federal arrangement, there were divisions of constitutional powers between the federal (centre) and regional governments. That federal arrangement lasted till January 15, 1966 when the constitution was abrogated in the country's first military and bloody coup.

John Locke emphasized in his liberalism that the only duty the government has is the protection of the individual's rights in the society. *Isaac Kramnick quoting* Adams summarized these;

Natural rights as First, a Right to LIFE; Secondly to LIBERTY; thirdly to Property. He described a natural liberty of Men, a state of nature where each was sole judge of his own rights and the injuries done him." This free man entered into political society by agreeing to accept an Arbiter or indifferent Judge between him and his neighbors, a civil government that would support, defend, and protect his natural rights to life, liberty and property.

These rights which according to John Locke individuals have naturally which were enjoyed by men in the state of nature which are also emphasized in the commonwealth as the greatest values of the society summarily are equally highlighted in the second order social contract which introduced the system of federalism, in which the individual component governments are also bestowed the individual rights which men enjoyed in the state of nature and are still enjoying after the arbiter or the indifferent judge, (the government) was forged.

As a result of the strict observation of the liberalism of John Locke by the American society, their federalism fulfils of the purposes of the commonwealth, realizes the common good and fosters both economic and political developments. This is the reason Lockean liberalism is made the American creed. Isaac Kramnick put it thus; "the founders of America like Sam Adams rejected Boucher's Christian commonwealth and in so doing made "Mr. Lock" and his radical liberalism the American creed."

Finally, the individual autonomy of the state governments or regional governments in the federal republics to govern themselves with the resources at their disposal is not

negotiable

### **Doctrine of Equality**

The concept of equality is the primary and principal aspect of true federalism, this is because John Locke the brain behind true federalism emphasized that equality is a natural thing which the created had bestowed on all humanity upon creation. This principle had informed and influence many commonwealths around the world, principally a state like the United States of American had been deeply influenced that this principle of equality. This is why Blake Emerson said that;

The most recent term of the United States Supreme Court saw two decisions which crystallize two important precepts of contemporary U.S.- American constitutional doctrine: a formal conception of equality, emphasizing the non-discriminatory treatment of all individuals before the law; and the principle of federalism, which vests the States with sovereign prerogative to determine and delimit certain rights and duties.

In Emerson's furtherance of his explanation concerning the new law forbidding unequal treatment of individuals in the American society, he added that “This approach forbids public laws and policies and private policies which produce a disparate impact, or unequal out-comes, upon various social groups.” These legal outcomes in the American society is always as a result of the impacts of John Locke's Liberalism on the American political system.

In Nigeria for instance inequality has become a normal thing, where those who have, have everything and those who do not have, do not have anything at all. The nation's rate of inequality is overtly conspicuous. The result of this obvious inequality has been gruesome poverty among the majority of Nigerians. The government who should ensure that Nigerians have normal plain field in their pursuit in Life seem to be doing nothing about it, rather it exacerbates inequality among Nigerians. Amara Ekeruche portrayed it situation as follows;

*Your Nigerian Economist believes that a person's economic prospects should be determined by her talent and skill, not by circumstances beyond her control. That a girl born into an underprivileged family in rural Nigeria should have a fair chance at life as a boy born to an affluent couple. And that such equity could be achieved if the government becomes more deliberate in giving all citizens equal access to opportunities.*

*For equality to be realized, government has to play a calculated and proactive role politically and economically. Government must ensure that all the Nigerians are treated equally and given equal opportunities and level play ground to pursue their happiness as*

*stated in the Lockean Liberalism. The principle of equality in the Nigerian context or federalism has performed so abysmally. It is as bad as it was portrayed in George O'well's Animal Farm where all animals were painted to be equal but some are more equal than others. Opportunities are available to individuals based on the tribe and the region they come from. Those from the majority tribes enjoy bigger opportunity than those from minority ethnic groups.*

*The states and regions are treated disproportionately. Often the regions that are linked to the individuals that populate the government enjoy greater goodwill from the government than those who are not bonded with the government; hence, there is a disproportionate composition of infrastructures and essentials goods among the regions and states of the federation. And this is a sickening and a gross aberration. In a true federal system as specified in John Locke's Liberalism, the individuals and regions that constitute the federation are bounded by their social contract to enjoy equal rights and opportunities and superstructures and infrastructures must be calibrated in a way that all the regions must enjoy them evenly with no one has a better part of them than the other. According to Prof. maduabuchi Dukor,*

*Nigerian problem is federalism against true federalism. The true federalism as a correction of the federal anomaly would mean an analysis of the superstructure of true federalism in Nigeria as comprising the component unites of ethnic or regional infrastructures. A...true federal political economy of Nigeria is where there is proper distribution and dispersion of infrastructure according to the relative strengths of different ethnic regional economic compositions in superstructures and natural endowment.*

In the ambiances of true federalism inspired by John Locke's liberalism, the component governments are to be allowed autonomy as the individuals enjoyed in the state of nature to evenly and equally run their affairs and to develop themselves according to cultural, natural and entrepreneurship superstructures and infrastructures.

### **The Individual Right to Property**

The rationale for the formation of the commonwealth or the civil society with its government is to protect the individuals' property which were not adequately secured in the original state of man or as John Locke depicted it, the 'state of nature.' This property for Locke incorporates individuals', life, liberty and estate, and the only duty the government has is to protect it. Equally, in a true federal commonwealth, right to property is extended from the individual members of the commonwealth to the individual components of the federation. Here the individual regions of the state have the right to own whatever resources located in their regions and to use it to develop their jurisdictions according to their pace and strength. In this scenario the government at the centre does not have the need to be ditching out monthly pocket money to the states in the name of revenue allocation, which is not always enough for the individual components of the

federation to manage their immediate needs let alone erecting infrastructures.

John Locke knew adequately well that allowing the ownership of property to the individual members of the commonwealth would enhance the economic wellness of the individuals and the state at large and by inference, the formulators of the federal system knew that the economic independence of the regional or component governments will bring about a very enhanced development for these individual governments of the federation and the commonwealth at large. The Nigerian state is not doing so well economically as a result of its failure to recognize this Lockean proposition for the individuals in the civil society and the component governments as individuals in the federal alliance. Going by the Lockean democratic principles which are the governing principles of federal system of government, the individual components of the federation are akin to the control of whatever resources that are pinned to their territory for the well being and the development of their citizens, since John Locke opined that whatever man appropriates from nature through labour has automatically and legally become his possession or property and any external use of this property without his consent becomes an infringement on his natural right. Hence, it's misnomer and an anomaly that the reverse is the case in the Nigerian situation and the common wealth is paying dearly for this indiscretion.

This imprudence has created a problem of resource control in Nigeria as a federal entity. In order to capture this situation aptly Mohammed I.S portrayed it thus;

Resource control and allocation are an integral part of every federal system. But for Nigeria, stiff disagreements, regional, economic and political power game and controversies over the control and allocation have characterized and negatively affected the success of its federalism. In Nigeria's practice of federalism for sixty-three years, various issues of resource control agitation, controversies, conflicts, disagreement over vertical and horizontal allocation of revenue, corruption and excessive politicking have shaped and dominated the entire federal system.

Authentic federalism will remain an illusion to Nigeria if some of the grand tenets of federalism are eschewed from the Nigerian political milieu. Private property ownership which is the heart and nexus of these tenets is not accorded the adequate regard and respect as this work has already stated above and that is why Nigeria a commonwealth is have both epileptic and tortuous development both economically, politically and infrastructurally. This makes the reordering of the Nigerian federalism according the will and mind of John Locke pertaining to the other of the civil society and government inevitable.

### **The Sovereignty of the People**

**Popular sovereignty** is the standard that the authority of a [state](#) and its [government](#) fashioned and maintained by the consent of its citizens, via their elected representatives

(Rule by the People), who are the foundation of all political power. It is strongly associated with social contract philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Peoples' sovereignty articulates a notion and does not necessarily reflect or describe a political reality. Benjamin Franklin elucidated the idea when he wrote, "In free governments, the rulers are the servants and the people their superiors and sovereigns."

Popular sovereignty in its modern understanding, is a concept that could be traced to the social contracts school (mid-17th to mid-18th centuries), embodied by John Locke (1632–1704), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), author of *The Social Contract*, a well-known political work that obviously portrayed the notions of "general will" and further grew the concept of popular sovereignty. The central tenet is that the legitimacy of rule or of law is based on the consent of the governed. Popular sovereignty is therefore a fundamental principle of many Republics, and in some monarchies. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau were the most prominent philosophers of this school, all propounding that persons decide to go into a social contract with one another, thus willingly surrendering some of their natural freedom in exchange for protection from hazards resulting from the freedom of others. Whether men were seen as obviously more prone to brutality and raping (Hobbes) or collaboration and compassion (Rousseau), the idea that a legitimate social order materializes only when the liberties and duties are equal among citizens binds the social contract thinkers to the idea of popular sovereignty.

Nonetheless, going through the intellectual and political propositions of mind like Thomas Hobbes, one will quickly understand that the will of the people do not count when it comes to the operations of the commonwealth. He said that the people gave away their rights to have a say in the civil society upon the contraction of the social contract. In the Hobbesian Leviathan State, has the right to fashion any laws he deemed fit. The only task of the sovereign was to protect the state and maintain the tranquility. There was no contract between the sovereign and those who appointed him. The only covenant was the agreement between the masses to assign someone they would obey.

Hobbes fashioned a monarch with unlimited authority, who was irreversibly given the power to impose unity and compliance. To safeguard his own life every citizen must give complete and unconditional obedience to the monarch and his laws, hence in the Leviathan State, the social contract validates authoritarian government. Hobbes copy of social contract propounded that rebellion was not in any way justifiable

The reason of the Leviathan state is to sustain the natural law of self preservation; this is the foundation of the notion of natural rights. The function of the Leviathan commonwealth is limited to defending its citizens. Besides the duty of the state to thwart conflict most additional types of involvement in the dealings of men are unwarrantable. This is Hobbes liberalism.

However, as for Robert Filmer, the peoples' consent is needed to forge or to govern a commonwealth. For him those who rule, rule based on divine mandate, so the sovereignty and the consent of the people do not in any way exist, sovereignty for him is the privilege

of the rulers and not of the ruled. He opined that allowing sovereignty and the consent of the people when it comes to the rulership of the commonwealth will definitely lead to anarchy. He puts it thus;

Since nature hath not distinguished the habitable world into kingdoms, nor determined what part of a people shall belong to one kingdom, and what to another, it follows that the original freedom of mankind being supposed, every man is at liberty to be of what kingdom he please, and so every city petty company hath a right to make a kingdom by itself, and not only every city, but every village, and every family; nay, and every particular man a liberty to choose himself to be his own king if he please, and he were a mad man that being by nature free would choose any man but himself to be his own governor. Thus to avoid the having but of one king of the whole world, we shall run into a liberty of having as many kings as there be men in the world, which upon the matter, is to have no king at all, but to leave all men to their natural liberty, which is the mischief the pleaders for natural liberty to pretend they would most avoid.

However, John in his Philosophical liberalism disagreed with both Thomas Hobbes and Robert Filmer, say that it is the natural right of man to be the master of himself provided all is done within the ambience and in congruence with the law of nature which for him is the source of every other law made in the civil society. For him the government is a means to an end not an end in itself. In his *Two Treatises of Government* he opined that the power wielded by the government emanates from the people, in other words the sovereignty of the state or the commonwealth is located on the people and the only duty of the government is to champion the common good which entails the protection of the people's property (their lives, liberty and estates).

This Lockean opinion is what determines whatever that is done in the federal political system. In federalism, the government wields limited power and the people exercise unlimited power since the sovereignty of the commonwealth is situated on them, hence the government does everything for the good of the people not for the good of the government itself. In every true federalism, the people are at the centre of every government policy made. Also every superstructure is fabricated with the people as the focus. That is why Prof. Maduabuchi Dukor described true federalism as "...a political economy where creative industries, agrarian innovations, according to their natural endowments and super structural values."

Just like in the United States of America the implementation of the doctrine of popular sovereignty receives meticulous emphasis in American history, in describing how Americans attempted to apply this doctrine prior to the territorial struggle over slavery that led to the Civil War, political scientist Donald S. Lutz noted the variety of American applications:

To speak of popular sovereignty is to place ultimate authority in the people. There are a variety of ways in which sovereignty may be expressed. It may be immediate in the sense that the people make the law themselves, or mediated through representatives who are subject to election and recall; it may be ultimate in the sense that the people have a negative or veto over legislation, or it may be something much less dramatic. In short, popular sovereignty covers a multitude of institutional possibilities. In each case, however, popular sovereignty assumes the existence of some form of popular consent, and it is for this reason that every definition of republican government implies a theory of consent.

The contrary of the above is what actually obtains in the Nigerian type of federalism, where greed and lack of democratic values are paraded by the officials and machineries of the government. For Dukor, “what is not true federalism; it is inveterate and unscrupulous greed for and propensity indebtedness on the parts of the federal and state governments that is propelled by corruption, ethnicism and sectionalism.” As a result of the aforementioned, the sovereignty of the people has been eroded in the Nigerian type of federalism. The people now are at the mercy of the government and its self centered policies that are not in the interest of the common good of the people.

Also, this has amounted to a whole lot misnomers, the peoples' wellbeing is no longer sought after by the government. The concept of human right is now as oblivious in the Nigerian commonwealth as the shadow. Lives and property which are the major responsibilities of the government to protect are now in great jeopardy because of the looming insecurity in the country. This is why there is a great for the Nigerian federalism to be restructured according to the mind of the man who fashioned the principles, in which true federalism is situated, John Locke's liberalism. With the principles of John Locke's liberalism imbedded in the Nigerian federalism, Nigerian will be as successful as its counterparts in the global north part of the world like America.

### **The People's Right to Revolution and Rebellion**

One of the quintessential features of liberalism specifically John Locke's liberalism is the peoples' sovereign right to depose or rebel against any government that fails to fulfill its primordial duties to its people. Even Thomas Hobbes opined that revolution is inevitable when the Leviathan compels the people to do harm to themselves which contradicts the natural law of self preservation. Karl Marx in his *De Capita* propounded that in every epoch, the superstructure of every society is determined by the economic dominant force and this leads to the exploitation of the majority by the few capitalist bourgeoisies who exploit the poor masses through their tyrannical economical policies and dominance. He said that revolution is the only means through which the reign of capitalism which benefits only the bourgeoisies could be brought to an end and this will lead to the reign of the proletariat that is, the people of the masses. Augustine in his *City of God* opined that justice is the “habit of the soul which imparts on every man the dignity due to him...its

origin proceeds from nature...and this notion of justice...is not product of man's personal opinion but something implanted by certain innate power." He argued that if the law of the commonwealth is out of tone with the law of law, then it is not law out all, "nor would there be a state." Inspire disobedience of a law that in not in consonance with the law of nature.

According, John Locke, the people are obliged to revolt against any government that failed in its duty to the people. For him the chief duty of the government is to protect the peoples' property which for him involves the peoples' "lives, liberties and estates." John Locke categorically stated in his Two Treaties of Government that any government that is not able to guaranty the security of the peoples' property should be revolted against the government.

The question that should be raise here is if the Nigerian federalism has performed so abysmally to be revolted against by the peoples? Has the Nigerian federal government been able to fulfill the major purpose for which the commonwealth was forged or how far has the Nigerian federal government worked for the well being of the Nigerians? From the studies the has been carried out so far by this work, the Nigerian federalism has so far performed so abysmally and needs to be revaluated and restructure. But how can this be possible when the voices of the peoples are being muscled by the government. The natural right of the people to occasion change are being stifled by the government hence the people are left to settle for and endure a dysfunctional government or government. Since the Nigerian superstructure is not favourable to the people it is the duty and the right of the people to agitate for a rearrangement of the superstructure from the tyranny of the few according Karl Marx to the rulership of the proletariats.

However, in the recent times, the federal government has overtly and categorically denied the people this natural mandate to occasion a change in the Nation's superstructure. Anyone who attempts provoking this super-structural change is either silenced or put in jail. For the Nigerian federalism to be improved, the people must be allowed their rights of forming the government or dissolving the government as propounded by John Locke in his liberalism.

### **The Imperative of Restructuring the Nigerian Federalism**

It has already been observed in this work that the super-structure underlining the Nigerian federalism is faulty and hence needs to be streamlined. The anomalies thwarting the Nigerian federalism has to be removed in order to reposition it for the popular benefits. It should be reshuffled to take of the desires and aspirations of both majorities and the minorities in the Nigerian commonwealth to avoid the gross marginalization that is maligning the country. M. Chris Ali stated it thus;

What is really on the card is that existing electoral and political structures have not addressed the respective needs of component nationalities that comprise the federation with

justice and equality. All the political structures, state, local government, political parties and districts, House of Representatives' constituencies on the other, do not provide for either equality of nationalities or the representation of the nationalities.

John Locke in his *Two Treatises of Government* categorically emphasized that all men are equally and must be treated equally. However, in the Nigerian federalism the reverse is the case, what obtains here is what George O'well satirically called the equality and inequality of all animals. He said that 'all animals are equal but some are more equal than others.' It is imperative that since one of the principles of liberal democracy which underline federalism is equality, the Nigerian federalism is over ripped or due for restructuring to inject equilibrium into the system. M. Chris Ali aired his own view concerning the repositioning the ailing Nigerian federalism thus; "the unending crises in Nigeria point to the need for the restructuring to install a balance in power of some sort, not a shift of power. Such restructuring should be capable of proving competent leadership and alternative ideologies for political action and politicking."

The urgency of the restructuring of the Nigerian Political system must be hinged on the reduction of the power of the government at the centre to accommodate the autonomy of the component governments, in order to enhance the economic prosperity of the regional governments and the entire commonwealth in general. If this is not done the economic growth in the country will be perpetually dwarfed. M. Chris Ali registered his concern as follows; "the overwhelming power of the central government, sooner than later, will no longer shelter the logic and special opportunities of federal character a and quota system in an open market economy and the specter of ethnic nationalism is hanging over the nation." Prof. Maduabuchi Dukor, also believes that the "Nigeria's problem is federalism against true federalism." He added that restructuring the Nigerian federalism will occasion "true federalism as a correction of the federal anormally..."

There is no doubt that restructuring the Nigerian federalism will constitute the foundation of continual growth, wealth and prosperity. This initiative was measured in January 1967 prior to the war in July of that very year and the proposal was for every region to man their affairs, create wealth by harnessing and managing their resources while making some commitments to the federal and government at the centre. Economically, these units must be separate and autonomous while other areas can be negotiated like the Military which is always the scope of the central government with the President as the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces for any Federal Republic.

Nigeria's federalism, as it exists today, encourages parasitism, dependency and laziness. Stupendous oil wealth which motivated the centralization urge is gone and restoring resource fullness of the state would be foreseeable. It is conceivably time to contemplate the notion of federalism and what it should denote in the context of Nigeria's particularism. As earlier observed, traditional definition of federalism perceives it as division or sharing of legislative power among the central and regional governments in an approach that offers shared independence in their individual domains. Its connotation

is to be established in the nature of society, not in the constitution. Nigeria by character is multinational, linguistically and culturally dissimilar and its constituent nationalities are geologically separated. What is inaccurately called the Nigerian federation has been overseen by ideologies that are anything but federal - a centralizing officialdom, a profoundly twisted three tier structure not founded on social contract but created by governmental fiat and has continuously expand dominance with a analogous societal disorder . Divergently, federalism should mean that component units (States and Local Governments) ought to be autonomous and should be able to survive on their own. Each state should unchain its potential. It denotes authentic and actual resource control, “that is, ownership and control of resources by the people so endowed who should decide who share it, with.” The Nigerian commonwealth is merely breathing a lie, therefore, there is imperative for restructuring.

Quite unparalleled is the inquisitive demand from all territorial segments of the nation, even individuals who were initially opposed to it have coupled themselves to the wagon of agitators. It is certainly nursing towards what could be portrayed as the popular demand of the peoples. It is evident from the description and analysis in the beginning of this work that Nigerian federalism is confronted with a innumerable problems which have occasioned the calls and agitations for political restructuring. M. Chris Ali discoursing the importance of restructuring the Nigerian superstructure opined the “the unending cries in Nigeria point to the need for restructuring of the federation to install a balance in power of some sort, not a shift of power.” It is pertinent to identify that the Nigerian commonwealth will certainly profit from the restructuring of Nigerian federalism or power devolution from the centre in innumerable ways:

First and foremost, it will engineer the promotion of National Integration and Stability. Restructuring will arouse cohesion among Nigerian people, which will as a result encourage stability and thorough cohesion among Nigerians. Integration is exceedingly essential in the national superstructural establishment, as it scrutinizes the challenges of diversity and inter-ethnic enmity and gives birth to tranquility and harmony among people. A restructured Nigeria is a Nigeria with developed leadership-building culture, where a truly-federal system permits each section to locally classify leadership for unrestricted governance, foster and intimately supervise such leaders for hard work and patriotic force of public service, concentrated on the advancement of individual regions, at a speed and a tempo that replicate the totality of each regional endeavor and resourceful use of indigenous resources; certainly, the contention for regional development ensuing from a justly federating Nigeria, will enhance sustainable growth and development across all regions of the country.

Furthermore, Restructuring will ensure evenhandedness, fairness and justice among the ethnic divides which will result to the elimination of the issue of preferentialism or favouritism in the Nigerian commonwealth. A good example of this is the government of the late president Umaru Musa Yar'adua which realistically and philosophically surmounted resolved and solved the challenges posited by the Niger Delta issues. This has recently taught the nation that government should not for all time recourse to violence

to patch up conflicts, round table dialogue should instead be the solution. A restructured Nigeria is a Nigeria where every component, region or zone of the country will be able to dedicate extra rationalizing time, conceptualization, study, searching and analysis to its mineral and agricultural resources, with a sight to budding an economic value-chain from them, which is the primary fundamental step channeled towards the expansion of a manufacturing competence across the commonwealth. When governments and individual investor and entrepreneurs in every segment of the country, are faced with the challenge to look for avenues of wealth creation particularly within their own region, and to cooperate with foreign investors to convert these natural endowments into actual economic empowerment of the people of their region, then we are sure and certain that restructuring is at work.

In addition, a restructured federalism will occasion economic development, prosperity and stability in Nigeria. The ideology in the creation of federalism in Nigeria was to fundamentally establish economic expansion and enthrone a reputable and effective administration. Restructuring will enhance constancy and stability in the Nigerian political economy, and would eradicate any type of crisis which could originate from ethnic conflicts. Every region would be obligated or force to administer its resources more cautiously and astutely giving minimal or no room for uneconomical expenditures. This will definitely curb or kill the prevalent gigantic monster called corruption. Component or regional sovereignty will without doubt unearth buried goldmines, hitherto unexploited resources and potentials as each component will focus on its sphere of relative advantage. There will be speedy and substantial advancement in infrastructure development. Government will be nearer to mass at the interiors.

Nevertheless, the essence of restructuring is to encourage unity and for the government to be brought closer to the people especially at the grassroots. Federalism came from the notion of peaceful coexistence among citizenry where government is brought closer to the populace, stability and unity in so as to advance national incorporation or integration. Because according to Ita;

more public appointments and elected offices may likely be needed within the federating Regions, with relatively less at the Centre, a Nigeria re-structured will be one where the process of recruitment into public leadership could be better subjected to closer local scrutiny for reputation, character and track record, as against the current practice where persons with dubious reputations and questionable bona fides among their own people, are chosen into high national office as leaders - presumably on behalf of their regions or localities - by a distant central government, which often knows relatively little (or, sometimes cares little) about the poor and low character reputation of such appointees among their own people.

Finally, Restructuring the Nigerian federalism will certainly eliminate the challenges of irregular, unequal distribution of Government allocation. Restructuring Nigeria's political structure will tackle the problem of uneven sharing of fiscal allocation by the federal government by guaranteeing that allocations of revenues to diverse regions are not politicized. A Nigeria restructured will emerge a Nigeria in which the Government at the center will no longer; "be able to automatically pool funds un-evenly from different parts of Nigeria, while re-distributing the same funds unfairly and inequitably (at the expense of the larger contributors among the various states and local governments - regardless of the quality of policy choices and good governance efforts by State and Local Government leaders." Conspicuously, restructuring of the nation's political and administrative superstructure will work as a prospect for tranquil coexistence among the diverse ethnic and religious diverse, because the previously existing federal structure is unitary in character which make the central government enormously powerful and despotic; the system stimulates and promote injustice, corruption, marginalization and is not only negating growth and development, but also incites unnecessary tensions and animosities.

Conclusively, restructuring the Nations mode and manner of federalism to have the figure and the feature of true and authentic federalism or federalism as it is in itself, is not only going to improve the social and economic conditions of the people but will project the mind of John Locke who propounded the theory from which the principles guiding true federalism are derived.

### **Conclusion**

This work having comprehensively studied the Nigerian federalism, its concomitant challenges, and the inevitable impacts on the Nigerian socio-political and economic structure, found out that despite some of the limitations of the Lockean liberalism, it is still, the panacea or remedy for Nigerian political plights.

In the entire history of political thought, John Locke is remembered as one of the most influential and controversial theorist. Locke's profundity in which he understood the bearing of philosophy on how man have good reasons to live their lives, is greatly appreciated. This work agrees with Mukherjee and Ramaswamy the "no political thinker had influenced political theorizing on two different countries in two different continents as Locke did." Also, Locke liberalism is reputed to have left the human society with a lasting legacy for a reputable leadership style despite the inadequacies found in the ingredients the constituted the theory.

John Locke's Liberalism reminds the government of every commonwealth those fundamental and primary purposes which alone justifies its existence. As Immanuel Kant ostensibly, argued, "the legislator is under the obligation to order the law as if they were the outcome of a social contract." John Locke's liberalism, just as that of Rousseau, brought out the notion that civil society rests not on the consent of the ruler but one that of the ruled and thus became an important factor in the restructuring of the Nigerian superstructure (federalism).

Irrefutably, it is pertinent to note that, John Locke's liberalism, brought to human consciousness the truism of the fact that individuals in the commonwealth possess rights that are natural and inalienable to them and as well need to seek them out and defend them. John Locke, unequivocally and unambiguously, posited that the government is for the people and therefore, must seek the well being of the people. It is on this note that this work recommends that we thrust consideration of the relevance of Locke's liberalism to recent political and economic quandary debilitating the stability of Nigeria as a commonwealth, as a result of a faulty political foundation and a malfunctioning federal system.

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