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# Federal Character and Political Appointments in Nigeria, 2015-2023

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## ABSTRACT

To address the challenges associated with nepotism and ethnic struggle for control of power in Nigeria, the federal character principle was introduced into the Nigerian constitution in 1979. In this paper, attempt is made to examine to what extent the federal character principle has influenced political appointments in Nigeria. This is in the midst of mounting accusations of nepotism by the Muhammadu Buhari The paper is anchored on the Pluralist Group Theory (PGT) which has the assumption that public policy results from inter group struggle for power. The study is a qualitative research, thus utilized secondary data from journals, text books, periodicals, magazines, reputable and reliable news sources for discussion and analysis. It observed that the federal character principle was adopted by the Federal Government to address issues that bother on inter-ethnic struggle for power through public positions. However, this has not yielded much result in Nigeria's development efforts as it has impeded effective and efficient implementation of public policies. Therefore, the study recommended amongst others, that for effective and efficient implementation of public policies, merit and proficiency must be taken into consideration in considering appointments and policy implementation in order to achieve the much needed national development.

**Keywords:** Federal Character; Public Policy; Ethnicity; Nepotism; National Development

## INTRODUCTION

The struggle for power and political advantage has been a major political challenge in any multi-ethnic state, particularly in developing countries. As a result, in many instances, such struggles have resulted to political instability, wars and revolutions. The case of Nigeria is not an exception. The plural nature of the Nigerian state has been a major issue that successive governments have continued to grapple with over the years. It has been characterized by ethnic and tribal struggles for dominance and advantage since the colonial period. The minorities have continued to express their fears over ethnic domination by the majority. It was this fear that led to the setting up of the Willinks Commission in 1958. The Commission received memoranda from individuals and minority groups, deliberated on them and presented a report containing among others the following: problems cannot be solved by creating more states; Fundamental Human Rights should be entrenched in the Constitution to safeguard the interests of the minority; the police should be under federal control; minority areas should have special councils; there should be a special development board for the Niger Delta areas (Nigeriaschoar.com, 2020).

It is also obvious that ethnic sentiments characterized the post-independence politics in Nigeria which culminated to the political crises that brought the abrupt end of the First Republic. The coup made matters worse as it was given an ethnic slant that deepened the crises in the country and the resultant effect was a

30 month civil war. Although the government declared a ‘no victor, no vanquished’ situation, mistrust generated from the crises continued to manifest in various spheres of the polity. The Gowon administration introduced policies to address the challenges of mistrusts, including the setting up of the National Youths Service Corp (NYSC) scheme. Furthermore, the process of constitutional amendment saw the Federal Government introduce the federal character principle into the Constitution in a bid to give a fair chance to the different ethnic entities in the country. According to Nwodim and Barikor, (2019) the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provided for a federal character principle as a strategy for accommodating the various ethnic groups that comprise the country. In the wisdom of the framers of that Constitution, the federal character principles are intended to deal with the feelings of mistrusts among groups who feel less represented in government positions. These fears and mistrust have in no way affected the implementation of public policies in Nigeria, thereby affecting the overall development of the country. This is so because, public policies are meant to achieve the objectives of providing a road map to address public challenges and when they fail to do so, it poses grave challenges for societal development.

This paper seeks to evaluate to what extent has the principle of federal character succeeded in engendering the overall development of the Nigerian state. To achieve this, the paper is sub divided into introduction; conceptual clarification, theoretical framework; review of literature, discussion of relevant data and analysis, summary and conclusion.

### **Conceptual clarifications**

**Federal Character:** The concept acknowledges the diverse multi-ethnic nature of the Nigerian state, as well as the challenges posed by the quest to gain access to power by these individual entities. The 1999 Constitution (as amended) gives legal backing to ensure that the diverse entities that constitute Nigeria are accommodated in terms of appointments and enlisting in public and strategies offices. For instance, Section 217 (3) of the Constitution provides that the composition of the officer corps and other ranks in the armed forces of the Federation shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria”. The Federal Character Commission (FCC) is a Federal executive body established by Act No. 34 of 1996 to implement and enforce the federal character principle of fairness and equity in the distribution of public posts and socio-economic infrastructure among the various federating units of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The provision of the 1999 Constitution in Section 14 and 153 consolidated the establishment of the Federal Character Commission’s operations in a democratic system of government. One of the duties of the Federal Character Commission is to work out an equitable formula, subject to the approval of the President, for distribution of all cadres of posts in the civil and public service of the federation and of the state, the armed forces, the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies, bodies owned by the Federal or State Government or extra ministerial departments and parastatals of the federation and states (FCC, 2018).

**Public Policy:** A most popular definition of the concept of public policy is that provided by Dye (1972) which avers that public policy is what government decides to do or not to do. However, other scholars have also opined on the concept. For instance, some aver that **public policy** is the means by which government maintains law and order or addresses the needs of its citizens through actions defined by its constitution, (White D., 2015). Sambo, (1999, p. 282) conceives public policy as the cumulative decision made by the authority in allocating values, which of course, may be favourable to some or unfavourable to others. From which ever perspective it is seen, public policy is an important instrument that government adopts to achieve its objectives. In other words, we could say that the quality of public policy and its implementation determines the level of development of a state. If there is strength in this assumption, it implies that public policy is a determinant factor for the overall national development.

**Ethnicity:** A group of people with a homogenous culture, beliefs, language and biological ancestral origin are said to be of one ethnicity. They, most often, pursue a common objective, purpose and are bonded together with these. Adeniji and Ofiwe (2-007) citing Cox (1970) aver that Cox sees ethnicity as a socio-cultural entity, while inhabiting the same state, country or economic area consider themselves

biologically, culturally, linguistically or socially distinct from each other and most often view their relations in actual or potentially antagonistic terms. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state comprising of over 200 different ethnic groups that hitherto existed independently and carried out their activities autonomously until the advent of the British colonialists. Each ethnic group is in perpetual struggle for either domination or to protect its cause and so inter-ethnic rivalry and competition manifests in the polity.

**Nepotism:** The concept is associated with ethnicity and tribalism. It is an unfair practice of giving advantage of positions, whether political, economic or social to favour one's tribal or ethnic group. The term nepotism is derived from the Latin words (nepos, nepotism) meaning grandson, nephew, as well as cronyism (for instance employment according to the principle of old university ties) granted relations or friends regardless of professional values (Wikipedia, Safina, 2014).

**National Development:** The concept of national development refers to efforts by government to enhance the overall wellbeing of the citizens. It involves policies and programmes, as well as strategies by government to ensure that the socio-economic lives of the individuals in the state are enhanced. The major prerogative of a state is to ensure the overall wellbeing of the state and that is achieved through the implementation of programmes and policies. According to Bawa, Bhawnal (n.d.), the term national development is very comprehensive. It includes all aspects of the life of an individual and the nation. It is holistic in approach and involves a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and development of individuals. He further avers that the United Nations Decade Report has defined national development as growth plus change. Change, in turn, is social and cultural, as well as economic-qualitative, as well as quantitative. It further states that for a broad perspective, development as a nation encapsulates such parameters as: development through a planned national economy; increase in agricultural production through application of modern technical know-how; harnessing industrial production; development of human resources; application of science and technology in the production sector; provision of various facilities to meet the needs and expectations of disadvantaged, deprived and poorest of the poor segments of the population.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The literature on public policy provides a number of theories that easily fit into diverse public policy strategies. The literature identify the Political System; Group Theory; Elite Theory; Rational Choice Theory, as well as Incrementalism Theory as models of public policy. Allen and Gilbert (2011). This study is anchored on the Pluralist Group Theory (PGT). The theory has a basic assumption that public policy or decision results from intergroup struggles for power. Citing Ikelegbe, they argue that struggle, interaction and competition among or between groups when processed result in public policies. The most influential group then dominates or determines the nature of public policy or decision. In relation to this study, it is obvious that the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state and the manner the colonial authorities cobbled the hitherto indigenous and distinct entities made for a skewed structure that has created fears and disaffection amongst the component units. Such fears emanate from the advantage the bigger and more dominant ethnic groups have over the smaller and weaker entities and hence the struggle and agitation for equity, justice and fairness in the activities of the state, particularly in the distribution of socio-political and economic resources that is accrued to the state. Evidently, these agitations are as a result of the contestation and competitions among the groups, hence the need to adopt policy measures that would address the situation and thereby create stability in the polity. The federal character principle is one of such public policy that emanated as a result of inter-ethnic rivalry and struggle for power in the Nigerian state, thus making the theory most relevant for this study.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The introduction of the federal character principle in the legal framework of the Nigerian state was a strategy aimed at enhancing the socio-political and economic stability of the polity. Successive governments of the Nigerian state having passed through a peristalsis of tribal and ethnic rivalry, culminating into a civil war have taken steps to prevent a repeat of such unwholesome occurrence. It is

obvious that no state can achieve progress and development without the requisite stability and so justice, equity and fairness become the watchword for a cohesive and smooth relationship of the component units. A major instrument to achieving this is the integration policy that brings the various entities together as a united and common front. Development scholars and public policy analysts have bared their minds on the subject matter from diverse perspectives. For instance, Idowu and Sayuti (2016) examining national integration issues in Nigeria aver that national integration is the hallmark of unity and development of any policy and that a multi ethnic state requires potent integration mechanisms because multi-ethnicity is a potential political 'time-bomb' which may explode at any time. The multi ethnic nature of the Nigerian state is obvious and makes this necessary. Adeniji and Ofiwe (2015) in their study of the impact of ethnicity on Nigeria's political development averred that the competition for scarce resources has been the core common bases of ethnic consciousness and tensions. The competition is in areas of land, boundary, natural resources, as well as political power and control. It is in this regard that Idowu and Sayuti (2016), harp on the need to evolve integration mechanisms which will stem the tide of violence, favouritism and nepotism in the polity. For Ajayi (1985), national integration is a serious problem in Nigeria. According to him, it is basic to the development of Nigeria and as a result advised the Federal Military Government to accord national integration a priority and to evolve a coherent policy and ideology towards the attainment of that goal. The foundation laid by the British colonialists in the creation of the Nigerian state makes this inevitable. The forceful cobbling of the distinct ethnic nationalities that hitherto existed independently in a manner that put some in advantageous position over the others makes this inevitable. On their own part, Ofide and Imhonopi (2013) argue that nation-building or national integration has long been seen as an important focus for post-colonial African governments. The fear of the minorities over the years has continued to create elements of mistrusts and instability in the Nigerian state over the years, resulting in intermittent conflicts, agitations and disruption of governance. This has been the lot of the post-colonial state in Nigeria. To this end, a number of strategies have been evolved in addressing the challenges associated with the multi-ethnic nature of the Nigerian state. For instance, General Gowon had alluded that the creation of twelve states in Nigeria was to protect the rights of minorities in the event of civil war (Edigin, 2010). In the face of all these, Ifeacho and Nwagwu (2009) argue that Nigeria's efforts at achieving national integration have remained largely unrealized. According to them, the history of democratization in Africa, in general and Nigeria in particular, has remained the history of national integration and so the integration crisis facing Nigeria is manifest in the minority question, religious fundamentalism and conflicts, ethnic politics, indigene-settler dialectic, resource control, youth restiveness and militancy and the clamour for a (sovereign) national conference or conversation about the fears of the nation's continued unification. It is based on this that Nwodim and Barikor (2019) argue that the fragile nature of the Nigerian state makes it important for policies of national integration, not only to be vigorously pursued, but it should be done with sincerity to promote a stable polity. However, Bakari (2017) highlights problems of national integration as follows: ethnicity, hangover of early empires, state and kingdoms in the Nigeria area, unhealthy formation and development of political parties in Nigeria and unabated passion for states creation in Nigeria. Part of this seems to agree with the views of Tamuno (1975, p.114) who argue that historically, it was easier to establish the Nigerian state than to nourish the Nigerian nation.... The latter eluded both the British officials and Nigerians for several decades thereafter.

Obviously, national integration is a veritable mechanism for establishing socio-political and economic stability of a state. Neuman (1976, p. 200) points out that national integration is not a measure of social homogeneity, but of the ability of a political unit (of a state for the purpose of this study) to conduct its important and necessary business without disaffecting large bodies of its constituents so that they are no longer willing to have their affairs regulated by or to participate in the political system. Examining national integration, citizenship and political participation and democratic stability in Nigeria, Edosa (2014) argues that the quest for national integration is important, serious and a daunting task. To this end, Onyeoziri (2002, p. 37) suggests that a more deliberate effort must be made to develop feeling of oneness among Nigerians. This call is pertinent in the obvious reality of the structure prevalent in the socio-

political and economic sphere of the country. As Gambari (2008) puts it: “In Nigeria, however, not only that many of our citizens demand basic rights such as the right to education and health, there is also serious variation in the enjoyment of these rights across the country. As a consequence, the citizen is not motivated to support the state and society because he or she does not feel that the society is adequately concerned about his or her welfare. Secondly, economic inequality across the country fuels fear and suspicion which keeps our people divided.” This brings to the fore the challenges that necessitate the struggle for power and the obvious need for a policy strategy to address the challenges. Perhaps, this reason underscores why Adegbite (2015) advocated what he described as adoption of a New Crusade on National Integration (NCNI) obliged with the objective of propagating and expanding the ideology of collective responsibility in tackling insecurity across the nation; propelling a redirection in the actualization of national integration through existing schemes and structures, as well as implementing new mechanisms on which national integration and national security will be achieved.

Examining the problems and prospects of the Federal Character Principle as a tool for national integration Tonwe and Oghator (2009) identify the reality that successive state creation exercises are seen as an expression and determinant of federal character and appear to have satisfied, to a large extent, statist claim to representation and at actualizing means to political power; the principle of federal character emphasizes the need for ethnic balancing as a necessity in the evolution of Nigerian citizenship and for ensuring less acrimonious relationship among the various peoples of Nigeria; the federal character principle has been manipulated by and channeled to serve the overall interest of the petty bourgeois ruling class;; the federal character satisfies the quest for representativeness and proportionality in allocating resources and in making appointments among various interest groups; the federal character principle is neither immoral or unjust. Rather, it should be seen as a variant of distributive justice, as a result of the undue application of the federal character principle, standards and professionalism are also compromised and engendered; the federal character principle can enhance the principle of efficiency of the service.; the complexity of the interests and units as represented by the North, South, state, local government, ethnic and religious group affiliations is also one of the problems and constraints of the federal character principle.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study relied on secondary data from books, journals, newspaper articles and online sources for information used for discussion and analysis. The method of analysis was qualitative, descriptive, historical and conceptual from which inferences for summary and conclusion were made.

### **The Federal Character Commission**

In a bid to implement the constitutional provisions of the federal character principle, the Federal Character Commission was established. The Commission was introduced under the military regime by the administration of General Sani Abacha,. By Section 1 (1) of the Act, the Commission was established and by virtue of subsection (2) and has the following features:

- i. Shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession;
- ii. Sue and be sued in its corporate merit;
- iii. Shall have its headquarters in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and
- iv. Shall establish an office in each state of the Federation.

### **Powers of the Commission**

By virtue of Section 5 of the Federal Character Commission Act (1995), the Commission shall have power to: formulate and provide guidelines for government agencies and other employers and providers of services and socio-economic amenities; monitor compliance with guidelines and formulae at Federal, State, Local Government and zonal levels in the employment and provision of socio-economic amenities; enhance compliance with its guidelines and formulae in the areas of the provision of employment opportunities, distribution of infrastructural facilities, socio-economic amenities and other indices; compel boards of directors of government owned companies and other enterprises which are subject to the

provision of this Act to comply with the guidelines and formulae on ownership structure, employment and distribution of their products; demand and receive returns on employment and socio-economic indices from any enterprise or body corporate and penalize any enterprise which does not comply with a request from the Commission; undertake the recruitment and training of staff of government agencies or departments where desirable; institute investigation into any matter relating to any institution or organization, where the institution or organization concerned fails to comply with the Commission, the institution or organization shall be required to bear the cost of such investigations, and do anything which in the opinion of the Commission is incidental to its functions under this Act. Furthermore, in 1996, the Federal Character Commission published the Guiding Principles and Formulae for the Distribution of Posts in the Public Service as follows:

The guiding principles provide for general principles under column A as follows:

- a. That each state of the federation is to be equitably represented in all national institutions and in public enterprises and organizations;
- b. That the best and most competent persons are recruited from each state of the federation to fill positions reserved for the indigenes of that state;
- c. That since a candidate has attained the necessary minimum requirement for appointment to a position, he or she should qualify to fill a relevant vacancy reserved for indigenes of his/her state;
- d. That where the number of positions available cannot go round the states, then sharing should be on zonal basis, but in the case where two items only are available, they would be shared between northern zones and southern zones;
- e. That if the indigenes of a state are not able to take up all the vacancies meant for them, the indigenes of other state(s) within the same zone should be given preferences in filling such vacancies;
- f. That in an ideal situation, posts to be distributed among the indigenes of the states and Abuja on the formula of equality would be 2.75% for the indigenes of each state after reserving 1% for the indigenes of Abuja. However, in the spirit of give and take, the Commission has decided to adopt a range so that the indigenes of any state should not constitute less than the lower limit or more than the upper limit of the range;
- g. That the six zones and the states they comprise are:
  - (i). North Central: Benue, FCT; Kogi; Kwara; Nassarawa, Niger and Plateau states;
  - (ii). North-East: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states;
  - (iii). North West: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara states;
  - (iv). South East: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states;
  - (v). South South: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers states;
  - (vi). South West: Ekiti, Lagos; Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states.
- (i). That for the zones, depending on the number of states within each zone, the Commission has adopted three ranges such that the indigenes of any state within a zone should not constitute less than the lower limit or more than the upper limit of the range of applicants to the zone

### **Powers and functions of the Commission Under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

Paragraph 8(1) of the Third Schedule Part I-C of the 1999 Constitution provides that the Federal Character Commission has responsibility to give effect to Section 14(3)(4) of the Constitution. In other words, it has a duty to enforce compliance with provisions relating to the concept of federal character enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution states that the functions of the Commission shall be:

1. To work out an equitable formula subject to the approval of the President for distribution of all cadres of posts in the civil and public service of the Federation and of the state, the armed forces, the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies, bodies corporate owned by the federal or a state government and extra ministerial departments and parastatals of the federation and states;

2. To promote, monitor and enforce compliance with the principles of proportional sharing of all bureaucratic, economic, media and political posts at all levels of government;
3. To take such legal measures including the prosecution of the heads or staff of any ministry, extra-ministerial department or agency which fails to comply with any federal character principle or for the prescribed formula adopted by the Commission;
4. To work out:
  - (a) An equitable formula subject to the approval of the President for distribution of socio-economic services, amenities and infrastructural facilities;
  - (b) Modalities and schemes subject to the approval of the President for redressing the problem of imbalances and reducing the fear of relative deprivation and marginalization in the Nigerian system of Federalism as it obtains in the public and private sectors.
5. To intervene in the operation of any agency of the Federal Government subject to the approval of the President, where in the opinion of the Commission, the function of the agency concerned is relevant to the functions of the Commission and the Commission is of the opinion that it is not being effectively implemented;
6. To advise the federal, state and local governments to intervene and influence providers of services, goods and socio-economic amenities to extend such services, goods and socio-economic amenities to deprived areas of the country;
7. To ensure that all ministries and extra ministerial departments, agencies and other bodies affected by this Act have a clear criteria indicating conditions to be fulfilled and comprehensive guidelines on the procedure for:
  - (a) Determining eligibility and the procedure for employment in the public and private sectors of the economy;
  - (b) The provision of social services goods and socio-economic amenities in Nigeria;
8. To ensure that public officers shall in the performance of their functions, adhere strictly to instructions to rules and regulations made pursuant to this Act;
9. To advise the Federal Government of Nigeria on the structure and rationalization of any Ministry, extra-ministerial department or agency, and
10. Carry out such other functions as the President shall from time to time assign it.

### **Appointment in President Buhari's Administration**

Implementation of public services in Nigeria is a function of the effectiveness of public officers appointed into relevant public positions. There have been criticisms and agitations of lopsided appointments under the present administration of General Muhammadu Buhari. In response to the criticisms, the Presidency released a statistics of appointments made under the regime. The statistics indicate that Ogun State in South West Nigeria has the highest number of political appointments made by President Muhammadu Buhari since his re-election in 2019. Ogun state holds 17 out of the 190 appointments. It is followed by Adamawa State with 14 and Kano, Lagos and Oyo States with 12 appointments each. Katsina, Osun, Edo and Ondo states have eight each. Kwara and Ekiti have seven each, with Delta State having six. Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Imo, Plateau and Zamfara states have one appointment each. The Federal Capital has none. On Zonal distribution the South-West geo-political zone comprising, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, Lagos, Ondo and Ekiti top the list with 64 appointees. The North- West zone comprising Sokoto, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Kaduna, Jigawa and Zamfara states have 37. The North-East zone comprising Yobe Borno, Bauchi, Taraba, Gombe and Adamawa states have 20 appointees. The South-South states namely: Rivers, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Edo and Bayelsa have 24 appointees. The North-Central zone made up of Plateau, Benue, Kwara, Kogi, Nassarawa and Niger states has 21 appointees. The South-East states made up of Imo, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra has 15 appointments. However this statistics does not include appointments made by the President to the boards and management of federal ministries (permanent secretaries), agencies and parastatals (director generals), managing directors, executive secretaries, executive chairpersons, corps marshals amongst others It did not also contain ambassadorial

appointments, as well as those of the national security agencies. A further breakdown shows that at least 102 of the presidential aides come from the south which has 17 states, while 87 come from the north with 19 states. All 190 appointees serve in the offices of the President, Vice-President, the First Lady and the wife of the President. In the midst of these, there have been criticisms over the lopsided nature of the appointments of the President given the reality of such appointments reduces merit and competence and thereby impinges on implementation of effective service-delivery in governance. However, Vice President, Yemi Osinbanjo was quite right when he stated in a recent online event that while “federal character is essentially affirmative to create balance..... it should be based on merit” such that if we are to reserve an office for a particular zone that some should be able to produce the best candidate. Also, former Central Bank Governor, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi had asked obviously in indignation, why federal character had always been pursued at the expense of merit and competence.

In fulfillment of the federal character principle, there is no zone, state or local government in this country that cannot offer human resource for any public office. The problem is that those who select or recruit do so for motives that leave little to do with a transparent and excellent discharge of duty. If the quality in terms of integrity and competence of persons is anything to go by, merit appears so glaringly to be the best consideration. This explains the degeneration of leadership and governance to the present intolerable level.

Even in the face of seeking equitable appointment to public agencies and parastatls, it has been observed that the Buhari administration clearly violates FCC provisions. For instance, the Chairman, Dr. Muheeba F. Dankakaka from the northern state of Kwara. The sitting Secretary is Mohammed Bello Tukur Esq. With her appointment, the top five positions in the Commission are firmly occupied by northerners. It is indeed a paradox of development that the natural body enshrined in the organic law of the land (1999 Constitution) has become a major paradox of national disunity. And sadly our elders and leaders have not been vigilant enough to note that the Commission’s abysmal failure to carry out its constitutional mandate is at the core of why agitations for self-rule and restructuring have of recent been longer than usual in the country. There is no doubt that given the nature and character of politics in Nigeria, the effectiveness in service-delivery will be impinged upon. Nnanna (2017) had stated “I am convinced that nepotism (favouritism granted to relatives, friends and political benefactors in various fields) is one of the worst forms of corruption. It is not only the root or foundation of corruption in Nigeria. It is also the fuel that feeds graft, impoverishes the nation and sets of one section (those who are benefiting from the nepotism) against the others (those being made to lose out). It is a major contributor to national disunity and instability. It is obvious that in the midst of national instability, it is not possible to achieve optimum output in public service delivery.

Nnanna (2017) further argues that the government of President Muhammadu Buhari has flagrantly violated the constitutional injunction in almost every aspect of its appointments and activities. In fact the President defined his formula of nepotism and favouritism (97%/5%) which is brazenly unconstitutional and he has continued to abide by it in spite of public outrages against it. The principle of nepotism puts personal, family or sectional interest above that of the nations’. It ignores constitutional injunctions and emphasizes the vital needs of small groups, over those of generality of Nigerians. In a government rooted on the foundation of nepotism those who belong to the President clan, section or political roots will always exhibit the brazen mentality that the government belongs to them and everyone else has been invited to come and eat. Nepotism is a huge monster that lays the egg which hatch into so many types of corruption.

Karakose (2014) examining the effects of nepotism, cronyism and political favouritism on the doctors working public hospitals observed adverse negative outcomes. According to the study results, unfairness in appointing, managers/heads of the hospitals affects the implementation in the health care delivery system. This gives reason why the health care system in Nigeria is considered poor and low. On his own part Saxone (2020) writing on this stated that one Abubakar Danjumar Umar had called out the President for dividing the nation along ethnic and religious lines, warning that lopsided appointments in government would spell doom for the country’s unity. In an open letter to President Buhari, Umar was



quoted as saying that the country was near the precipice as a result of his alleged unpopular policies that have undermined the unity of the country. He warned that unless this Buhari's administration changed its style of governance, Nigeria might further be faced with crisis. According to the letter "all those who wish you and the country well must mince no words in warning you that Nigeria had become dangerously polarized and risks sliding into crisis on account of your administration's lopsided appointments which continues to give undue preferences to one section of the country over others. Nowhere is this more glaring than in the leadership cadre of our country's security services. Mr. President, I regret that there is no kind or gentle words to tell you that your skewed appointments into the offices of the Federal Government favouring some and frustrating others shall bring ruin and disorder to this nation."

### CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing, there is no doubt that nepotism is orchestrated by the plural nature of the Nigerian state and the faulty foundation on which it was established, hence the need for successive indigenous administrations to make frantic initiatives to address the problem. Despite this, Nigeria continues to sink in the ocean of disunity, fear and mistrust. This has impacted negatively on her development. It is obvious that the 'cosmetic' approaches by successive administrations have not yielded the desired result of promoting unity in Nigeria. In other words, the federal character principle is mere cosmetic approach that post-pones the 'evil day'. Consequent upon this, we recommend as follows:

- That the principle of federal character has not yielded positive results and so should be scrapped;
- As true federal structure should be evolved so as to allow mutual respect for the sub units comprising the Nigerian federation;
- Appointments into public positions should be made on merit, irrespective of where someone comes from, the best and most qualified should be placed with such responsibilities; national institutions responsible for implementation of public services and projects should be strengthened in line with the principles of merit. This will help achieve effective service delivery in Nigeria.

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