

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (INTRA AND INTER) AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA'S TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

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### ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of Nigeria's fourth Republic 1999, the relationship among agencies, tiers and arm of government has not been healthy, thus cast aspersion on the likelihood of IGRs in stimulating social integration in Nigerian federal system. This unhealthy relationship is not unconnected with overbearing influence of the federal government over other levels of government which had heightened (inter and intra) governmental relations in Nigeria. A number of recent trends and challenges are identified while its implications on national integration are drawn from the current practices of IGRs in Nigeria. The paper explores secondary data such as textbooks, published journals, online information among others to explain the missing link between IGRs and social relations in contemporary Nigeria. The authors find out that the practice of intergovernmental relationship as shown today in Nigeria has not in any way strengthened good relationship among the units of governments. The paper therefore suggests the necessity to practice federalism base on constitutionalism and rule of law. Consensus must also play maximum role while taking important decision rather than coercion. The spirit of equality among the levels and arm of government must be imbibe toward strengthening intergovernmental relations and promote social integration in Nigeria.

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**Keywords:** *Constitution, Federalism, Integration, Government and Nation-States*

### INTRODUCTION

Intergovernmental relations are central to the practice of federal system of government in any federal system. However, this is not to suggest that intergovernmental relationship is only tied with federal system of

government. This is because in other forms of “administrative system like unitary system, relationship exists between different levels of government within the same political system” (Ojo, 2014). Intergovernmental relations not only imply relationships between layers of government alone but also interactions among agencies, government officials, citizens and the inter-government interactions.. In a mature federal system, federalism is means self rule, a sharing of power, responsibility and resources among the levels of government that make up the federation. In Nigerian federal system, the relationship among various groups, levels and arm of government have become problematic due to unitary practice coined federal system of government. The 1999 constitution has made the central to be too powerful therefore, dictating style of governance to other tiers of government.

Since the country return to democratic rule in 1999, the relationship between executive and the legislative arm has not been cordial until the current legislative arm. The Judiciary is not free from the crisis due to interference from the executive, not even the relationship between states and the central government has been encouraging. This supremacy battle had in the past led to litigation and court cases between the states and the federal government over constitutional jurisdiction. There have been conflicts over security matters, resource controls, power generation, and local government control among others. It needs to reiterate that the goal of government in achieving social cohesion would not be attained when coercion and intimidation rather than dialogue and consensus reign supreme. Thus, the paper x ray the practice and challenges of IGR in promoting social cohesion in Nigeria and also proffer suggestions on how IGRs can stimulate intra and inter units’ relationship not only within the government circle but also among Nigerians.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In Nigeria, the practice of inter-government of relations in both colonial and post-colonial Nigeria has been much exhibited in form of master-servant relationship or principal/ agent model. The quest for harmonious relationship of IGRs in Nigeria has been hampered by structural and institutional changes in Nigerian federal establishment. The unending conflict between legislatures, Judiciary and executive, the frosty relationship among the levels of government which had in the past resorted to withholding and seizure of local government allocation with executive fiat and other forms of impunity since the beginning of Nigeria’s

fourth Republic has not in any way enhance the expected social integration.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This paper adapted structural functionalism approach. The theory was authored by 'Herbert Spencer' (1800-1903). In his analysis, Spencer used both human system and society to justify the relevance of the theory in explaining factors and situation that could ensure stable society. In describing human system, the approach argues that skeletons, muscles, lung and various internal organs function independently, to help the entire body to function effectively. The approach remarked that all structures in a society work together for the survival of the society. Thus, "structural functionalism is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts must work together to promote solidarity and stability" (Macionis, 1944). This approach assumed that society has many structures that shape its operation. Thus, "society has evolved like organism" (Derosso, 2012). The approach looks at both social structure and social function and addresses society as whole in terms of function of its constituent elements, such as norms, customs, traditions and institution perform for the survival of the society. In application to Nigeria situation, it can be explain that all structures that make up Nigerian society have failed optimally in their responsibilities to stem the rising insecurity and other challenges facing the country. The theory posits that ideal interactions of people, religious body and institutions of government within society will strengthen the unity of any nation. The theory was developed to explain "collective roles that complement each other in fulfilling functions for society" (Talcott, 1977), as some roles are bound in institutions, including social structures (economic, education, legal, tradition etc. These are very important in assisting society to operate to, functioning effectively and fulfilling its goal for the society.

## **Models and Practice of Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria (IGRS)**

Wright (1988) identified three models of IGRs namely coordinate authority, inclusive authority and overlapping authority. According to him, the inclusive and coordinated authority models of IGRs are more or less constitutional destination in determining how states and LGs fit into existing federal system. In coordinated/separated authority model, there is a clear cut in authority relationship between the state and the central government. Here, the state is separated and autonomous from the central government while the states remain the creator of LGs. This

model can be attributed to U.S.A Intergovernmental relations (IGRs) operational system. Each tier of government is separated and supreme within their respective jurisdiction. Thus, each has its separate, ministries, departments and a distinct law and courts for enforcement. However,, in case of conflict between the federal and the state, the Supreme court became an arbiter. Nonetheless, local entities are minors and as such remain the creatures of the state.

The inclusive model sees state and local government as appendages of the federal government. Here the federal government maintains its dominance over others tiers of government, this system is commonly found in a unitary system like Japan, UK and presently in Nigeria federal-unitary system where the supposed autonomous units such as states and L.Gs are acting as agents of the central government. That is why political analysts argues that state and local government are mere governing entities in name as the federal government pushes for more expansion and dominance over other levels of government. . This model thus explains the hierarchical nature of authority which is dependent relationship. However, in overlapping model; there is interdependent of these governmental levels cooperating together. In this model, there is bargaining, cooperation, information and implementation of government policy. According to Wright (1985:59) overlapping authority models has three basic features: There are substantial areas of governmental operations involving national, state and local government

- (a) The areas of autonomy or single-Jurisdiction, independence and discretion are comparatively small
- (b) The power and influence available to anyone jurisdiction (or official) is substantially limited.
- (c) The limits produce an authority pattern best described as bargaining.

In this model, the pattern of governmental operations involves federal, state and local government. Thus, the autonomy and full discretion enjoy by all tiers of government are considerably small. The chief characteristics of the overlapping authority models according to Mohammed are:

- There is limited, dispersed power
- There is dependency
- Limited areas of autonomy
- There exist bargaining exchange relationships

--There exist cooperation and competition between and among the component units of the government (Mohammed, 2006).

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Intergovernmental Relations**

An intergovernmental relation is the interactions that exist not only among bureaucrats but also the tiers and arm of government in a country. However, scholars have argued that IGRs is best suitable to federalism than unitary system because of sub-units of government under federal system. The pattern of relation could be (Federal-state-local) in case of Nigeria federal system than unitary system (nation-local) relations or (inter-local relations). In a federal system, the federal and state government are said to be coordinate in relationship to power distribution, finance, authority issues, executive, and Legislature and Judiciary matters. Intergovernmental relation is the interaction that takes place among the different levels of government within a state (Adamolekun, 1983). Similarly, Olugbemi (1980:113) defines IGRs "as a system of hierarchically structured levels of government in a state." It is assumed that constitution of a state cannot spell out all the relations between the government, while duties and responsibilities at the same time cannot be total. Intergovernmental relations X-ray the whole array of activities designed to solve conflict that may emanate from the federal arrangements. This stands on the notion that dialogue and consensus rather than coercion remain the key to better social relation. It needs be stress that IGRs is neither about transfer of funds from one unit of government to another nor is it only an inter-jurisdictional conflicts network of transactions among various agencies and units of government in a state; But the harmonious working relationships that exist among the tiers and units of government for effective delivery.

Fundamentally, federal structures of government offers more defined platform for the operation of intergovernmental relations. Thus, in a federal system, Elekwa (1995) in Ikejana, Clark and Okoli identify six levels of Intergovernmental relations: Federal-state relations// Federal – state-local relations//Federal-local relations //state-local relations // state–state relations / /and local-Local relations. These identified levels represent both vertical and horizontal relations. However, Ayoade (1980) defines intergovernmental relations to comprise nine patterns. --Federal-state,/ Federal–local, / State–local, / Federal–civic- group,/ Local–Civic groups and Inter–Civic groups. From the above patterns, the four new

levels added are meant to show that IGRs is not only meant to explain the relations that exist among tiers and levels of government but also between the government and various groups within society.

### **Social Integration**

Social integration implies equal opportunity and rights for all citizens. Therefore, social integration connotes having various ethno-religious groups irrespective of race, language; caste etc without losing one's identity. Social integration is dynamic. It's a structural process which enhances integration through to achieve and maintain peaceful social coexistence. Social integration focuses on safe, stable and just society by mending social disintegration, social exclusion, social fragmentation, exclusion and polarization by expanding and strengthening conditions of social integration towards conditions of social relation and peaceful coexistence, collaboration and cohesion. The essence of social integration is to remove all impediments to national cohesion in heterogeneous society.

### **Bodies/Institutions for Managing Intergovernmental Relations**

The 1999 constitution has made it clear institutional avenue for IGRs between the federal government and other levels of government in the federation. The 1999 constitution 3rd schedule part one clearly provided areas of cooperation between federal and states government. These bodies include: The Council of States, Federal Character Commission, Nigerian Police Council, National Planning Commission, the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (Obiyan, 2010). The integration of these institutions can be seen in their composition and functions.

Hence, the Council of States comprises the President, who is the Chairman, the Vice President, all former President and Heads of State, all past Chief Justices of Nigeria, the President of the Senate, the Speaker, and all the Governors of the states of the federation and the Attorney General. Thus, in order to boost IGRs, "the Federal Character Commission and the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission consist of a Chairman and one representative from each state of the federation and F.C.T, Abuja (FRN,1999). There is avenue also for governmental relation between the federal and the state which was embedded in state and local government creation and boundary adjustment. Despite the establishment of these various institutions of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria, social relations has been

characterized by suspicion and ethnic distrust, and hostility between the levels of government while the political contest for the control for the centre has tend to worsen intra governmental relations among ethnic nationalities in Nigeria

### **Governmental Relations in Nigeria: Some Contending issues since 1999—present**

#### **Federal-States Relations:**

On local government creation, the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria constitutionally vested the responsibility for creating new local government in the state of the federation (See section 8 (3) and 8 (4). However, any exercise of this power without the approval from the national Assembly is a futile exercise. Its thus stated “this constitution shall not be passed by either House of the national Assembly unless the proposal is approved by the votes of not less than fourth –fifth majority of all the members of each house and also approved by resolution of the House of Assembly of not less than two-thirds of all the states (See section (8) (5)”. Nevertheless, the attempt to create local government by some states in the federation has remained one of the sources of conflict which create a frosty relationship between the federal and states in Nigeria. Several states government such as: Lagos, Kastina, Balyesa, Ebonyi, and Nasarawa states have in the past created Local government without fulfilling the constitutional approval from the national Assembly. They were forced to reverse their decision except Lagos state. The Lagos state government refusal led to seizure of the state Local government allocation by Obasanjo administration during his first term of office. As Supreme Court delivered ruling that local Government creation without recognition from the national Assembly was is incomplete. However, the Apex Court nullified the seizure of Local government allocation under any guise. The crisis raged on till expiration of Obasanjo regime in 2007.

#### **Federal- State Relations: On Security**

The issue of security is another sour area in the relationship between the federal government and the states in Nigeria. On paper, Governors are Chief security officer for their states but in operation, they do not have control over Police and other security apparatus domicile in their respective states. The order to Police Commissioner of a state is always from (Inspector General of Police) in Abuja. The security challenges facing Nigerian- state since 1999 is the end result of centralization of security apparatus. The worsening security across the federation most

especially the banditry in the north west and Boko- Haram crisis in Bornu state emanated due to lack of control over security forces despite the Governor being called chief security officers of their respective states. Other areas of conflict in security relationship between the federal-state governments remain the controversial withdrawal of state Governors security aids. For instance, the illegal impeachment of former Governors of Oyo and Ekiti states (Rashid Ladoja and Ayo Fayose) in 2003 and 2006 respectively. The current security challenge in the country has further widened the frosty relationship between the federal and state governments which has further led credence to agitation for state police, while some states had gone ahead to established regional security outfit.

### **Federal–State Relations: On financial Relation and Resource Control**

Finance has been the major problem in intergovernmental relations in Nigeria. It's not only within the federal and States government alone, but "state and local government relations as well as horizontal intergovernmental relations" (Obiyan, 2010). Fundamentally, the 1999 constitution has made it possible for centralization of resources. These resources in turn will be distributed to levels of government as prescribed by law. Basically, issue of financing between the federal and states since 1999 has been a major source of conflict with the state agitating for upward review of their monthly allocation. It is the dominance of the federal government over other levels of government that has created master–servant relations. It was on this pretext that scholars have accused the federal government for using monthly allocation to changed behavioral pattern of the state Governors most especially during Obasanjo regime. Resource control has always been a problem in IGRs. States are not endowed equally in natural resources. Thus, resources are being shared from distributive account known as (federation account). Therefore, federal government is responsible for "authoritative allocations of values" (Easton, 1975) to stem the tide of conflict. Agitation for resource control is particularly traceable to the nature of Nigerian federalism. The demands of the newly formed oil minorities' social movement included the restructuring the restructuring of the federation in a manner that gives more autonomy to other tiers (Obi, 1989).

Thus, it was after the intense struggle and agitation that 13% derivation was allocated to oil rich states of the South-South region by the Commission on Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission in 1994. The agitation is still raging as the South- South states Governors



have argued that 13% derivation was insignificant compared with hazardous situation of the region. The resource control struggle also ensued between the federal government and littoral eight states of the (Oil producing States. The littoral States asked the Federal Government the application of the derivation to revenues generated from natural resources located offshore from their Coast (OJameruaye, 2002).

### **State-State Relations**

Inter- state relations in Nigeria are very competitive rather than cooperative. Since the dawn of democratic governance in 1999, there have been improvement in inter- relations among States of the federation. For instance, the National Council of States and Governors forum provide an avenue for usual meeting, while the Northern and Southern Governors forum are also held and interact on how best to propagate their interest with Nigerian federation. But Political analysts are quick to argue that the recent comments and behavior of Governors in different Zones of the country are inimical to unity of the Country.

### **State–Local Relations**

The dissolution, removal and suspension of elected Local Government Chairman from office by some states Governors since the emergence of democratic rule in 1999 is harmful in promoting good governance at the local level. The elected Chairman often sacked or placed on suspension by the state Governors. Almost all the state Governors is guilty of this action.

### **Joint Account (State–Local Government Joint Account)**

This is another relations that currently generating conflict and confusion in states-Local Government relations in Nigeria. The states Government frequently seize and divert Local Government allocations through the dubious 'Joint Allocation System.' Virtually, all states government is to blame for this development and this has rendered Local government administration as mere administrative unit within the state.

### **Intra-Governmental Relations**

Since the beginning of Nigeria's fourth Republic in 1999, Nigerian-state has been facing the challenges of democratic consolidation. The unending conflict between the executive, Legislature and Judiciary at the beginning of 1999-2015 hampered democratic dividends in terms of good policy

formulation and implementation. The flagrant abuse of power, growing culture of impunity and flagrant disregard for bargaining, cooperation and constitutionalism has weakened intra-governmental relations which unarguably essential for social relations in any poly-ethnic state. The crisis between the Executive and Legislature first manifested during the first term of former President Obasanjo leading to removal of the former Senate President, Chief Enwerem, late Chuba Okadigbo, and Chief Adolphus Wabara. Intra-party crisis in the two leading political parties have also led to defections and cross carpeting to unimaginable magnitude in recent years. The crisis that emanated from conflict of interest between the former President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Vice, President Atiku Abubarka no doubt affected governance and interactions among tiers of government. Under former President Jonathan, the incumbent Governor of Sokoto state emerged the speaker of the House of Representatives against the interest of the executive. The emergence of former Senate President, (Dr) Bukola Saraki (2015-2019) the then (A.P.C) member under the incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari against the interest of the executive and the ruling party led to Cat and mouse game throughout the first term of the incumbent President. In Nigeria today, institutions that expected to promote social integration are frequently enmesh in conflict and system abuse and impunity. For instance, Nigerian Police Force versus Nigerian Army, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) versus Nigerian Police, Central Bank of Nigeria versus Ministry of Finance and many more have affected level of intra-governmental relations to promote social integration in Nigerian state.

### **Research Questions**

Below are the research questions the paper intent to answer:

- (i) What are presupposing factors obstructing social integration in Nigeria?
- (ii) How genuine are political leaders and bureaucrats committed to social integration in Nigeria?
- (iii) What are the likely remedies to problems of IGRs to achieve social integration in Nigeria?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main core of the study is intergovernmental relations and social integration in Nigeria and the specific objectives are:

- (i) To examine the link between IGRs and social integration in Nigeria.

- (ii) To analyze the ways in which the structure of the current federal system limit the growth of IGRs and negating social integration.
- (iii) To examine the various factors obstructing social integration in Nigeria

### **Significance of the Study**

This study has revealed the nature, pattern and character of governmental relations in Nigeria political system which is hierarchical. It is characteristically inclusive and reckless overlapping model. The practice that had started since the incursion of the military into political arena has been consolidated by successive civilian administrations in Nigeria. The current constitution which was handed over by the military in 1999 has erased what is known as 'cooperative marble theory in place of Domino theory/practices through its command structures. Therefore, its irrefutable that this paper will be useful for government to fashion out ways to address the fundamental problem of IGRs in Nigeria. The paper will also be relevant to the public and Scholars to carry out more research on politics of IGRs and its inability to promote social integration in Nigeria, and what needs to be done to achieve the desire objective.

### **Findings**

The inquiry on the study has revealed the pattern and character of governmental relations which is hierarchical in Nigeria. It is a system characterized with inclusive and overlapping model. The study has revealed that the dominance of federal government over other tiers of governments has contributed immensely to suspicion and mix feeling in governmental relations. The findings further revealed that intra and inter-governmental relations crisis that has enveloped Nigeria's fourth Republic has been competitive rather than cooperative relations which have not encourage expected cordial relations. Thus, the imperfect of 1999 constitution as handed over by the military was partly responsible for crisis of IGRs in Nigeria.

### **CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD**

This paper has identified some major issues in intra and inter-governmental relations as it affect social integration in Nigeria. The structural problem of Nigerian federalism as well as diverse nature of the country prompted varieties of governmental relations during the military era as the federation grows older. Therefore, as the fourth Republic began

in 1999; the agitation for regional autonomy, tendency towards rigid constitutionalism, inter-personal conflict, high-handedness and party partisanship reared its head with tendencies to strains governmental relations. The proper functioning of a federal system requires" a network of internal personal relations among officials necessary to overcome constitution rigidities and deadlock" (Obiyan, 2010). No doubt as it is presently constituted, the power relation between the federal and states is skewed in favor of the federal. Only the constitutional review in favor of the states and attitudinal change of the political elite will make fourth Republic get better.

### **Way forward**

- (1) Political actors should build the spirit of consensus rather than pressure or coercion at all levels of governance.
- (2) All the tiers and arm of government must imbibe the spirit of cooperation and partner in progress rather than Master–servant relations in governance.
- (3) The composition of power which is skew in favor of the federal must be address urgently. Similarly, government must not pay lip service to any attempt to review past constitutional conferences which were designed to proffer good governance and improved intergovernmental relations in Nigeria.
- (4) In the interim, the ongoing constitutional amendment must also be pursuing rigorously by removing several items under the exclusive list in favor of the state.
- (5) The current allocation formula which stands at: 52%, 28%, and 20% for federal, states and Local government respectively must be review urgently in favor of other levels of government, since there are closer to the grass root.

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