

## Reflections on the Federal Character Policy on Recruitment and Placement in Public Service in Nigeria: Implications for Merit and Morality

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### Abstract

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Nigeria is a heterogeneous state hence the adoption of federalism. Federalism allows for unity in diversity and internal freedom by coordinate units. Unfortunately, the post-colonial state system in Nigeria has put the practice of federalism in jeopardy following misapplication of its principles. The misapplication is manifest in all sections/sectors of the state. It has resulted in real and imagined marginalization, mistrust and violent crisis in some cases. To minimize the consequences, federal character policy was introduced in Nigeria via the 1979 constitution. Pursuant to this constitutional provision, Decree N0 34 of 1996 established a Federal Character Commission to ensure that the federal character policy is strictly implemented by all government agencies at all levels of government. Unfortunately, the implementation of the policy at the federal level, and in particular, with respect to recruitment and placement has resulted in defeating the objective of the policy. This Study, using secondary source of data reveals that the policy has resulted in the engagement of incompetent hands in the public service. This has resulted in inefficiency, lack of professionalism and low productivity of the Nigeria civil service. The policy has been used to kill the moral of competent and qualified staff and merit has suffered as criteria for effective service delivery in the public service. Pre-bender Politics has over taken merits in recruitment and placement. To correct this anomaly, this paper suggests Nigeria adopts a restructured federal system that would make the component parts autonomous and independent of the centre among other recommendation. This will reduce the pressure on the centre.

**Keywords:** *Federalism, Civil Service, Recruitment, Placement, Federal Character Policy*

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### **Background to the Study**

Nigeria, by virtue of section 2, subsection 2 of the 1999 constitution as amended, operates a federal system of government. This is an appropriate governmental system given the heterogeneous character of the inhabitants of the country. According to Kirk-Green, cited in Ojo, (2016) Nigeria has well over four hundred (400) ethnic groups. Apart from ethnic diversity, Nigeria is also a multi-religions state with Islam, Christianity and host of other traditional religions been practiced. As a multi-ethnic and multi-religions state, Nigeria has to contend with myriads of problems such as fear of domination of one ethnic or religious groups by another, unequal distribution of national resources including recruitment and placement of staff in to the public service of the country. These problems have resulted in inter-ethnic and religious conflicts, mutual distrust and suspicion as well as continuous agitation for separate existence and secession or dismemberment of certain ethnic group from the country. The consequence has been absence of unity and integration, which has made growth and development of the country a herculean feat to attain by successive governments since independence. Through several policies and programmes, attempts have been made to integrate the people. These policies include creation of more states and local governments, establishment of Unity Secondary Schools, quota system in employment as well as the policy of the federal character in employment, deployment and placement of civil servants at all levels of government.

The federal character policy is the desire to integrate all the diverse elements in the country with a view to ensuring political stability, peaceful co-existence as well as economic development. Unfortunately, in practice the policy is being used to enthrone mediocrity in the public service. It is a tool wielded by political elites to promote their personal and or group interest at the expense of the under privileged. This has resulted to divisiveness, low productivity in the civil service, systemic corruption etc.

This work is divided into five sections. Section one is introduction. It discusses the statement of the problem, the study's objectives as well as the research questions. It also discusses significance of the study as well as its scope and limitations. Theoretical framework and definition of concepts, Section two critically examines the application of the principle at the federal government level. Section three discusses the findings of the research. The fourth section deals with Conclusion of the study while the final section offers recommendations for improvement in the application of the principle for better performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The federal character policy is a very useful integrative mechanism in a diverse state like Nigeria and so its introduction is a good development. In principle, the policy is a powerful instrument to solve the problems of multi-ethnic and multi-religious society like Nigeria. It is also capable of ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism in the civil service. More importantly, it serves as a mechanism for proportional representation of all diverse elements in the federation. Unfortunately, in practice, it has turned to a very powerful instrument used to deepen disunity, promote incompetence,

ineffectiveness and inefficiency. This results from recruitment and placement of incompetent and unqualified hands; why then has its implementation been this disastrous, leading to grater inequality, sectionalism, nepotism and corruption?

The significance of this study lies in its handiness in assisting political leaders to identify the evil inherent in reducing merit consideration in recruitment and placement in civil service to insignificance. Universally, merit is a major basis of recruitment and placement. Inappropriate application of the federal character principle has resulted in low productivity of the service. Again, the study is significant in its ability to point out how the principle of federal character can be properly applied. This knowledge will assist policy makers and even politicians. It will also add to existing literature and so assist further researches in this and related fields and placement in the civil service in Nigeria to achieve the goals of the policy.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to identify the major problems with the implementation of the federal character principle/policy and its implications on national development and integration. The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the reasons for the introduction/adoption of the federal character policy in Nigeria
2. Examine its implementation in the Federal civil service with respect to recruitment and placement.
3. Identify the loopholes, if any, in its implementation.
4. Suggest measures to address the problems with its implementation for better results

### **Research Questions**

This paper seeks to address the following research questions;

1. Why was the federal character policy adopted in Nigeria?
2. How appropriate is the application of the Federal Character Principle/policy in recruitment and placement in the civil service in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges in the implementation of the federal character principles in the federal civil service?
4. How can the implementation of the policy bring about unity and harmony among diverse elements in Nigeria?

### **Research Method**

The research method adopted in this study is the use of secondary source of data. We consulted relevant and valid information contained in books, journals, existing literatures as well as internet. We use this method because we consider it appropriate and people have written lots on the topic. and related ones. The time available for conduct of this research is insufficient for application of any other method of research. This challenge notwithstanding, the outcome is not affected.

### **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited to recruitment and placement of staff in the Public Service in Nigeria at the federal level. This scope is determined essentially by the time available to complete and present this work. Another determinant of the scope is the financial resources available to the researchers. The nation's economic condition makes extensive research costly. Again, because of people's attitude to research, there is high level of unwillingness to divulge useful information by those who possess it. Notwithstanding these constraints, the outcome of the study is not affected.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

In order to avoid misconception or misinterpretations, some of the concepts used in this study are conceptualized in the context they are applied. These concepts are:

#### **Federal Character Policy**

According to Ayoade, (1998:117) Federal Character Policy is 'the Achilles heel of Nigerian politics', which according to him, aims at addressing historical imbalance and integrate Nigeria. It is a deliberate arrangement made by a state with a legal back up to address the problem of multi-ethnicity. Other problems it aims to address include fear of domination by one or few ethnic/religion or sectional groups, unequal distribution of the national resources and the need to promote national unity and also command national loyalty, by ensuring fair and equitable distribution of the national resources among the ethnic/sectional groups that constitute the state. For the purpose of this work, we see federal character policy as a mechanism adopted by the political elite and rulers in Nigeria to reduce, if unable to remove marginalization, domination of one ethnic/religions group by another group. It is also a means to ensure fairness and equity in the distribution of national resources among all the diverse elements of the country.

#### **The Civil Service**

The civil Service is the machinery through which the government implements its policies designed to meet political aims and provide social services. It plays very important roles in ensuring that government policies result in tangible services for the entire population.

#### **Recruitment**

Recruitment is defined as a process or specific steps through which suitable candidates are attracted to apply for examination and declaring the right candidates for particular jobs. It is a process of hiring suitably qualified work force.

#### **Federal Character Commission**

The Federal Capital Commission is a Federal Executive body established by Act N034 of 1996 to implement and enforce the Federal Character principles of fairness and equity in the distribution of public posts and socio-economic infrastructures among the federating units of Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study applied the Bureaucratic Management Theory. This is because it is considered more appropriate. The Bureaucratic management is described as a formal system of organization based on clearly defined hierarchical levels and roles in order to maintain efficiency and effectiveness. Max Weber embellished the scientific management theory with his bureaucratic management theory, which is mainly focused on dividing organizations into hierarchies, establishing strong lines of authority and control. Weber suggested that those organizations develop comprehensive and detailed standard operating procedures for all routinized tasks. The bureaucratic theory is still applicable in today's organizations, especially in public and large private organizations.

Scott (1994), defines bureaucracy as the existence of a specialized administrative staff. According to Weber, bureaucracy is a particular type of administrative structure developed through rational legal authority. The literal meaning of bureaucracy is rule by office or by officials. Bureaucracy, and by implication bureaucratic organizations are characterized by job specialization, hieratically arranged authority, Employment and career progression, is also another characteristic of bureaucracy (Gorge and Jones, 2011) most organizations use the principle of employment and career whereby all personnel are selected and promoted on the basis of their technical qualifications and offered a full time carrier. However, although an employment and career is applicable to many organizations, it has its weaknesses to the individual employee and to the organization as a whole. To the employee it can restrict the psychological broke of the individual in his or her job. The disadvantage to the organization is that individuals throughout the company are promoted to their level of incompetence.

A formal written record is another characteristic of bureaucracy (Robbins et al, 2011). Most organizations use the principle of formal written records. In most former organizations, administrative acts and decisions are recorded in writing. Records keeping provide organizational memory and continuity overtime. Armstrong, (1998) opines that formal written records are used to document all rules, regulations, procedures, decisions and actions taken by the organization and its members to preserve accountability and consistency. A policy and procedure manual are good examples of formal records. The advantage of formal written records is that it creates an organization history that is not depended on individual memory; however, the disadvantage of formal written records is that employees come to see record keeping as an end in itself rather that a means to an end. The other disadvantage is that recording incidents inhibits flexibility, adaptability and irresponsibleness. Therefore, it can be said that bureaucracy is still applicable in modern day organizations although it has some weaknesses.

Mondy (1988), holds the view that rules and procedures is also among the characteristics of bureaucracy. This principle is applicable to most if not all modern day organizations because without rules and procedures an organization cannot function well since there will be no orderliness. Robbins et al (2010) holds the view that management by rules and regulations provides a set of standard operating procedures that facilitates consistency in

both organizational and management practices. Robbins et al (2010) holds the view that the positive consequence of rules is that employees know what is expected of them. However, the disadvantages are that it introduces delays, stifles innovation and creativity, it leads to individual and sub unit goal replacing organizational objectives, rules defines acceptable level of performance. Therefore it can be safely argued that although bureaucracy has its weaknesses it is still applicable in today's organizations.

The last characteristic of bureaucratic management theory is impersonality. At all bureaucratic organizations procedures and rules are impersonal and applied to managerial non- managerial employees. Managers maintain an impersonal relationship with employees to promote fair and equal treatment of all employees so that unbiased decisions can be made. Hellriegel et al, (1988) opines that impersonality fosters efficiency and reduces bias. However, the negative consequence of impersonality is that it creates a climate of alienation through the firm as employees come to see themselves as small cogs in a wheel. Although, the bureaucratic theory is still applicable, it has its shortcomings.

One critique is Weber's claim that bureaucratic organizations are based on rational legal authority. Scott (1994), notes that Weber claims that authority rests both in the legal incumbency of office and on technical competence. This works if supervision has more knowledge and skill, but often this is not the case. Thompson notes that in today's organizations authority is centralized but ability is decentralized (Bach, 2005). In fact, staff – line seem to be a structural resolution of this authority ability quandary that Weber overlooked. Note that Weber also does not distinguish between definition and proposition in this model. This list of distinguishing characteristics is linked between each other. Udy (1959), found in examining 150 organizations and found no correlation between the bureaucratic attribution of the organization and its rational attributions. More recent theorists think that earlier theorists misread Weber and distorted his views. Weber was defining a formal rationality that was not necessarily optional for efficiency.

In spite of these criticisms, bureaucratic management theory remains one of the theories that have assisted scholars in identifying and resolving problems in formal organizations. Using this theory in this study, we have seen that if the due processes outlined in this theory are followed in recruitment and placement in public service in Nigeria and in line with principles of the federal character, problems currently bedeviling public service in Nigeria might be overcome.

## **Application of the Federal Character Policy in Nigeria Civil Service at the Federal Level**

### **Introduction of the Federal Character Policy in Nigeria**

Federal character principle or policy has been with Nigeria even before independence. It was called zoning and quota system. The objective then was to take care of disequilibrium that may exist among the diverse elements. Just before independence, precisely with the inauguration of 1954 constitution in colonial Nigeria, Federal system was foisted on the country with the then three regions been the component and

coordinate members of the federation. Under this constitution, legislative items were divided into three, exclusive, concurrent and residual legislative lists. The Exclusive legislative list was vested in the central authority, residual list was vested in the regions while concurrent list was vested in both the centre and the regional governments. With this arrangement, each region had power over issues that directly affect its people and so within its purview it was more powerful than the central authority.

The regional government was more influential and powerful than the centre because it controlled resources. There was healthy competition among the regions for their regional development. At the centre, efforts were made to ensure balance in representation particularly where there was imbalance in representation. This was what informed the establishment of the Federal Training Center, Kaduna. This centre trains junior level work force to enhance communication between those who could not communicate in English from the Northern region. Between October 1954 and October 1960, the idea of fair representation of all regions in federal appointment was accepted without any specific quota or ratio.

Recruitment to the Officer Corps of the armed forces and the police was based on quota system and equal representation between the North and the South. The quota system as a basis of recruitment into public offices remains till 1967 when the regions were abrogated given birth to twelve (12) states as federating entities at the federal, state and even local government levels. The quota system was replaced with proportional representation of the states. Unfortunately, the policy has been jettisoned in practice as observed by Onimode (2007). Rather he said, emphasis is now placed on the recruitment and placement of junior officers on the staffing of branch offices at the states with indigenes of the states. In this regard, the federal civil service commission issued a policy statement that direct indigenes of states to occupy the junior level cadre of federal establishments in their states.

It was in the second republic (1979-1983) that the federal character principle was formally entrenched in the Nigerian constitution. Section 14, sub sections 3 and 4, of the 1979 constitution states, in part that:

*The composition of the government of the federation shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character principle and the search for national integration, the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies. Sub-section' state thus; the composition of the government of a state, local government councils or any of the agencies of such government or council, be carried out in such a manner as to recognize the diversity of the peoples within its area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the peoples of the federation*

The rationale behind this principle is further explained in the supplementary clause of the 1979 constitution as "the distinctive desire of the people of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a thorough sense of belonging. The constitution made provisions that could aid the actualization of the principle. Among others, these include provisions that contain national/federal offices be spread among the states or regions of the country which the states and local governments levels should equally replicate. The draft Nigerian constitutions of 1989 and 1995 which were not promulgated made further additions to the list of the organizations and positions to which federal character principles was to apply to. Some of these additions found themselves in the 1999 constitution. The report of the presidential Committee on the Review of the 1999 refers to the federal character as 'the distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, forestall national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging'. This was given effect to in section 22 (3) and (4) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution.

The principle was further extended to embrace what it calls "equal opportunity", which refers to the distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to prohibit all forms of discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, place of origin, religion, political, social, economic, educational and employment opportunities as equally expressed under section 50 of the 1999 constitution. The essence of the Federal Character principle as envisaged in Nigeria aims at playing down centrifugal and centripetal forces that can disintegrate the polity. Furthermore, it equally accounts for the reasoning why at the federal level all the states of the federation are expected to be adequately represented in the federal executive council. Similarly, at the state and local government levels, this principle also holds with the local governments and electoral wards serving as basis of sharing resources and offices. It is expected that the principles of federal character must reflect in all spheres of life, but most pronouncedly in the election of people into high political offices like the president, president of the senate, Speaker House of Representatives, the Chief Judge of Nigeria. Other places are ordinary people of Political Party offices, composition of cabinet, Recruitment into armed forces and other Paramilitary formations, federal commissions and such other bodies.

The federal character policy is an integrative mechanism in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria. Nnoli (1987) explains that federal Character policy is not synonymous with mediocrity, neither does it entails replacing officers from particular sections of the country with those from sections not fully represented in the civil service.

### **Implementation of the Policy in Nigeria**

Implementation of Federal Character policy is affected by inadequate recognition of the principle. This results in recruitment of Federal Civil Servants with low qualifications and experience. Some Federal Civil Servants recruited through Federal Character policy rather than by merit have demonstrated inadequate knowledge and incompetence on the job at various levels of the service.

An accommodative strategy should accommodate the interests of all the diverse component parts in terms of sharing national resources including recruitment and placement into the public service. In the government view on the political Bureau report in 1987, it was observed that federal character principle touches a lot of issues which includes ethnicity, national question, minorities' problems, discrimination based on resource allocation, power sharing, employment and placement of personnel in institutions of higher learning . It also provides formula for participation in the government of the country in such a way that a single section of the country will not dominate another or segment dominating the rest. This indicates that the bureau identifies lopsidedness in appointment, placement and promotion in the public service, hence the recommendations. The basic assumption is that every segment of the federation participates in the governance and there would be equity and fairness in the distribution of national resources and offices. This is expected to engender a sense of belonging in the state by all segments of the society.

However, this might not be the case. In a study carried out by Ayilara, O (2015). He finds that in 2003, a distribution of consolidated work force statistics of 220,263 staff on GL 01-17 by state of origin in the federal civil service shows that 18 states constituted below 2.5% ideal range set for the study, 14 states each constituted above the 3% upper limit and 5 states constituted 2.5 % within the prescribed ideal range. In 2004, the study reveals that 213, 368 civil servants by state of origin on GL01-17 indicates that 18 states constituted below the 2.5% ideal limit, 13 states constituted above 3% upper limit and 6 states each are within the ideal prescribed limit. In 2005, same study shows the statistical distribution of state-by-state of origin in the federal civil service as follows: 7 states are within the 2.5% ideal limit, 17 states were below the limit while 13 states constituted above the 3.0% upper limit.

What this figures means is that there is discrepancies in the implementation of the federal character policy. Although, all states cannot have equal number of staff because of differences in population, but a situation where few states are disadvantaged leads to agitation and mistrust in the land. Nigeria currently adopts a six geo-political zone strategy to ease the implementation of the federal character principle. Though it is still not a constitutional matter, the geo-political divide has been used to allocate political offices by political parties such that all the national political offices are allocated and rotated among the geo-political zones. In furtherance of the pursuit of the federal character principle, the federal government established the federal character commission via decree N0 24 of 1996. The Commission is charged with the responsibility of promoting, monitoring and enforcing compliance with the principle of fairness in the sharing and distribution of all cadres of public positions and socio-economic services, amenities and infrastructural facilities all over the federation. It should take necessary legal measures against any public officer that fails to comply with the principles of federal character.

The federal character principle has embedded in it, provisions that ensure all-inclusiveness of all shades of diversity in the governance of the state. However, in practice

the principle of federal character defeats its objectives due to man-made actions or inactions. Appointments, placements and even promotions are characterized by favoritism, which ultimately results in lopsidedness, and hence the public service jettisoned merit criterion for mediocrity and nepotism.

### **Findings and Discussions**

It should be noted that this work suffers from inadequacy of necessary data upon which the work would have been based. Ideally, data from official source detailing number of staff recruited within a period, giving details of their state of origin would go a long way to assist. However, this is not available because of the non-cooperative and even intolerant attitude of the officials who has this data towards research. However, we have been able to deduce the following out comes from scanty records available.

The federal character principle has been subjected to debate as to its usefulness to Nigeria and otherwise. While some people see it as mechanism to ensure ethnic balancing in recruitment and placement of employees, others conceive it as a euphemism for federal discrimination or a geographical apartheid (Report of the Constitutional Conference, containing the reactions and recommendations, 1995).

According to Gboyega (1989), the implementation of the Federal Character policy is characterized by arbitrary appointment and removals especially during the lengthy period of military rule in Nigeria. Southern bureaucrats saw it as constraint to their proper placement and this demotivated them as their sense of belongingness was affected. Suberu (2001), has similar negative observations on the Federal Character principle and he analyzed the varying degrees of assessment of the principle. He was of the view that Northern Nigerians preferred the policy as a tool for representative bureaucracy while Southern Nigerians see it as a discriminatory tool for recruitment.

In the same vein, Okpu (1998), opines that the policy tends to favour Northerners while Southerners were negatively affected in terms of its implementation. Oyovbaire (1983), sees the policy as affecting efficiency in recruitment and paving the way for mediocrity in positions of authority. This writer disagrees with this opinion. Rather, we believe the policy's implementation favours all Nigerian elites regardless of which region they come from.

This study however finds that in implementation, the policy of federal character suffers disrepute. As argue by Akinwale (2014), in theory, the federal character principle aims at bringing about national unity, but in practice, it results in negative implications, particularly representation of the states. It is a policy that is supposed to be beneficial to all Nigerians regardless of their ethnic, religion or regional affinity, which turned out to be a one-edge sword serving the interest the few elites who plays religion, regional and ethnic cards among the masses to exploit the situation for their selfish interests. This led to recruitment of unqualified individuals who are not professionally competent and vocationally unfit for jobs they were recruited to perform.

The normal checks and balances that prevailed in the service were removed resulting into geometric diffusion of mediocrity, ineptitude in the civil service and manifest decline in public morale Osaghae and Onwudiewe (2007). Similarly the practice, in alter contradiction of its principles, negatively affects the integrity and the standard practice of civil service bureaucracy. It ensures unnecessary meddlesomeness of politics in the public service because of the dictum of 'he who pays the piper dictates the tune'. The claim that some states are under-represented in an organization and so people should be recruited from such areas regardless of their quality has simply bastardized the Nigerian public service.

In other federal states they devise means of ensuring that the society, though diverse too, has a mechanism that ensures equity and justice among all the diverse elements in such societies. In India for example, a means to address the issues of conflict between the diverse elements in the state to ensure efficiency, inclusiveness and meritocracy in the public service are introduced from the point of entry into the public service. Progress in Indian civil service is therefore based on examination and performance. This enables individuals to strive/ struggle for excellence, as there is no other means other than performance. In this system, merit and morality are held sacrosanct and are not toyed with as criteria for recruitment and placement.

Thus one observes that in a federal state like Nigeria where people are diverse, there is need for a mechanism like the federal character principle to ensure fair distribution of resources, equitable share of national resources as well as equal access of all to state service through recruitment and placement. In principle, one observes that the rationale behind the promotion of the federal character policy and the federal character commission are laudable as they aim at equity, fairness and justice in the allocation and sharing of national resources to all elements in the country.

However, in practice, the principle has been abused and even battered. The misapplication of the principle has resulted in the lopsidedness in the appointments and placement of public servants at federal, state and even local government levels. Consequently, productivity in the states by public officers has dwindled and in some instances has gone into comatose. It has been revealed that the cause of the present state of affairs in the federal, state and even local service in Nigeria is a result of so many human factors including but not limited to misapplication of the principles of federal character policy.

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

This work attempts an examination of the principles and practice of Federal Character principle in the Nigerian civil service. The policy is seen as an integrative mechanism whose major objective is to ensure equal representation of all the diverse elements in the Nigerian state in the sharing of national resources, political offices, civil service and such other institutions of the state. The study finds that in principle Federal Character policy is a good instrument in a diverse state like Nigeria to harmonize the resource for the overall

development of the country. Unfortunately, the study discovered that as laudable as the objective of the policy is, its implementation leaves much to be desired. In fact, the policy has been held principally for the current inefficiency, ineffectiveness, unprofessional conduct, low productivity unproductivity that characterize the Nigerian civil service.

This study identified inequality of the diverse elements in the Nigerian state as the reason for the introduction of the federal character principle to the Nigeria public service. This problem was inherited from the colonial rule that peached one region against the other and did not administer the North and the South protectorates as one entity. The attempt to redress North- South imbalances resulted in the creation of states. Unfortunately this did not solve the problem, it rather created another set of problems by weakening one region against the other. Bello (2012). The federal character principle was introduced to redress the historical imbalances inherent in the polity. It was also aimed at promoting sense of belonging in the polity by all and sundry, enhance national loyalty and achieve national integration. Unfortunately, the application of the policy has failed to achieve the objective for which it was formulated. The application of the principle as witnessed in recruitment and placement of public servants in Nigeria enthrone mediocrity instead of merit. This misapplication has resulted in to the level of decadence that is common feature of public service in Nigeria today.

There is no doubt that Nigeria is a diverse state. Because of this feature there is bound to be conflict of interest. It is the responsibility of the state to ensure that there is harmonious relationship among all peoples of Nigeria. To this end one need to commend the efforts of successive governments in Nigeria for the promotion of mechanisms that ensure integration of the people. The Federal Character policy as well as the Federal Character Commission is necessary tools for ensuring peace and harmonious relationship among the component parts of Nigeria. Unfortunately, the implementation of the policy is defective.

The fact that the implementation of the policy is defective has not vitiated its efficacy as a panacea to problem of the civil service in the country. Therefore, one of the recommendations of this paper is that the policy should be implemented without bias. The Federal Character Commission should be strengthened by injecting into it people of integrity who are detribalized and nationalistic inwardly and outwardly. The commission should also enjoy a great level of autonomy. This may address the current imbalance in recruitment and placement in the public service.

Secondly, in order to ensure an effective and efficient Civil Service in Nigeria, as a machinery of government for service delivery and sustainable development, recruitment, placement and promotion of civil servants in Nigeria should be based on merit rather than mediocrity. This actually will ensure that capable and qualified personnel are employed in to the public service.

The Nigerian government should endeavor to put extra measure in place to ensure that the issue of arbitrariness and victimization of public officers in the name of balancing or re-balancing in the name of implementing federal character policy should be discouraged. Undue political interference in purely civil service matters should also be discouraged. Merit, as a measure of competence should be place over and above any other considerations in recruitment, placement and promotion of public officers to ensure development in all spheres of the Nigerian society.

Finally, we like to recommend an amendment to the constitution. In this amendment, responsibility of the federal government as contained the exclusive legislative list should be transferred to the state. This will reduce the pressure on the federal government. If this is done, proper attention will be paid to the job and competent hands will be hired.

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