



**UNVEILING THE POLICY INTRIGUES OF FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLE IN
NIGERIA 2011-2022**

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Abstract

Managing a plural society has been a taxing exercise due to suspicious and lack of trust among the federated units. The case of Nigeria is even alarming that a sixty-two years old independent state is still wallowing in the ocean of mistrust. Today, in spite of interrelationship and sociocultural connectivity in the country, division and ethnic domination continue to be the popular narrative. It then demands comparative methodological attention which is the flagship of political science to vividly discuss the federal governmental configuration aimed at deepening connectivity towards peace and nation-building. Putting it into proper perspective, this paper deployed descriptive analytical discourse using elite-instrumentalist perspective as the theoretical escapade to unveil the intrigues of Federal Character principle (FCP) as experimented during the Jonathan 2011-2015 and Buhari 2015-2022 administration in terms of appointments into ministries and the military/police agencies. The work therefore concluded that the principle has always been an instrument of the elite to mobilize and defend few of their group interests and more of their own personal interests. Hence, there is the need for elite consciousness to promoting national development and patriotic representation of the country rather than causing mayhem when they are denied of political offices as observed in the country today.

Keywords: Policy, Federal Character Principle, Instrumentalism and ‘Juicy offices’

1. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt the fact that federalism and its ingredients are best suited to administer the hitherto independent nationalities. This is evident with Nigeria as applicable to other likeable countries that historically share similar attributes. The society that housed numerous ethnic groups has over the years appreciated the need to adopt a political arrangement to take care contending interests of these hitherto infra-sovereign political entities. Odumosu (1963) earlier established this position that Nigeria comprised of independent kingdoms prior to independence. In fact, historical evidences indicated that Nigeria comprises of more than three-hundred and fifty ethnic groups. In terms of Nigerian federal trajectory, Nigeria has been a federal democratic country prior independence; in spite of the military incursion, the country still maintains federal principles. More importantly, as argued by Agamo (2014) that every nation that adopt federalism also goes further to device means of managing its pluralism so as to ensure fair and equal participation of various interest groups in its political governance and Nigeria is not an exception. As part of these means, federal character principle (FCP) is one which became known through the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Moving forward, despite the efficacy and positive intentions behind the introduction of this mechanism as applicable in United States codenamed 'Affirmative Action', it is quite unfortunate that the experimentation of FCP is replete of intrigues and political cronyism as it will be unraveled in the discourse. FCP is meant to prevent the dominance of persons from one or a few states or from one or a few ethnic groups in the running of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and this is also expected at the state and by extension, local levels. The yearnings and aspirations of minorities and the question of marginalization underscored part of the reasons for enshrining FCP into the 1979 Constitution, 1995 Federal Character Commission under General Sanni Abacha and the carry-over of it into the 1999 Constitution as amended in 2011.

Today, FCP is viewed with suspicious based on intrigues and clandestine plots by political officials to strategically favour sections of the country with so-called juicy offices (Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Commissions and Boards). Nigerians as individuals and by extension, groups have raised concern that federal character has always been swept under the carpet by the

political leadership of the country and hence, do favours their ethnic groups in appointments and other opportunities. Based on this, this paper examined the intrigues and permutations in the implementation of FCP in Nigeria using comparative method under the Former President Goodluck Jonathan 2011-2015 and President Muhammadu Buhari 2015-2022.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Beyond any further contradiction, Nigeria is a victim of multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic orientation. The country lies on the multi-dimensional lifestyles, though with similar historically evolvments. Hence, governance in Nigeria recognizes the implications of the two seeds namely; ethnicity and religiosity planted by colonialist that till today rearing and establishing ugly heads in the country. There is hardly any political organization that will not take into consideration the rampage of these seeds in the configuration of the personalities occupying public offices. This implies that occupiers of the governmental offices are in most cases products of these seeds and this is having negative impacts in the body-politic of Nigeria. It is somehow irrational and illogical to agree that FCP is to take care of ethnic configurations and promotion of inclusiveness in governance at the expense of putting the round pegs in the round holes.

As Ayu (2014) right observed that we had series of amalgamation between 1893-1914, but the 1914 has always been the most quoted one. In 1893, Oil Rivers protectorate were amalgamated with other conquered coastal territories to form Niger Coaster Protectorate in 1893, Kingdom of Benin conquered and merged into Niger Coastal Protectorate in 1897, more territories near Lagos conquered and amalgamated with Niger Coastal Protectorate to become Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1900, colony of Lagos amalgamated with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906, Protectorate of Northern Nigeria proclaimed as a sphere of influence to keep out other European powers. Of this, we had entities as the Sokoto Caliphate, Kanem Borno Empire, and other independent entities as Tiv, Igala, Jukun etc in 1900, amalgamation of the protectorate of Northern Nigeria with the colony of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1914 and amalgamation or integration of Northern Cameroon as the thirteenth province of Nigeria in 1961 (Ayu, 2014).

Since the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, which a renowned scholar tagged “forced brotherhood and sisterhood” (Ayoade, 1998), the coming together of Nigeria is a mistake (Bello, 1962), To Awolowo (1947), it is a mere geographical expression while Balewa described Nigeria unity as a British intention. Thus, these descriptions are today manifesting on the challenges of how to effectively accommodate diverse interests and groups through political and administrative inclusiveness. As part of the contradictions, the dichotomization of the country into the unfortunate North–South regions in spite of the earlier historical diffusion as a result of migration is today creating contentions through various names today whereby Yoruba names are found in Kwara, Kogi, Niger and Edo states respectively.

In another dimension, FCP has also been blamed on elite’s consensus on how Nigeria should be governed to ensure political stability and fairness in the distribution of resources and governmental offices among various ethnic groups that inhabit or make up the country (Adeosun, 2011). In spite of the available literature on FCP in Nigeria, it is evident that emphasis has not been on the study and examination of its construct in a comparative context and proper study on the intrigues of this constitutional provision. This paper however deployed elite-instrumentalist perspective to unveil the intrigues and contradictions associated with the religious and patriotic implementation of FCP during the administration of former President Jonathan and the present President Buhari.

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts qualitative research design methodological orientation. It therefore relies heavily on descriptive and analytical review of the secondary source of data to include relevant books, journal- articles, government documents, newspapers and Nigerian government official websites to drive home the relevant argument on the subject under discussion.

4. CONCEPTUAL DISCUSS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Policy either public or private is never made in a vacuum (Sharma, Sadana and Kaur, 2012). The policy at any level is thereafter an outcome of several factors ranging from environmental factors both internal and external, ideological inclinations, political leadership and personalities, political parties and pressure groups, bureaucracy, constitutional provisions in a constitutional

democracy, individuals/opinion public and organizations, public opinion, beliefs and values, the configuration of the country and in this wise Federal Character Principle (FCP) as applicable to Nigerian situation. Friedrich (1963) posits that policy is a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose. Self (1972) viewed policy as changing directives as to how tasks should be interpreted and performed. Anderson (1975) defined policy as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern. For the purpose of this paper, policy is seen as the outcome of a political compromise among ethno-religious groups making up a country.

FCP is an instrument or policy means backed up by the (CFRN, 1999) as amended in 2011 to ensure federating units are given equal rights to represent awareness and representation in political and administrative decision-making bodies of government. It is a form of instrumentalizing national membership and belongingness that is further institutionalized as Federal Character Commission to monitor and ensure proper adherence to the constitutional provision and assurance of ethnic colouration of governance in Nigeria. The attempt is to construct a very formidable nation out of the existing fragile nations by maintaining inclusiveness and participation. The public management in a plural society is often taxing and demands quite manageable measure and policy that will help to alleviate fear of domination and unnecessary suspicion among the ethnic nationalities that make up such entity. This necessitated the eventual introduction of FCP to address such unwarranted phobia to build a strong nation-state devoid of acrimony and avoidable tension.

Afigbo (1987) periodized FCP in Nigeria when pointed out that FCP was informally operationalized between 1900-1946 while formal experimentation can be categorized between 1946-1966 first republic and 1967 to this fourth republic after various military and democratic distortion of the principle. To Afigbo (ibid), the principle arose out of a compromise among the protagonists of the 1976 Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC).

As clarified above Federal Character Principle is engineered where there are observed differences in culture, tradition and inequality either in human, natural or both. It can be derived

that FCP is a palliative measure aimed at cushion the effects of possible domination by the stronger ethnic group(s) over the weaker ones through the deployment of quota system for equalization of opportunities for peaceful co-existence. It is a policy arrangement to allay the phobia of dehumanization and the promotion of self – belongingness in the affairs of the nation. Over the years, FCP arising to its strategies intervention has made this monthly and bilocation impossible in the fold decision making process was made difficult for the secession frontiers to achieve their objectives.

Ezenwa (1987) rightly pointed out that federal character arose out of the need to correct the anomalies that emanated from the random and uneven distribution of natural and economic resources.

Also, Ikejiani and Ikejiani (1986) noted that multi-ethnic and multi-racial affiliations in the country is the root cause of constant crises and blamed governments for not trying to arrest the ugly situation. As a policy directive, Federal Character Principle either at the federal or state level, means that the numbers of its constituent members, their inter-relationship, the allocation of powers and functions amongst them and such other tangible matters should be equally and fairly distributed among the hitherto independent nationalities to assuage any form of discrimination, unnecessary oppression, imposition of decision and create sense of belongingness in the affairs of the nation.

5. THEORETICAL EXPOSITION

This paper deployed Paul Brass's Instrumentalist of Elite perspective (1979, 1991) to ethnic identity and political mobilization. It lends credence from the class analytical discourse in explaining social issues in political science. The theme of this perspective rests on the premise that development of ethnic identity is unnatural, hence, ethnic identity is often a product of construction by the elites. In the early creation of the Nigerian state, Richard Constitution of 1946 clearly provided the need to seek political office (ends) through ethnic region (means) and hence, this presupposes certain intrigues of federal character. Therefore, ends justifies the means at the end. Ethnicity is thus the making of the elites and specifically created for class privileges

and advantages. The political conspiratorial inclusion of the FCP in our constitution and the eventual manipulations in constitutionalizing it has continued to generate tension in the country.

As argued by Brass (1979), it is common to the elites to identify and give credence to certain aspect of the group's culture and attach value to them for the purpose of defending their interests. These interests are packaged to appear collective but rather intrinsically elitist's interests. The linguistic, tribal, dressing style, names and other historical affiliations of groups in the country has made the faithful and religion experimentation of FCP difficult. In fact, the issue of 'name' occasioned either as a result of historical attachment or marriage on the part of women has been a subject of debate and politicians use this to achieve personal interest in governance.

In the appointment of political and bureaucratic executives, legislature, judiciary as well as appointments in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government in Nigeria, it is the elites that are beneficiaries without given recourse to the membership of that ethnic groups. This again created gap in FCP in Nigeria. So, the point of the instrumentalism apologists is that ethnicity is used to disguise class interest. It is the elites from different ethnic groups who ultimately benefit. That is why the application of FCP is ultimately the dictate of the elites. In this wise, what is needed in Nigeria is the elitist consciousness and collaboration for the effective, efficient and harmonious management of the country. This is what is obtainable in developed societies.

6. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section provided an overview of selected appointments under the two administrations in Nigeria with explanation.

PRESIDENT JONATHAN ADMINISTRATION

Table 1: Ministerial Appointment (2011–2015)

S/N	Name of Ministers	Portfolios	State of Origin	Region
1.	Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala	Finance	Abia	S/E
2.	Yerima Lawal Ngama	Finance (State)	Yobe	N/E
3.	Deiziani Alison Madueke	Minister of Petroleum	Bayelsa	S/S
4.	Bukar Tijani	Agric and Natural Resources (State)	Borno	N/E

5.	Mohammed Bello Adoke	Attorney General, Justice and Minister of Justice	Kogi	N/C
6.	Stella Oduah-Ogiemwonyi	Aviation	Anambra	S/E
7.	Bello H. Mohammed	Defence	Kebbi	N/W
8.	Erelu Olusola Obada	Defence (State)	Osun	S/W
9.	Ruqayyah Ahmed Rufa'i	Education	Jigawa	N/W
10.	Olajumoke Akinjide	FCT (State)	Oyo	S/W
11.	Bala Mohammed	Federal Capital Territory	Bauchi	N/E
12.	Olugbenga Ashiru	Foreign Affairs	Ogun	S/W
13.	Viola Onwuliri	Foreign Affairs (State)	Imo	S/E
14.	Onyebuchi Chukwu	Health	Ebonyi	S/E
15.	Labaran Maku	Information	Nasarawa	N/C
16.	Mrs. Omobola Johnson	Communication Technology	Ondo	S/W
17.	Comrade Abba Moro	Interior	Benue	N/C
18.	Emeka Wogu	Labour	Abia	S/E
19.	Mohammed Musa Sada	Mines & Steel Develpt.	Katsina	N/W
21.	Shamsudeen Usman	National Planning	Kano	N/W
22.	Godsday Orubebe	Niger Delta Affairs	Delta	S/S
22.	Zainab Ibrahim Kuchi	Niger Delta Affairs (State)	Niger	N/C
23.	Caleb Olubolade	Police Affairs	Ekiti	S/W
24.	Chinedu Nebo took over from Bart Nnaji	Power	Enugu	S/E
25.	Ita Okon Bassey Ewa	Science and Technology	Akwa Ibom	S/S
26.	Yusuf Sulaiman	Sports	Sokoto	N/E
27.	Olusegun O. Aganga	Trade and Investment	Lagos	S/W
28.	Samuel Ioraer Ortom	Trade and Investment (State)	Benue	N/C
29.	Idris A.Umar	Transport	Gombe	N/E
31.	Zainab Maina	Women Affairs	Adamawa	N/E
31.	Mike Onolememen	Works	Edo	S/S
32.	Bashir Yugudu	Works (State)	Zamfara	N/W

33.	Bolaji Abdullahi	Youth Development	Kwara	N/C
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Source: Researchers' Compilation 2022

Table 1 shows that the ministerial appointees are not on equal basis as North West of the country has five ministerial appointments while North East has six appointments, also the North Central has six while the South West has six, South-South has three, South East has six. As could be seen in the table above, South East which is the sister region of where the president came from were given key ministerial positions such as Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Aviation, Ministry of Power and Ministry of Health. The South-South got four ministerial positions including Petroleum (Bayelsa-President Jonathan's state) Niger Delta Affairs, Works and Science and Technology. These ministries can be tagged important and juicy in the running of governmental affairs in Nigeria, although, the number is unfair compare to other regions with six.

MILITARY APPOINTEES

Table 2: Chief of Defence Staff

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Admiral Ola Ibrahim	2012-2015	Kwara	North Central
2	ACM Alex Sabundu Badeh	2014-2015	Adamawa	North East

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2022

From the table above, the two appointments namely under this administration are from the northern part of the country. This also generated concern among the people of the southern part of the country then, that why not appointing from other region but the contradiction of religion diversities also played out here with the emergence of Alex Badeh who is a Christian like President Jonathan himself and hailed from Vintim, a small community in Mubi Local Government area of Adamawa state. Admiral Ola Ibrahim who preceded Badeh was once Chief of Naval Staff and he is from Kwara. But the intrigue here again was his name bearing Ibrahim (Islamic name) and Ola (Yoruba name). This would have generated very serious crisis if it was the time, we have a president from northern Nigeria.

Table 3: Chief of Army Staff

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Lieut. Gen Azubuike Ihejirika	2010-2014	Abia	South East
2	Lieut. Gen Kenneth Minimah	2014-2015	Rivers	South South

Source: Researchers' Compilation 2022

The above table shows that Chief of Army Staff appointments made during his administration were both from South East and South South (Southern Nigeria) of the country where the

president came from leaving the South West and North West out just as he did for the appointment of Chief of Defence Staff that was zone to North Central and North East.

Table 4: Chief of Air Staff

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	AM Alex Sabundu Badeh	2012-2014	Adamawa	North East
2	AM Nunayon Amosu	2014-2015	Lagos	South West

Source: Researchers' Compilation 2022

The appointments were picked from the North East and South West respectively. This must have been informed by the seniority/hierarchy associated with the institution. Although, there are exceptional cases whereby a junior officer will be appointed and senior ones will be retired according to the military tradition.

Table 5: Chief of Navy Staff

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Vice Admiral Ola Ibrahim	2010-2012	Kwara	North Central
2	Vice Admiral D. J. Ezeoba	2012-2013	Plateau	North Central
3	Vice Admiral U. o. Jibrin	2013-2015	Kogi	North Central

Source: Researchers' Compilation 2022

From the table above, the three navy commanders during his tenure were from North Central leaving North West out of the appointment as well as other regions. This is unique and calls for deeper reflection with the way the position was retained in the region for three consecutive times. There are cases in the country when in the quest for competent and capable hands, come senior military officers have to retire to pave way for a younger officer to take charge which will eventually affect certain region.

Table 6: INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Mohammed Dikko Abubakar	2012-2014	Zamfara	North East
2	Suleiman Abba	2014-2015	Jigawa	North West
3	Solomon Arase	2015-2016	Edo	South South

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2022

Table 6 above shows the appointment of Inspector General of Police (IGP). Out of the three IGP appointments under this administration, one each to the North-East and North-West while one goes to the South-South and he spent just a year approximately.

Table 7: Chief Justice of Nigeria

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Aloma Mariam Mukhta	2012-2014	Adamawa	North East
2	Mahmud Mohammed	2014-2016	Taraba	North East

Researchers' Compilation 2022

Table 7 revealed the Chief Justice of Nigeria's appointments. The two that were appointed came from the North-East. It is very understandable that this is subject to hierarchical order and must be adhered to strictly.

PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI ADMINISTRATION

Table 8: Ministerial Appointments 2015-2019

S/N	NAME OF MINISTERS	PORTFOLIOS	STATE OF ORIGIN	REGION
1.	Okechukwu Enelamah	Trade and Investment	Abia	S/E
2.	Muhammadu Bello	Federal Capital Territory	Adamawa	N/E
3.	Udoma Udo Udoma	Budget and National Planning	Akwa Ibom	S/S
4.	Chris Ngige	Labour and Employment	Anambra	S/E
5.	Heineken Lokpobiri	State for Agriculture	Bayelsa	S/S
6.	Adamu Adamu	Minister of Education	Bauchi	N/N
7.	Audu Ogbeh	Agric. & Rural Planning	Benue	N/C
8.	Mustapha Baba Shehuri	State for Power, Works and Housing	Borno	N/E
9.	Usani Uguru	Minister of Niger Delta	Cross River	S/S
10.	Ibe Kachikwu	State for Petroleum	Delta	S/S
11.	Ogbonaya Onu	Science and Technology	Ebonyi	S/E
12.	Osagie Ehanire	State Minister for Health	Edo	S/S
13.	Kayode Fayemi	Solid Minerals	Ekiti	S/W
14.	Geoffrey Onyema	Foreign Affairs	Enugu	S/W
15.	Amina Mohammed	Environment	Gombe	N/E
16.	Anthony Anwuka	State for Education	Imo	S/E
17.	Suleiman Adamu	Water Resources	Jigawa	N/W
18.	Zainab Ahmed	State for Budget and Planning	Kaduna	N/W
19.	Sen Hadi Sirika	State for Transport	Katsina	N/W
20.	Abdulrahman Dambazau	Interior	Kano	N/W
21.	Abubakar Malami	Justice % Attorney Gen.	Kebbi	N/W
22.	James Ocholi	State for Labour and	Kogi	N/c

		Employment		
23.	Lai Mohammed	Minister of Information	Kwara	N/C
24.	Babatunde Fashola	Power, Works and Housing	Lagos	S/W
25.	Ibrahim Usman Jibril	State for Environment	Nasarawa	N/C
26.	Abubakar Bawa Bwari	State for Solid Minerals.	Niger	N/C
27.	Kemi Adeosun	Finance, Budget and National Planning 2015-2018	Ogun	S/W
28.	Cladius Omoleye Daramola	State for Niger Delta	Ondo	S/W
29.	Isaac Adewole	Minister of Health	Osun	S/W
30.	Adebayo Shittu	Communication	Oyo	S/W
31.	Solomon Dalong	Youth and Sport	Plateau	N/C
32.	Rotimi Amaechi	Transportation	Rivers	S/S
33.	Aisha Abubakar	State for Trade and Investment	Sokoto	N/E
34.	Aisha Alhassan	Women Affairs	Taraba	N/E
35.	Khadija Bukar Ibrahim	State for Foreign Affairs	Yobe	N/E
36.	Dan Ali	Defence	Zamfara	N/W
37.	President Buhari	Petroleum Resources	Katsina	N/W

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2022

Table 8 showed the Muhammadu Buhari Administration (2015 – 2019) ministerial appointments. It was found out that the ministerial appointees are not on equal basis as North East of the country has seven ministerial appointments while North west has six appointment, also the North Central has five while the South West has five, South South has six, South East has five. It was discovered that the northern state has the highest share of the appointment while key ministerial positions such as ministry of finance, ministry of power, ministry of communication, work and ministry of health were the key ministries that were allocated to South West region. This is made possible based on the overwhelming support gathered by the president and the political strength of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu. But this was not the same game after the 2015 Presidential election that returned President Muhammadu Buhari. This could be associated with the political nuances of Nigeria that politicians play innocence when firstly elected to pave way for political patronage in the second term. It is always the case that after they are offered votes in the second term, the real ethnic identity of Nigerian politicians now be unmasked.

MILITARY APPOINTEES UNDER BUHARI

Table 9: Chief of Defence Staff

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Gen Abayomi Olonisakin	2015-2021	Ekiti	South West
2	Gen Lucky Irabo	2021 till date	Delta	South South

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2022

Table 9 revealed the name of Chief of Defence staff under Buhari administration. From the table above, the two appointments of Chief of Defence staff under this administration are from the Southern region of the country that between 2015 – 2021 the appointment was zone to south west and South/South.

Table 10: Chief of Army Staff

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Lt. Gen. T. Y. Buratai	2015-2021	Bornu	North East
2	Lt. Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru	Jan.2021–May 2021	Kaduna	North West
3	Lt. Gen. Farouk Yahaya	May 2021 Till Date	Sokoto	North West

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2022

Table 10 revealed the appointment of chief of army staff under Buhari administration. The table showed that the three appointments of the army force was zone to North-West and North-East parts of the country where the president came from leaving the southern part.

Table 11: Chief of Air Staff

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	AM Sadique Abubakar	2015-2021	Bauchi	North East
2	AM Isiaka Oladayo Amao	2021 Till Date	Osun	South West

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2022

Table 11 revealed the appointments of chief air staff under Buhari administration. The appointments was zone to north east and south west part of the country

Table 12: Chief of Navy Staff

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe	2015-2021	Cross River	South South
2	Vice Admiral A. Z. Gambo	2021 Till Date	Kano	North West

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2022

Table 12 revealed the appointments of chief of navy staff under Buhari administration. From the table above the navy head appointment was zone to north west and South/South. To the Nigerians, this is very encouraging and patriotic.

Table 13: INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE (IG)

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Ibrahim Kpotun Idris	2016-2019	Niger	North Central
2	Mohammed Adamu	2019–2021	Nasarawa	North Central
3	Usman Alkali Baba	2021 Till Date	Yobe	North East

Source: Researcher’s Compilation 2022

Table 13 above show the appointment of inspector general of police (IG). The three appointments went to northern part. North central has two while north east two.

Table 14: CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA

S/N	Name	Period Served	State of Origin	Region
1	Walter S. N. Onnoghen	2017-2019	Cross River	South South
2	Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad	2019–2022	Bauchi	North West
3	Kayode Ariwoola	2022 Till Date	Oyo	South/West

Source: Researcher’s Compilation 2022

Table 14 revealed the Chief Justice appointment of the federation. The two Chief Justice appointments were from the Southern part of the country namely South-South and South West while Justice Tanko was from the North-West. It was the sudden resignation of Justice Tanko that paved way for Oyo State man to emerge as the new CJN.

7. THE MAIN POLICY INTRIGUE OF FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLE IN NIGERIA

The analytical discourse of the fuller implementation of FCP in Nigeria as comparatively shown between Jonathan and Buhari administration clearly indicated that FCP is an elite tool to share political offices in the country. Based on its application in the country, it has become a double-edged sword deploying for the benefit of the utilizer at the expense of the groups that are not in government. The few in government can now be described as the “benefactors” of the tool of federal character principle in the sharing of governmental opportunities namely social amenities, infrastructures and political offices. This observation has been given credence by Gauba (2005) and Agarwal (2005) that elitism represents the interests of the minorities. It then suggests that the few minorities in government uses the policy instrument of government to further strengthen

themselves in government. It is not controversial to reveal that federal character principle has been manipulated and channeled to serve the interest of the Nigeria's petit bourgeoisie who controls the instrument of governance (Agbodike, 1998). A respected and one of the famous Political Scientist, Gboyega (1989) has rightly declared that federal character principle is merely an elite ploy which could not materially improve the lot of the down-trodden in whose name it is raised. To him, the elite constitutes corrupt cabals and use ethnic sentiment to cover their ills. They strategically position their few agents in offices who act as political representatives against the set out goals of the establishment where they work (Gboyega, 1989). This in its entirety berated the inclusion of the principle at the first instance in the 1979 constitution barely two years later.

In a similar view, the introduction of federal character principle has orchestrated the emergence of mediocre in public offices who are bent at representing the parochial interests of their ethnic groups as a coverage to enrich themselves, promoting themselves in government and causing untoward retrogression in the prudential public financial management of the state's treasury and gravely the public enterprises. In Nigeria, the available public corporations have become the conduit pipes to share the national cake by the elites presenting themselves as the representatives of their ethnic groups in the country. This is very trickery as many of them have become parasites of national patrimony. The ineffective and inefficient and mismanagement of the country's public corporation has been traceable to the undue interference and politicization manifesting in form of affirmative sharing of political offices for equal representation and national colouration (Abba, 2008; Sharma et al, 2012). Thus, Nigeria has constitutionally created the war between meritocracy versus mediocrity in governance against herself. It is however sad to dissect that the resultant implications of this is bad governance, irresponsible leadership emergence.

The unfortunate seed of possible domination by certain tribal/ethnic groups over the other that federal character principle was set out curtail has continue to rear its ugly head even in monitoring its fuller implementation. Power individuals in government have been accused of being secretive of the open spaces in government works for the main purpose of filling the offices by their people. Today in Nigeria, higher percentages of graduates believe that getting jobs has been a victim of "who-knows-who", that it is difficult to secure jobs without having

connection with the people in government. Thus, there is high level of distrust and mistrust when it comes to issues relating to benefiting from corporate world. This is not only in public organizations but rather it has extended to the private corporations where replacement of qualified candidates with their own people not minding the outcome. Hence, the administration suffers the consequential implication of jeopardizing the objective behind FCP.

Again, another intrigue is the introduction of “Certificate of Origin” as part of the document required to gain admission and even to secure jobs in the country. The outcome of this is the reintroduction of catchment areas and quota system in our public corporations and institutions or what is earlier referred to as spoil system that crippled many governmental activities in the past. Presently, the principle of federal character has also attracted the attention of the religious leaders who viewed that politicians must try and put religiosity into consideration especially when it comes to fielding candidates for elections. The religion centres have become the campaign grounds for them to woo people using religion as an instrument.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored and unveiled the hidden intrigues of federal character principle by comparing selected appointments under Jonathan administration and the Buhari civilian administration. The study carefully and explicitly shown the utilization of the principle to the benefit of the people in government especially the few individuals. The paper identified that political party in power distribute federal opportunities based on the electoral value of each region to them during the conduct of the elections and this reflect in most cases on the offices that will be zoned to each region. Again, the mixture of the Nigerian society in terms of linguistic, names-giving, intertribal marriages and others have indeed provided another narrative to the observance of federal character principle in sharing opportunities particularly offices.

Based on the outcome of this paper, the following recommendations are provided;

- a. In the implementation of federal character principle, the implementers should give consideration to the weaker or the marginalized groups in the country. The attempt is to check the domineering tendency of the stronger nationalities over the weaker ones.

- b. Also, there is the need to be circumspect in the appointment of the people to positions in the country given attention to the origin, marriage, names and other smaller tribes by adhering to the principles of natural justice, equity and fairness.
- c. There is the need for elite consciousness, determination and unity towards stabilizing the nation against any division. It is important to point out that elites must agree to form an alliance irrespective of political, religion or ethnic differences to ensure the growth and development of the nation starting from the appointment of qualified, talented and men of impeccable characters.
- d. It is high time that Nigerians promote nationalism and patriotism in their attitudinal disposition to the nation. What keeps the nation is the level at which her citizens are committed and dedicated to the progress of the nation. Hence, this is more compelling than the introduction of federal character principle without national character.
- e. Our moral and value system should be revisited and encouraged. The values of diligence, honesty and incorruptibility should be emphasized. This will promote the act of questioning sudden wealth among us and celebration of hard-work.



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