



Nigerian Federalism: Health and Poverty in Nigeria

by

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Abstract

This paper examined the evolution, structure, and practices of federalism in Nigeria to synthesize the extent to which fiscal federalism in conjunction with agitations for resource control has affected the health and poverty profiles of the citizenry in relation to economic growth and sustainable development. In achieving this, the paper adopted both descriptive and analytical methods by relying on secondary sources for data gathering with a well-researched literature to discuss the interface between these concepts and identify strategies for solution with robust policy recommendations. This research was, therefore, intended to fill the strategic intellectual gap on the subject matter. The findings showed that the dependence of the local government on the states and federal government allocation has led to its inability to positively affect the grass-root health care development while poverty alleviation is threatened. The paper also revealed that Nigeria has not operated as a true federation since it adopted a federal constitution. Fiscal responsibility and taxing powers still remain considerably centralized. It was therefore concluded that the federal government ought to devolve some of its tax powers to state governments in order to stimulate healthy fiscal independence and competition among states. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the current revenue allocation formula and fiscal federalism should be reviewed to embrace autonomy in its entirety in order to achieve national goals and objectives. Government should engage the interest groups on resource control in dialogue for peaceful resolution and proactively offer optimal solution. Direct schemes and workable measures for improved health care development and poverty alleviation should be put in place.

Key words: Agitation, Federalism, Health Profile, Poverty Prevalence

1. Introduction

Federalism which x-rays the amount of autonomy and responsibility accorded to subnational government, has been an important subject in the area of health and poverty

schemes of many developing countries including Nigeria. Fiscal decentralization has become fashionable regardless of levels of development and civilization of societies. Nations are turning to devolution to improve the performance of their public sectors. Fiscal federalism is essentially about the allocation of government resources and spending to the various tiers of government. In general, the intensification of clamour for greater decentralization is informed by a combination of people desiring to get more involved in government, and the inability of the central government to deliver quality services (Aigbokhan, 1999). Decentralized systems of government give rise to a set of fiscal exigencies referred to as fiscal federalism also known as fiscal decentralization. It refers to the scope and structure of the tiers of governmental responsibilities and functions, and the allocation of resources among the tiers of government to cope with respective functions. In Nigeria the dismal performance of the public sector since the first half of the 1980s has brought to the front burner the issue of fiscal federalism which has remained dominant and most contentious in Nigeria's polity (Arowolo 2011). In the last three decades Nigerians have contended with not only vanishing real incomes but also unbearable levels of unemployment and inflation, decay in social amenities and failure to maintain, not to talk of improving, the nation's infrastructures. This dismal performance of the public sector has prevented the creation of opportunities for a resilient and sustainable growth and development of the Nigerian economy, which should be the object of rational and functional fiscal federalism. Long years of military rule and the centralized nature of the military hierarchical structure created the financial hegemony enjoyed by the federal government over the thirty-six states (36) states and seven hundred and seventy-four (774) local governments. This has created disaffection in the Nigerian federation. Thus, the worry over the development of a national and functional fiscal federalism for Nigeria is well founded.

Various scholars have given credence to the fact that the amalgamation of 1914 which gave birth to Nigeria was not meant to nurture a true federal state in Nigeria. Osadolor (2003) cited in Amuwo (2003: 35) is of the view that "the act of amalgamation was not a federal idea; Lugard did not conceive the idea of a federal state for Nigeria, even though there were strong integrative factors of inter-group relations and the trend of opinion before 1914 favoured the division of the territory into a number of units of a future federation. According to Okadigbo (1987:14) "after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, the country was more or less run as unitary colony with twenty-four provinces (12 in the North and 12 in the South) until the establishment of the federal order vide the Richards constitution of 1946. Thereafter, ethnic politics (otherwise known as tribalism) and regionalism became definitive features of Nigeria federalism". Okadigbo (1987) observed that after the major's coup of January, 1966, which ironically brought General Aguiyi Ironsi to power, there was an attempt to impose a unitary state structure by means of the infamous Decree N0.34 of 30th, May 1966 which purportedly abolished the regions and unified the public services. This fatal

decree became the last straw that broke the back of the federal camel. Responses thereto varied from appalling massacre (as revenge) of Nigerians from the Southern regions, especially the Igbos, the repatriation or flight- en masse-of persons to their places of origin in Southern Nigeria and the declaration of independence by Eastern Nigeria in the name of Republic of Biafra, to the return of federalism, this time with a stronger center. Thenceforth, the general agreement of Nigerians seemed to be that Nigeria should remain a federal republic.

The Lyttleton constitution which came into effect on 1st October, 1954 that introduced real federalism in Nigeria. The constitution shared powers between the central and regional governments, giving out details on issues which were exclusive to only one level and those on which both could legislate. Regional premiers were also provided for in the constitution". Oyediran (2008) summarized the factors that necessitated the adoption of federalism in Nigeria as follows:-

Heterogeneity/cultural differences: Nigeria is made up of diverse ethnic groups, religions, customs, traditions and languages. These diversities are a problem to the operation of a unitary system. The peoples therefore opted for federalism to retain as much as possible their identity. Size and Population: The country is too large both territorially (size) and in population for a unitary system of government, and federalism became inevitable for administrative convenience. Historical /Colonial factor: The different ethnic groups in Nigeria had developed different administrative structures. The colonial principle of indirect rule allowed each region to preserve its cultural and traditional practices different from those of other regions.

Economic factor: In Nigeria, natural resources are scattered, therefore component units must unite as a federation to harness the resources for their overall benefit in addition to even and rapid economic development.

Fear of Domination: There has been suspicion among the various ethnic groups, particularly the major ones like the Yoruba, the Igbo, and the Hausa-Fulani. There was also fear by the minority groups that they would be dominated by the majority ones. Federalism therefore offers opportunity for self-preservation by different groups Divide and Rule Policy of the British Colonial Administration: The British policy of divide and rule was a deliberate attempt to keep Nigeria weak and decentralized. The British considered unity among the various ethnic groups as a threat to their imperialistic interest.

The concept federalism has numerous and multifaceted definitions. According to Tamuno (2003), Federalism is that form of government where the component units of a political organization participate in sharing powers and functions in a co-operative manner through the combined forces of ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity, among others. In the words of A.V. Dicey, Federalism is a political invention which is intended to reconcile national unity and power, with the maintenance of the rights of the separate member states (Cited in Elaigwu and Akindele, 1996). Federalism is essentially about the

distribution of political and economic decision-making power among constituent units or levels of governments (Cited in Elaigwu and Akindele, 1996).

2. Aim and Objectives

However, it is sad that despite continuous increase in the clamour for federalism, resource control and revenue generation, the expected impact on economic growth in Nigeria has not been realized, why? Is it due to the challenges of federalism? Why has the scenario not improved? The objective of this study was to examine Nigerian federalism: health and poverty profiles to chart a new order for the current and future development.

3. The Features of Nigerian Federalism

Musa and Hassan (2014) gave the general features of Nigerian federalism in summary as follows:

- i. Division and sharing of governmental powers between the federal and the regional or state governments;
- ii. The derivation of the powers of the different levels of government from the constitution.
- iii. The supremacy of the federal government.
- iv. The existence of a supreme court for judicial interpretation and review.
- v. Unified police force
- vi. Decentralization of the public service and the judiciary.
- vii. The existence of a bicameral legislature at the federal level.
- viii. The principle of the federal character; and
- ix. A three-tier system of government.

4. Conceptual Framework

Fiscal federalism is a byproduct of federalism. Federalism is a political concept in which the power to govern is shared between national, states and local governments, creating what is often called a federation (Arowolo, 2011, Musa and Hassan, 2014). It is a set of guiding principles or concept that helps in designing financial relations between the national and subnational levels of government, while fiscal decentralization is the process of applying such principles (Sharma, 2005). Fiscal federalism concerns the division of public sector functions and finances among different tiers of government (Mushieka, 2018). Fiscal federalism is characterized by fiscal relations between central and lower levels of government. The fiscal relationships between and among the constituents of the federation is explained in terms of three main theories, namely, the theory of fiscal relation which concerns the functions expected to be performed by each level of government in the fiscal allocation; the theory of inter-jurisdictional cooperation which refers to areas of shared responsibility by the national, state and local governments, and the theory of multi-jurisdictional community (Ewetan, 2012). In this case, each

jurisdiction (state, region or zone) will provide services whose benefits will accrue to people within its boundaries, and so, should use only such sources of finance as will internalize the costs.

a) *Theory of Fiscal Federalism*

The basic foundations for the initial theory of Fiscal Federalism were laid by Kenneth Arrow, Richard Musgrave and Paul Samuelson. Samuelson's two important papers (1954, 1955) on the theory of public goods, Arrows discourse (1970) on the roles of the public and private sectors and Musgrave's book (1959) on public finance provided the framework for what became accepted as the proper role of the state in the economy. The theory was later to be known as "Decentralization Theorem" (Ewetan, 2012). This framework identifies three roles for the government sector. These are correcting various dimensions of market failure, maintaining macroeconomic stability, and redressing income inequality. The central government is responsible for the correction of market failure and maintenance of macroeconomic stability, while the subnational governments and the central government are jointly responsible for redressing income inequality (Ewetan, 2012). Each tier of government is seen as seeking to maximize the social welfare of the citizens within its jurisdiction. This multi-layered quest becomes very important where public goods exists, the consumption of which is not national in character, but localized. In such circumstances, local outputs targeted at local demands by respective local jurisdictions clearly provide higher social welfare than central provision. This principle, which was formalized into the "Decentralization Theorem" constitutes the basic foundation for what may be referred to as the first-generation theory of fiscal decentralization. The theory focuses on situations where different levels of government provide efficient levels of outputs of public goods for those goods whose special patterns of benefits are encompassed by the geographical scope of their jurisdictions. Such situation came to be known as "perfect mapping" or "fiscal equivalence". Nevertheless, it was also recognized that, given the multiplicity of local goods with varying geographical patterns of consumption, there was hardly any level of government that could produce a perfecting mapping for all public goods. Thus, it is recognized that there would be local public goods with inter-jurisdictional spill-overs. For example, a road may confer public goods characteristics, the benefits of which are enjoyed beyond the local jurisdiction. The local authority may then under-provide for such a good. To avoid this, the theory then resorts to traditional Pigouvian subsidies, requiring the central government to provide matching grants to the lower level government so that it can internalize the full benefits. Based on the preceding, the role of government in maximizing social welfare through public goods provision is assigned to the lower tiers of government. The other two roles of income distribution and stabilization are regarded as suitable for the central government.

From the foregoing, the role assignment which flows from the basic theory of fiscal federalism is summarized as follows: The central government is expected to ensure equitable distribution of income, maintain macroeconomic stability and provide public

goods that are national in character. Decentralized levels of government on the other hand are expected to concentrate on the provision of local public good with the central government providing targeted grants in cases where there are jurisdictional spill-overs associated with local public goods. Once the assignment of roles had been carried out, the next step in the theoretical framework is to determine the appropriate taxing framework. In addressing this tax assignment problem, attention is paid to the need to avoid distortions resulting from decentralized taxation of mobile tax bases. Ewetan, (2012) emphasized that the extensive application of non-benefit taxes on mobile factors at decentralized levels of government could result in distortions in the location of economic activity. Following from the assignment of functions, taxes that matched more effectively the assigned functions are also assigned to the relevant tier or level of government. For example, progressive income tax is suited to the functions of income redistribution and macro-economic stabilization and is therefore assigned to the central government. On the other hand, property taxes and user fees were deemed more appropriate for local governments. Benefits taxes are also prescribed for decentralized governments based on the conclusion that such taxes promote economic efficiency when dealing with mobile economic units, be they individual or firms. The final element of this basic theory is the need for fiscal equalization. This is in the form of lump sum transfers from the central government to decentralized governments. The arguments for equalization are mainly two. The first which is on efficiency grounds sees equalization as a way of correcting for distorted migration patterns. The second is to provide assistance to poorer regions or jurisdictions. Equalization is important in a number of federations.

b) Resource Control

Resources are natural endowment and when properly managed leads to improvement in social, political and economic development of the nation. This translates to development that trickles down to the masses leading to enhancement in the standard of living and poverty alleviation. It largely deals with the need to regain ownership, control, use and management of resources primarily for the benefit of the communities and the people on whose land the resources originate and secondarily for the good governance and development of the entire country (Ojo, 2014).

For countries that possess large deposits of these resources, the wealth accrued from their production and exploration increases their national income and improves their economy and so there is a high reliance on these resources. Africa has been blessed with numerous resources all of which contribute to its growth and economic development. With this vast amount of resources and the wealth amassed from their trade, resource management is very important. The concept of resource management is closely tied to that of resource control. These resources when managed properly should bring economic development, reduce poverty and improve the economy of the country. Proper natural resource management also involves accountability on how these resources and the wealth are used. Proper resource management ensures that everyone in the country benefits from the oil wealth in a fair and equitable manner. Resources are therefore a

blessing for the countries that possess them only if properly managed. In Africa however, these resources have been a blessing for some and a curse for others – the latter specifically for the population and the region where these resources are extracted from. These resources are a curse for these regions because they remain in abject poverty, experience poor economic growth and a generally lower standard of living in comparison to other parts of the country that enjoy the bulk of this wealth. Hence, the quest for resource control poses burning issues or problem at the centre stage of economic development and poverty alleviation.

Poor resource management is a problem in many resource-rich countries in Africa. The argument that the more resources a country has will lead to increased economic growth and prosperity does not hold true when one examines these countries. Nigeria as the world's eleventh largest oil exporter with immense wealth coming from annual oil production and trade continues to suffer from poor resource management. This is manifest specifically in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The Niger Delta is the largest oil producing region in the country but the poorest because it has not benefited from the oil wealth derived from oil production. Poor resource management is one of the prominent reasons behind the crisis in the region. Similar cases can be found with oil in Angola, diamonds in Congo and Sierra Leone; these countries being very poor and the most violent of African countries.

c) *Health and Health Care in Nigeria*

The health of Nigerians pose great concern to many professionals and the health care system in the face of federalism is quite challenging in view of prevailing inequalities in health profiles. The ways towards achieving the third United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity and achieve universal health coverage to include access to quality health care services by 2030 have been a great issue in developing countries including Nigeria. Available statistics from Nigeria Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, September 2016 – January 2017 show varying degrees of gaps on critical needs in health concerns in the country.

Despite the vast efforts by the global community to reduce the burden of mortality as a result of pregnancy and delivery, the rate of death as a result of pregnancy related complications is disturbing (Yaya *et al.*, 2016). Developing countries have been reported to account for about 99 percent of the global maternal mortality, while sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries record approximately 62 percent and having Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of 510 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (WHO, 2013; Prata *et al.*, 2010). The problem of unjust distribution of health care services is receiving global attention in the area of public health, with evidence of the disadvantaged group of the society, having worst health conditions (Yaya *et al.*, 2016). Just like other sub-Saharan countries, Nigeria is having an unequal share in maternal health care. A country with Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 5.7, is ranked the 2nd in the world with maternal mortality (World Factbook, 2010). The inequalities and inequities across various strata of the society have become key determinants of maternal and child health (Victora *et al.*, 2003;

Boerma *et al.*, 2008). Gaining equal access to maternal health care including antenatal, delivery and postnatal services, is one of the most critical concerns in public health programmes and policies shared in virtually everywhere in the world, and demands that women with the same maternal needs should receive the same access to health care services (Qian *et al.*, 2017). Every society aspires to witness a well improved and quality maternal health care as it is the engine of development through regeneration. Consequently, the provision of quality maternal health care is a top priority to all governments and stakeholders in all societies. In the sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria to be precise, quality and sustainable maternal health care is desired for development considering the roles women play in the sub-region. Hence, when strong policies on maternal health care become wishful thoughts by power holders, maternal mortality tends to be on the ascendency. A number of African countries have experienced increased maternal mortality from 1990 till date largely due to lapses in maternal socio-economic disparities. The levels of health care utilization among vulnerable groups in rural areas particularly in developing countries are worrisome. The situation becomes devastating when it borders on skilled maternal health care. This is the basic underpinning in the sustainable development of all societies (Witter *et al.*, 2009).

d) Poverty Alleviation

Poverty in Nigeria is multi-dimensional and has many faces as revealed by Nigerian indicators of human development such as education and health amidst spending relative to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Analysis of poverty in Nigeria shows inequalities in terms of educational and health indicators, and such indicators vary across regions (geopolitical zone), states, location (urban and rural), and gender (male and female).

According to the World Bank, during the last decades the number of people living below international poverty lines set approximately at 1 and 2 Dollar a day levels has been falling. They argued that the problem of this method with calculation is optimistic and give biased assessments of poverty reduction. Some scholars have distinguished between many dimensions, which are: Economic, human, political, socio-cultural. The economic dimension identifies poverty as insufficient income to meet certain basic needs. The human dimension focuses directly on the question of an individual's access to basic needs, such as education and health. The political dimension refers to the deprivation of basic political and human rights as well as limited influence on public policy-making. The socio-cultural dimension indicates social exclusion and a lack of dignity within or between communities.

Measures, like those promoted by Henry George in his economics classic *Progress and Poverty*, are those that are intended to raise ways of enabling the poor to create wealth for themselves as a means of ending poverty forever. Poverty alleviation also involves improving the living conditions of people who are already poor. Aid, particularly in medical and scientific areas, is essential in providing better lives, such as the Green Revolution and the eradication of smallpox

Types of Poverty include the following: Absolute Poverty, Relative Poverty, Situational Poverty and Generational or Chronic Poverty.

Factors that cause poverty include the following: income inequality, conflicts and unrests, location of countries /communities, adverse ecology, natural disasters, droughts, floods, hurricanes and other unexpected natural events cause deaths, illness and loss of income, health challenges and disability, inheritance of poverty, lack of education, training and skills; and gender discrimination.

5. Interface between Federalism, Health and Poverty Alleviation

Federalism and Niger Delta Crisis over Resource Control

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria spans across the nine states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers in the Southeastern region of Nigeria. These states make up the richest region of the country having large oil and gas deposits.

The origins of the Niger Delta crisis can be traced back to Independence in 1960 and the Civil War of 1967. The Civil war was largely caused by the desire of the Eastern region (where the Niger Delta is situated) led by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu to secede from the rest of the country. The reasons for secession were due to the fact that many people in the region wanted more control over oil resources and more revenue allocated to them. This desire for resource control and revenue was further exacerbated by the fact that the federal government which had sole ownership of the oil resources and the wealth derived from it was ruled mostly by the Yoruba and Hausa, the two largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. With the failure of a summit to resolve that conflict at Aburi in Ghana, in which Shell and the Nigerian government were on one side against the Eastern region, the scene was set for secession attempts and the subsequent Civil War (Biafran War) of 1967. In spite of the failure of the Eastern region to secede, Nigeria's economic and political structure was heavily affected by the war. The failed attempt at secession did not stop the rift between the federal government and the oil-producing regions. There are also limitations allowing the inhabitants of the region to have legitimate access to these oil resources and use them for their own benefit. The problem of resource control is coupled with the fact that the economic, social, and environmental issues in the region have been neglected in these host communities.

Currently giant corporations like Mobil, Chevron, Shell, LNG and Forte Oil are the dominant actors in the region. These organizations make billions of dollars a year from oil production and sale and have failed to develop the regions where they operate. The fact that people barely make a living by fishing while oil wells owned by the foreign companies pump billions of dollars' worth of oil around them, does not help the reputation of these corporations. Although, corporations are now beginning to make some efforts but it has been late and still considerably slow. The regions remain highly underdeveloped and lands are no more available due to the fact that pipelines take up land space and gas flaring leads to the burning of farmlands and forests and oil spillages cause

large fires that spread very quickly when lighted. Companies interact with the host and impacted communities but the terms of this relationship are dictated by the former taking the form of a master-servant relationship. The use of claim agents to represent the communities that make claims to the oil companies has not been honest as these claim agents are usually registered under and are acquaintances of these oil companies and so they literally dupe the communities.

An interesting dimension to this is the fact that the facilities of oil companies are protected by the Nigerian police, army and navy and these oil companies have provided monthly pay and perks to ensure that the military protect their installations. Oil companies have the attitude of getting things done, forcing their way and using military means. Corporate social responsibility remains very low despite calls from various advocacy and human rights groups. The companies' activities include "exploration, seismic surveys, test drillings, development drilling, and the provision of production facilities such as flow stations, pipelines, export terminals and offshore platforms and jetties", however they neglect to develop other areas in the region in which they work; this continues to be a hindrance to its peace and security.

National security has been weakened by the conflict in the Niger Delta as cults and militant groups continue to challenge the government. Some of these groups are not satisfied with the government's response and neglect and so violence is used to pressurize the government to quicken its response to their demands for resource control, development assistance and poverty alleviation. Since the 1990s-armed groups have intensified violence and now, "a new form of Guerrilla-style conflict has emerged" in the region. Security in the region is very poor as wide scale fighting between the federal government soldiers, militant groups and private security firms is regular. These groups such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Niger Delta Volunteer People's Force (NDVPPF), and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) which claim to defend the rights of the Niger Delta peoples have been the dominant groups in the Niger Delta acting as umbrella groups for smaller factions to press for political and economic reforms.

Cult groups and gangs have also increased in the Niger Delta and they fight both government forces and each other as they compete for supremacy and control and territory, oil bunkering networks with severe implications for National Security, Political and Inter-Ethnic relations, and economic retardation.

7. Health Care Assessment

Table 1: Respondents' characteristics across wealth-related quintile

Variable	Sample Persons (%)	Poorest (%)	Poorer (%)	Middle (%)	Richer (%)	Richest (%)
Age						
15-19	6805 (19.8)	1010 (14.8)	1333 (19.6)	1547 (22.7)	1433 (21.1)	1482 (21.8)
20-24	5721 (16.6)	903 (15.8)	1212 (21.2)	1151 (20.1)	1206 (21.1)	1249 (21.8)
25-29	5933 (17.3)	1056 (17.8)	1196 (20.2)	1087 (18.3)	1285 (21.7)	1309 (22.1)
30-34	5296 (15.4)	911 (17.2)	929 (17.5)	998 (18.8)	1101 (20.8)	1357 (25.6)
35-39	4391 (12.8)	831 (18.9)	808 (18.4)	797 (18.2)	863 (19.7)	1092 (24.9)
40-44	3605 (10.5)	681 (18.9)	692 (19.2)	671 (18.6)	732 (20.3)	829 (23.0)
45-49	2625 (7.6)	463 (17.6)	476 (18.1)	561 (21.4)	558 (21.3)	567 (21.6)
Place of residence						
Urban	11689 (32.3)	951 (8.1)	413 (3.5)	1348 (11.5)	3012 (25.8)	5965 (51.0)
Rural	24487 (67.7)	6704 (27.4)	6233 (25.5)	5464 (22.3)	4166 (17.0)	1920 (7.8)
Geographical region						
North Central	7462 (20.6)	1354 (18.1)	1569 (21.0)	1763 (23.6)	1436 (19.2)	1340 (18.0)
North East	5469 (15.1)	2006 (36.7)	1378 (25.2)	1002 (18.3)	688 (12.6)	395 (7.2)
North West	9765 (27.0)	3402 (34.8)	2655 (27.2)	1571 (16.1)	1043 (10.7)	1094 (11.2)
South East	3753 (10.4)	196 (5.2)	414 (11.0)	851 (22.7)	1294 (34.5)	998 (26.6)
South South	4918 (13.6)	217 (4.4)	373 (7.6)	1081 (22.0)	1580 (32.1)	1667 (33.9)
South West	4809 (13.3)	480 (10.0)	257 (5.3)	544 (11.3)	1137 (23.6)	2391 (49.7)
Level of education						
No education	7255 (21.1)	2826 (39.0)	2298 (31.7)	1345 (18.5)	596 (8.2)	190 (2.6)
Primary	5213 (15.2)	611 (11.7)	1291 (24.8)	1495 (28.7)	1226 (23.5)	590 (11.3)
Secondary/Secondary-technical	13452 (39.1)	450 (3.3)	1391 (10.3)	2881 (21.4)	4273 (31.8)	4457 (33.1)
Higher	3635 (10.6)	23 (0.6)	48 (1.3)	248 (6.8)	774 (21.2)	2563 (70.1)
Non-formal	4800 (14.0)	1945 (40.5)	1618 (33.7)	843 (17.6)	309 (6.4)	85 (1.8)
Wanted to get pregnant at the time						
Yes	2786 (78.4)	662 (23.8)	710 (25.5)	555 (19.9)	408 (14.6)	451 (16.2)
No	767 (21.6)	153 (19.9)	183 (23.9)	156 (20.3)	160 (20.9)	115 (15.0)
Marital status						
Currently married/in union	23891 (69.7)	5016 (21.0)	5180 (21.7)	4508 (18.9)	4423 (18.5)	4764 (19.9)
Formerly married/in union	1453 (4.2)	118 (8.1)	236 (16.2)	395 (27.2)	404 (27.8)	300 (20.6)
Never married/in union	8938 (26.1)	709 (7.9)	1212 (13.6)	1885 (21.1)	2326 (26.0)	2806 (31.4)
Number of children ever born						
Nil	10032 (29.2)	1012 (10.1)	1537 (15.3)	2035 (20.3)	2432 (24.2)	3016 (30.1)
1-3	11330 (33.0)	1827 (16.1)	2147 (18.9)	2199 (19.4)	2313 (20.4)	2844 (25.1)
≥4	13014 (37.9)	3016 (23.2)	2962 (22.8)	2578 (19.8)	2433 (18.7)	2025 (15.6)
Received antenatal care						
Yes	7752 (69.3)	965 (12.4)	1463 (18.9)	1634 (21.1)	1821 (23.5)	1869 (24.1)
No	3430 (30.7)	1508 (44.0)	1064 (31.0)	552 (16.1)	230 (6.7)	76 (2.2)

Source: Nigeria Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, September 2016 – January 2017

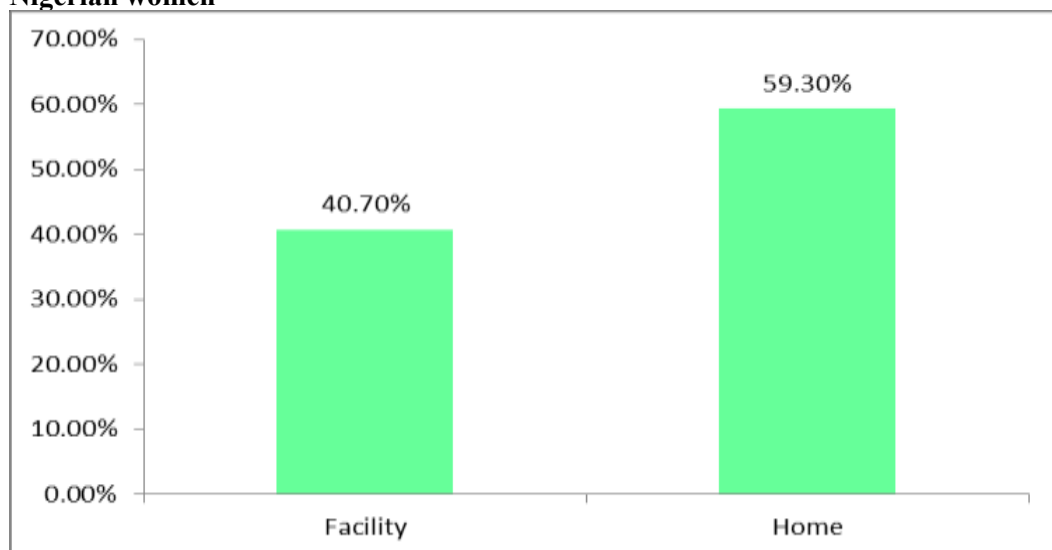
Results in Table 1 show the distribution of women's characteristics across wealth quintiles. Interestingly, women in urban residence reported approximately 51.0% (richest), 25.8% (richer) and 11.5% (middle class). This showed a reduction of lower wealth-related groups in urban residence. Conversely, women from rural residence reported about 27.4% (poorest), 25.5% (poorer) and 22.3% (middle class). This showed low proportion of higher wealth-related groups in rural residence. Furthermore, there were

disparities in wealth quintile by geographical regions. About two-thirds of women from North Central region were not less than middle wealth class. Comparatively, approximately 38.1% from North East region, also 38.0% from North West region, 83.8% from South East region, 88.0% from South-South region and 84.6% from South West region respectively were not less than middle wealth class. Maternal education showed large variation by level. Approximately 70.7% of women with no education were poor (poorest + poorer), compared with slightly above one-third of women with primary education. In contrast to 13.6% of women with secondary education and 1.9% of women with tertiary education were below middle wealth class.

While about half of respondents who wanted of did not want to get pregnant at the time the pregnancy came were poor. In addition, 78.5% of never married women were at least in the middle wealth group, compared with 57.3% of women currently married or living with a partner who were at least in the middle wealth class. Expectedly, about three-quarters of nulliparous women were in at least middle wealth group, compared with about two-third of women having not more than three children. But this was least among women having at least 4 children, as they accounted for 54.1% of at least middle wealth class. More so, about 75.0% of women who did not receive antenatal care were poor, compared with one-thirds of women who received antenatal care.

Figure 1 shows facility-based delivery was 40.7%, while approximately 59.3% of deliveries occurred at home. This showed a significant difference between facility-based and home delivery among women of reproductive age (15-49years) in Nigeria. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Effect of Socio – Economic Differentials and Place of delivery among Nigerian women



Source: Analysis using Nigeria Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2016 - 2017

Poverty Alleviation Assessment

Much remains to be done to ensure that oil wealth is distributed adequately and used to develop the backward regions of the Niger Delta. The impacted people of the Niger Delta are enthusiastic to move from their present plight and improve their way of life but the companies and the government are slow in their efforts. Efforts must be aimed at developing best ways to manage the oil wealth, creating compensation mechanisms, and implementing development goals and strategies. The government must engage these regions and their representatives in finding ways to share oil wealth, specifically addressing how much will be divided among landowners, the Nigerian government and multinational oil corporations. Since the issue of land ownership has been the cause of numerous conflicts, an arrangement has to be made that allows the state or local government to control these lands and provides adequate compensation to the residents of the communities living in these areas. Dialogue must focus on discovering what the needs of the region are and the best ways to meet these needs. Without unity and cohesion, it will be difficult for any progress or development to be made in the region. This dialogue must become more frequent and more proactive with the goals of finding solutions and reaching agreements among actors. In conflict resolution, the role of the Nigerian state must be to mediate conflicts and disagreements between oil corporations and communities and groups, and not partner with one side or the other.

Impact of poverty

Poverty brings about a myriad of complications. The effects usually depend on the kind of poverty in question. Various impact of poverty includes the following:
Hunger, Health and Deaths: Absolute poverty results in extreme hunger, starvation and malnutrition. People (and children) become vulnerable to preventable diseases such as cholera, dysentery and tuberculosis, with no access to health services and medications. Death rates rise. Relative poverty on the other hand, forces people to engage in behaviors that expose them to diseases such as HIV Aids.

Social and Political: Relative poverty may cause people to indulge in social vices such as drugs, prostitution and petty crimes as a means to meet their immediate needs.
Economic impact: People in absolute poverty simply cannot afford food, water and shelter. They are not healthy enough to undertake any economic activity. They cannot send their young to school and the youth cannot get any skills. This results in economic breakdown of the community, which directly affects the larger region where they are.

7. Strategies for Solution to the Problem of Fiscal Federalism, Health and Poverty Alleviation

Strategies for Fiscal Federalism:

The current revenue allocation formula should be reviewed and each tier of government should be allocated revenue according to functions they perform. This is to

ensure that all levels of government are able to carry out expenditure functions within their jurisdiction and ultimately improve the economic growth in the country. It is however recommended that the state and local governments be given a higher share of the revenue given that they are closer to the citizens in terms of the basic needs of the people and most Nigerians live in the rural areas where basic amenities are lacking.

Transparency, accountability and efficiency on the part of all the levels of government should be enshrined to ensure that revenue allocated to specific projects are utilized appropriately.

Strategies for Health Improvement: Measures to successfully improve and reinvigorate health care in the society is very important and this involves building hospitals, health centers, training of medical personnel, provision of drugs and health insurance as well as finding alternatives to their health challenges, livelihood and survival. Educational deficiencies need to be addressed nationwide.

Methods used for reducing poverty: Poverty cannot be completely eradicated, as it largely caused by human factors. Over the past years there has been a lot of Poverty Alleviation Programs designed to break the cycle of poverty in many households and communities in the world. The result is remarkable, but there is still a lot to be done. Poverty alleviation involves the strategic use of tools such as education, economic development, health and income redistribution to improve the livelihoods of the world's poorest by governments and internationally approved organizations. They also aim at removing social and legal barriers to income growth among the poor. These tools include: improvement in the quality of Education, Health, food and water; Provision of skills and Training and Income redistribution. It is important that the government extends its development programs such as roads, bridges, and other economic facilities to rural areas, to make it easy for goods and services and farm produce to move to and from the farming communities.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Federalism Health and Poverty in Nigeria both in the pre-independence era and the post-independence era were fraught with challenges. The federal, state and local governments want a sizeable share of the federation account. All the revenue allocation formulae have been geared towards the favor of the federal government, given that they have the highest share of the federation account. However, states and local government have been agitating for higher revenue shares of the federation account. It is therefore evident that if revenue allocation to the federating units in the country is used adequately for development and investment purposes, the country's economic growth will improve over time and sustainable development as well as poverty alleviation in Nigeria will be achieved in the long run.

Available statistics from Nigeria Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, September 2016 – January 2017 show varying degrees of gaps on critical needs in health concerns in the country.

Despite the vast efforts by the global community to reduce the burden of mortality as a result of pregnancy and delivery, the rate of death as a result of pregnancy related complications is disturbing.

Poverty in Nigeria is multi-dimensional and has many faces as revealed by Nigerian indicators of human development such as education and health amidst spending relative to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Poverty breeds myriad of challenges like social ills, hunger, health issues, political and economic retardation.

Based on the findings obtained in this study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. The government should focus on optimal revenue allocation targeted at economic growth and sustenance of true federalism. These would aid to achieve the goals of health improvement, poverty alleviation, desired economic expansion and sustained development in the future.
2. The need for an efficient formula between the Centre and other tiers of government is recommended. This formula should also satisfy the broad objectives of inter-regional equity and balanced national development. To this end the present vertical revenue allocation formula should be reviewed by the federal government to increase the percentage to lower governments in Nigeria to strengthen their fiscal capacity and enable them play strong role in nation building.
3. Urgent reform in fiscal federalism in Nigeria to address the constitutional issue of fiscal powers among the three tiers of government to redress the prevailing fiscal mismatch at subnational levels of government is strongly recommended.
4. The wave of the new order opines that the Federal Government should grant autonomy to states and Local Governments in terms of both generation and spending of revenue in its entire entirety with only agreed or minimal percentage (e.g. 10%) sent to central pool. This will resolve the issue of items on exclusive or concurrent lists in the constitution currently undergoing legislative amendment and also solve the problem of agitations, resource control and disunity currently threatening sustainable national development in Nigeria (ohiomu et al, 2017).
5. Government should engage the interest groups on resource control in dialogue for peace resolution and proactively offer optimal solution.
6. Direct schemes and workable measures for improved health care development and poverty alleviation should be put in place.

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