

# **Ethnic and Nepotic Issues in Nigeria: Exploring the Bane to Public Sector Performance in the Fourth Republic**

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## **Abstract**

Stolen and abused opportunities abound in countries with weak administrative/governance institutions where people largely and inappropriately rely on sub-optimal indices such as blood/family ties, ethnic affiliation, kinship linkage, friendship, race, gender and religious links in the creation, allocation and distribution of values. In such countries, Nigeria inclusive, competence and meritocracy are completely or partially ignored. Although this is a form of corruption, it is almost generally accepted but for those who cannot derive gains at the time of need. Even the current anti-corruption narrative is yet to beam investigative insight into the menace. This paper thus seeks to explore and analyze the dimensions of parochial attachments in recruitment and selection processes in the Nigerian Public sector. It also traces the debilitating implications of championing sub-optimal indices in value/resources allocation/distribution with regard to service delivery. It further observes in apposition to the study problematique that determination of most forms of relationships amongst Nigerian citizens follow ethnic and nepotic constructs which are not unconnected with poor performance of the public sector. The paper adopts a qualitative research strategy using comprehensive document review in tune with critical examination of extant literature. The paper thus submits that skewed quota system and zoning arrangement as consociational approaches in the Nigerian federalism negate national unity and massively impinge on public sector performance. It therefore recommends best practice in forms of integrity, accountability, adherence to competence and meritocracy, discipline, professionalism, patriotism, and impartiality in the observance of the federal character principle in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity, Nepotism, Preferential Treatment, Public Sector Performance, Corruption.

### **Issues Canvassed**

The performance of the public service towards national development is no doubt the most tasking challenge that the government of Nigeria is facing today (Osawe, 2015). Undoubtedly, the Public Service reflects the state of the nation and no nation has been able to advance beyond its Public Service. In Nigeria, the relationship between ethnic loyalty and public valued opportunities bespeak volumes of absurdities and preponderance of collapsed institutions. Public bureaucracies are brazenly personalized and run against key features of public service such as strict adherence to competence, meritocracy, professionalism, accountability and impartiality in Nigeria. Complete and or partial stealing/abuse of opportunities based on blood, family, friendship, other ethnic, nepotism and favouritism constructs embellished with organizational stories and myths to further legitimize them have turned a norm that no one bathes an eyelid upon observing the trend (Amaeshi, 2017).

The basic features of public sector and administration are obviously vitiated in diverse ways and manners in the Nigerian context. The Federal Civil Service in Nigeria, the most important government bureaucracy, operates in a highly fractionalized society with ethnicity as a salient form of identity (Eifert, Miguel and Posner, 2010). This scenario often create lopsided outcomes where trust becomes a very scarce commodity in inter-personal and group relationships. In such instances, negative politicking, which often is marred by betrayals, becomes the order of the day. People watch their backs, operate in parochial cliques, guided by clichés and stereotypes that propel them to strike at the slightest opportunity in advancement of sub-optimal interests. Mediocrity is thus augmented and enhanced by sophisticated eye-service and bootlicking in such manners that organizational objectives are significantly compromised and productivity often retarded. This form of identity-based politics and screening leads to biases and prejudices that obviously undermine performance in the public sector.

According to Abati (2016), the quality of human resource in any organization determines the quality of inputs and outputs. That is why organizations look for the best and the brightest. And if the public service in Nigeria can be taken as an organization, the selection and promotion of the kind of people who run, lead and manage it should be based on competence and quest to deliver the required services. Unfortunately, the selection and recruitment processes into the Nigerian public service have often been compromised and skewed towards preferred persons along blood and friendship ties, hence the problematique for the study.

It is against the foregoing backdrops that this paper seeks to explore and analyze the dimensions of parochial attachments in recruitment and selection processes in the Nigerian Public sector. It further examines the impacts of this trend on service delivery. The study is anchored on the realization of the fact that most forms of relationships amongst Nigerian citizens follow ethnic and nepotism constructs that impede performance of the public sector and retard national development. Hence, it is structured in five integrated sections on the issues necessitating the study in the form of introduction

closely followed by the description of key terminologies shaping the determination of the issues in conceptual clarification that is aptly situated within a theoretical exposition. The third part identifies manifestation of ethnic and nepotic considerations in the national life while the fourth segment presents informed analyses of the situation under review neatly capped in concluding remarks.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

Ethnicity and nepotism are metaphors defining forms of corruption as popular clichés for describing anomalies in the Nigerian public sector that significantly erode nation building, public sector performance and development. This paper like many others sees tribalism as an old concept clothed in ethnicity as was mainly used by the colonial imperialists to structure and demarcate their colonies (Nnoli, 1980). The duo of tribalism and ethnicity will be used interchangeably because they refer to same subject in the discourse. Hence, in this paper, we shall conceptualize the following keywords: tribalism and ethnicity, nepotism and favouritism, public service and public sector performance along some defining concepts such as consociationalism and corruption while employing such terms as national development, meritocracy, and competence as known indices for better comprehension.

### **Tribalism and Ethnicity Re-conceptualized**

According to Wikipedia, tribalism is the state of being organized in, or advocating for, a tribe or tribes. In terms of conformity, tribalism may also refer in popular cultural terms to a way of thinking or behaving in which people are more loyal to their tribe than to their friends, their country, or any other social group. Tribalism has been defined in engaged theory as a 'way of being' based upon variable combinations of kinship-based organization, reciprocal exchange, oral communication, and analogical enquiry. It is defined as “a label for social groups who feel a distinct sense of difference by virtue of common culture and descent” (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975).

Ethnicity on the other hand appears to have been best discussed by Professor Okwudiba Nnoli in his seminal work entitled *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria* where he sees ethnicity as a social phenomenon associated with interaction among members of different ethnic groups. Nnoli also captured that ethnicity in its ordinary form is not a problem but negates development when it becomes conflictual. Along the perspective of ethnic groups being social formations distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries, Mudasiru (2015) also argued that ethnicity constitutes the foundations of the African society, for it shapes communities, cultures, economic and the political structure of the peoples. More importantly, it shapes the perceptions of Africans, defines their universe and provides them with meaning, understanding and the power to interpret the world around him. Ethnicity is therefore an integral part of every African, nay Nigerian, hence the propensity to build blocs in their formations while in pursuit of public positions. In the light of the above description, Egobueze and Ojirika (2017) argues that ethnicity provides security to groups as a whole, as well as individuals constituting the group. The sense of belonging to an ethnic group means the members are safe together as one people, and ready to defend themselves against any external attacks on their

existence and sovereignty. Thus, Nnoli (1998) contends that ethnicity serves as an organizing force, which assists in bringing the people together to fight or seek a common goal thereby creating a sense of communalism, family, and togetherness, which also deepens the sense of belonging that invariably fan the embers of nepotism and corruption in public service.

### **A Re-definition of the Concepts of Nepotism and Favouritism**

We are moved to discussing these concepts together in this study. They are very closely related and tend to refer to about similar situations and acts of abuse of procedures. They are corruption because basing one's choice on family relationships or friendships, or to reward a supporter are all poor criteria for hiring someone. It's not as likely that they will tell you the truth - or that they will oppose you if they think you're wrong. As a result, you don't get the full benefit of another viewpoint. Favouritism (derived from the Latin word favor meaning mercy) has the sense of unfair and prejudicial patronage of minions in office to the prejudice of common cause (Chudinov, 2003). The given definitions imply that favouritism and nepotism take place in such cases where a person vested with power pushes forward a favourite or nepot to move up the career ladder irrespective of their experience, knowledge, services and advances. Whereas the former refer to special and unmerited favour to friends the latter harps on undue considerations granted to family members (including those with common descent). Hence, Institute for Security Studies (2010) observed that Like nepotism, favouritism refers to individuals being appointed to positions as a result of their personal relationships with those who are able to influence the appointment, rather than considerations of competence and merit.

Nepotism according to Mulwa, Murimi, Mutugi and Mombo (2009) "is the showing of favoritism for relatives or friends based upon that relationship, rather than on an objective evaluation of ability or suitability". It describes a situation like offering employment to a relative, despite the fact that there are others who are better qualified, willing and able to perform the job. It forms the highly biased method of distribution of state resources where a public officer prefers his or her relatives and family members or friends in awarding contracts, job recruitment, promotion and, appointment to public positions. Nepotic tendencies ignore merit and competence principles thereby resulting in downgrading of the quality of the public service (Amundsen, 1997; Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management, 2010). It also includes exemption of once relatives and friends from the application of certain punitive laws or regulations, and this may disrupt esprit de corps and trust. Nepotism provides room for "preferential treatment of one individual over another, without taking into accounts the relative merit of the respective individuals.

### **What is Corruption and how does it relate to the study problem situation?**

Corruption is a social construct that does not have a generally accepted definition but has parameters for identification. It refers to abuse of procedure for personal gains that manifests in different forms and contents. The United Nations Global Programme Against Corruption (GPAC) defines political

corruption as the “abuse of power for private gain.” In a similar vein, Transparency International (TI) sees it as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” Still in the same vein, Waziri (2010) views corruption as a pervasion or a change from the generally accepted law or rules for personal benefit. In a more comprehensive manner, Salisu (2006, p. 3) sees corruption therefore can be defined as "an arrangement that involves an exchange between two parties (the demander and the supplier) which is twofold: (i) has an influence on the allocation of resources either immediately or in the future; and (ii) involves the use or abuse of public or collective responsibility for private ends". Again, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) perceives corruption as “abuse of authority or trust for private benefit: and is a temptation indulged in not only by public officials but also by those in positions of trust or authority in private enterprises or non-profit organizations” (Wolfe and Gurgun, 2000).

Consequently, all vitiation and abuse of procedures that engender nepotism and ethnic considerations in the public sector of the Nigerian economy are all acts of corruption. When civil/public servants are recruited based on sentiments along family lines, cronyism and all other considerations that negate merit and competence, it negates productivity, equality, fairness and national development. Corruption can be very tragic to nations and its pervasiveness can lead to low economic performance of countries, especially those in developing countries like sub-Saharan African nations, Nigeria inclusive. It has been documented by analysts that corruption in Nigeria has been a hindrance to its economic development (Iroghama, 2011).

There are different degrees of corruption but this study focuses mainly on bureaucratic corruption. Bureaucratic corruption occurs ‘in public administration’ or ‘the implementation end of politics.’ In the views of Dike (2002, p.2), this kind of corruption is known as ‘low level’ and ‘street level’ corruption. It describes the type of corruption that citizens encounter in their daily lives, they are confronted by it in hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police stations, tax offices and various other public agencies. Bureaucrats have rules and regulations that they are supposed to follow which promote uniformity and achieve equity. Street-level bureaucrats perform their duties by making decisions based on individual cases brought before them. They are given bureaucratic discretion which is the ability to decide how policies should be implemented but abuse of this power is what we refer to as corruption (Lipsky, 2010).

A situation whereby bureaucrats base their measurements and evaluation techniques on family and friendship ties result in promotion of sub-optimal indices that grant opportunities to incompetence and mediocrity. It gives rise to preferential treatment in forms of nepotism and favouritism. Preferential treatment manifest in forms of "admit the bearer" in admission into higher education system and "assist the bearer" skewed letters of recommendation for employment among others. These trends have slaughtered aptitude test and job interviews in the Nigerian public sector. According to Kayabasi (2005, p. 56), the phenomenon of preferential treatment is a “form of corruption” that appears in the political decision-making process. It is one of the major problems of



the public bureaucracy across countries with weak institutions of government. Oktay (1983) cited in Bute (2011, p. 185-208) defines preferential treatment as “the state of prevalence of specific criteria, such as attendance to the same school, being from same place or similar political tendency, in the relations in organizational units or in the relations between these units and social environment, thus replacing universal criteria governing the management studies”. All those actions and inactions by personnel in government that vitiate laid down procedures in government agencies to favour relatives and friends constitute corruption.

### **What do we mean by public service and sector?**

The Public service according to Caiden (1971) cited in Peter (2016:17) refers to the collectivity of specialized government institutions or agencies established by law, financed by public money and staffed by professionals and career bureaucrats for the purpose of executing public policies. In general terms, the Institute of Internal Auditors (2011) succinctly posits that the public sector consists of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services. In the same light, Suleiman (n.d) sees the public sector as all organizations that exist as part of government machinery for implementing policy decisions and delivering services that are of value to citizens. He observes that it is a mandatory institution established in Chapter VI of the 1999 CFRN in Executive, Part 1 (D) and Part II (C). Suleiman further posits that the Public Sector in Nigeria is made up of the Civil Service (often referred to as the core service that is composed of line ministries and extra-ministerial agencies; and public bureaucracy (composed of the enlarged public service). According to Suleiman, the public service includes services of the state and national assemblies, the judiciary, the armed forces, the police force and other security agencies, paramilitary services such as the immigration, customs, prisons. Hence, public service also comprises of parastatals and agencies like social service, commercially oriented agencies, regulatory agencies, educational institutions, research institutes, etc. In that light, the public sector could be seen to refer to government business which constitutes the part of the economy that is owned and controlled by government. It defines all the institutions and agencies of the government that work to provide basic services to the citizens thereby serving as the means by which the government relates and delivers amenities to the citizens and the general public (Okoduwa 2007). For the purposes of proper guidance however, the Institute of Internal Auditors clarifies that the public sector consists of an expanding ring of organizations, with core government at the center, followed by agencies and public enterprises. Personnel in the public sector are grouped into civil and public servants. The former group describes those individuals who work in government ministries while the latter serve in departments, paraastatals and agencies including the local government and educational institutions.

### **What then is Public Sector Performance?**

Ordinarily, performance describes the level of accomplishment of a given task measured against set standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed (Osawe, 2015). Usually seen from the

perspective of ability and extent of implementation of an action along the panel of quality, quantity, cooperation, dependability and creativity; performance is purely a function of quality or otherwise of human capital. In the context of public service, performance according to Prasetya and Kato (2011, p. 15) is the attained result of skilled workers in some specific situations. This implies that, it is an act, process or art of performing an official duty. Hence, Churchill, Ford and Walker, (1987) aver that the determinants of performance are personal, organizational, environmental, motivational, skill level, aptitudes and role perceptions. Performance of the Nigerian public service has persistently remained poor and dysfunctional for reasons of lopsided appointment, recruitment and promotion procedures. Lopsided in that set procedures are flagrantly abused and sidelined on the altar of ethnic and nepotic considerations that have turned mediocrity and incompetence the major defining features of the Nigerian public sector. The Nigerian Public Sector has continued to engage the services of mediocre amidst abundance of human capital.

### **Theoretical Framework: Elite Theory**

Literature is replete with facts that the elite group has been a veritable tool for perpetration of corruption especially at the level of governance in Nigeria. The emergent ruling class in most African states was guided by their primordial attachments as could be seen in the notorious expression accredited to Chief Obafemi Awolowo that "Nigeria is a mere geographical expression". Chief Awolowo spoke the obvious considering the character and trend of politics and development in the emergent Nigerian state. In agreement with the foregoing postulations, this paper adopts Elite theory as a framework for analysis. As we know, the major proponents of elite theory includes Vilfredo Pareto (1923-1948), Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), Robert Michels, (1876-1936), Jose Ortega (1855-1983) among others. These scholars contend that public policy is the value and preference of the governing elite. Their position is anchored on the perception that every society is ruled by a minority that possesses the qualities necessary for its accession to full social and political power. In other words, all societies are made up of two classes of people – a class that rules and a class that is ruled (the elite and the masses). Whereas the elite is very few and performs key political functions of policy formulation and implementation, the masses are controlled and directed by the elite. In other words, the masses are dependent on the elites who monopolize power and enjoys the advantages derivable from it. The elite according to Ihonvbere (2009, p. 13) exercises legal monopoly over means of coercion, dominate the structures and institutions of politics and shape the ideological as well as philosophical direction of the society.

Interestingly, the development of governing class in Nigeria has colonial background that was rooted in inter-group identity crises. Tribalism which later metamorphosed into ethnicity determined group relationships amongst members of the emergent ruling class who mobilized primordial sentiments for personal gains in scouting for public positions. That situation was summarized by Ojukwu and Shopeju (2010, p. 5) cited in Obialor and Ozuzu (2017, p. 70-80) when they observed that Nigerian elites which took over power from the erstwhile colonial administrations imbibed the culture of self-

servicing ethos that is, exploitation of the people and the country for selfish purposes. The Nigerian elite by their activities have continued to be a cog in the wheel of economic growth and development. Consequently, the Nigerian elite group is deep rooted in primitive accumulation that is guided by high propensity to championing preferential treatment for members of their families and friends. Public policy which includes implementation of economic policies is characterized by sharp practices perpetuated by the governing elites and top public servants which has hindered economic growth and development.

The attendant implication of the character of Nigerian elite is high tendency for corruption that has demeaned the institutions of government and enthroned unpalatable sharp practices that encourage mediocrity and division. This again has degenerated to the extent where patriotism is slaughtered and government business is 'nobody's business': Azikiwe is Igbo, Awolowo is Yoruba and Ahmadu is Hausa/Fulani. Access to public position is avenue and opportunity for advancing the course of one's group interest. Hence, Buhari is Hausa/Fulani and all juicy positions should be allocated to his people. Nigeria is dead and buried but without funeral in the hands of the governing class.

### **Ethnic and Nepotic Issues in the Nigerian Public Sector: Tracing their extent and manifestations in the Fourth Republic under President Mohammadu Buhari**

Unfortunately, the management and administration of the Nigerian public sector has continually revolved around unknown ethics and features in Public Administration. Clannish and parochial tendencies have guided and determined state and group relationships at virtually all levels of the Nigerian economy. The principles of merit, competence, accountability, fairness and equity have overtime been grossly and blatantly abused in the allocation of values, recruitment, appointment and promotion processes.

Successive governments and administration in the fourth republic Nigeria have advanced this trend of corruption at different levels. The current government led by President Mohammadu Buhari appears to have adopted most ethnic and nepotic propensities and tendencies. However, to guarantee national character, fairness and equity for ethnic diversities in Nigeria, some principles which include Federal Character, Quota System and Zoning formulae were introduced in the public service. Those principles and provisions as contained in Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended provides inter alia:

The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect 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 State or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies.



Unfortunately, the government of President Buhari has brazenly violated this provision in most of their appointments and activities hence soaring as high as 97%/5% in ethnic and nepotic issues (Nnanna, 2018). The government also fell short of the provisions in Section 8 (1a-d) as well as Sub section 2 of the constitution which in support of section 14(3) and (4) of this Constitution stipulates that the Federal Character Commission shall have the power to:

- a) work out an equitable formula subject to the approval of the National Assembly for the distribution of all cadres of posts in the public service of the Federation and of the States, the armed forces of the Federation, the Nigeria Police Force and other government security agencies, government owned companies and parastatals of the states;
- b) promote, monitor and enforce compliance with the principles of proportional sharing of all bureaucratic, economic, media and political posts at all levels of government;
- c) take such legal measures, including the prosecution of the head or staff of any Ministry or government body or agency which fails to comply with any federal character principle or formula prescribed or adopted by the Commission; and
- d) carry out such other functions as may be conferred upon it by an Act of the National Assembly.

(2) The posts mentioned in sub-paragraph (1)(a) and (b) of this paragraph shall include those of the Permanent Secretaries, Directors-General in Extra-Ministerial Departments and parastatals, Directors in Ministries and Extra-Ministerial Departments, senior military officers, senior diplomatic posts and managerial cadres in the Federal and State parastatals, bodies, agencies and institutions.

(3) Notwithstanding any provision in any other law or enactment, the Commission shall ensure that every public company or corporation reflects the federal character in the appointments of its directors and senior management staff.

The President Muhammadu Buhari led federal government by refusal to comply with those provisions of the Constitution and act of the federal character coupled with his notoriety for non-compliance with court verdicts) has succeeded in whittling down the powers of democratic and administrative institutions. The level of lopsidedness in key political and military/security appointments aptly demonstrate clear personalization of institutions of governance in Nigeria by the government. See Tables 1, 2 and 3 showing Key Appointments under President Muhammadu Buhari. The tables demonstrate extent of exclusion of segments of the Nigerian state. The South East (SE) does not have any representation in the list of Service Chiefs clearly indicating that they are sidelined and skimmed out of the affairs of the federal government under the present administration against the above constitutional provisions.

Service Chief positions are seen largely as booties that were indiscriminately distributed to Hausa/Fulani brothers of the President in a manner that did not allow even a single position to 5 states of the South East. The tables show that North East (NE) has 5, North West (NW) - the

President's geopolitical zone 8, North Central (NC) has 4 positions. A more particularistic probe further shows that President Buhari appointed 3 Katsina indigenes into these key positions to ensure that his family and friends were adequately favoured. Again, 97% of the appointees profess Islamic religion in a secular state. Suffice it to state that all the security chiefs of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria minus two and all the heads of all the paramilitary agencies in Nigeria, are from the Northern part of Nigeria; and they are so appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari (Osuji, 2016).

**Table 1: Lopsided Appointment of Service Chiefs under President Mohammadu Buhari**

Names	Position	Religion	State	Zone
Lt Gen Tukur Buratai	Chief of Army Staff	Muslim	Borno	NE
Musa Lawal Daura	DG-SSS	Muslim	Katsina	NW
Retired Lt Gen A. Dambazu	Minister of Interior	Muslim	Kaduna	NW
Air Mars Sadique Baba Abubakar	Chief of Air Staff	Muslim	Bauchi	NE
Rtd Maj Gen Babagana Monguno	NSA	Muslim	Borno	NE
Mansur Dan Ali	Minister of Defense	Muslim	Zamfara	NW
Ibrahim Kpotun Idris	Inspector Gen of Police	Muslim	Niger	NC
Ahmed Rufai Abubakar	DG NIA	Muslim	Katsina	NW
Retired Col Hameed Ali	CG Custom Service	Muslim	Kaduna	NW
Mohammed Babandede	CG Immigration Service	Muslim	Jigawa	NW
Ahmed Ja'afaru	CG Prisons Service	Muslim	Kebbi	NW
Boboye Olayemi Oyeyemi	Corps Marshall FRSC		Kwara	NC
Anebi Garba Joseph	CG Federal Fire Service	Christian	Benue	NC
Abdulahi Gana Muhammadu	Com Gen NSCDC	Muslim	Niger	NC
Abubakar Malami	AG of the Federation	Muslim	Kebbi	NW
Ibrahim Magu	Chairman of EFCC	Muslim	Borno	NE
Muhammad Mustapha Abdallah	Chairman/CEO NDLEA	Muslim	Adamawa	NE
Lt Gen Abayomi G. Olanishakin	Chief of Defense Staff		Ekiti	SW
Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas	Chief of Naval Staff	Christian	Cross River	SW
Alhaji Abdul Jelili Oyewale	Min of Police Affairs	Muslim	Osun	SW

Source: Compiled by the researcher from various publication of the government

**Table 2: Serving Assistant Inspectors General of Police**

<b>Name</b>	<b>State of Origin</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Zone</b>
Mohammed Musa Katsina	Katsina	Muslim	NW
Tili Abubakar	Kebbi	Muslim	NW
Umaru Shehu	Sokoto	Muslim	NW
Abdul Bube	Kebbi	Muslim	NW
Ibrahim Adamu	Zamfara	Muslim	NW
Abdul Dahiru	Kano	Muslim	NW
Salisu F. Abdulahi	Kano	Muslim	NW
Lawal Shehu	Katsina	Muslim	NW
Abubakar Marafa	Kebbi	Muslim	NW
Dahiru Mohammed	Katsina	Muslim	NW
Mohammed Usman Sani	Bauchi	Muslim	NE
Aminchi Samaila Baraya	Taraba	Muslim	NE
Usman Ankali Baba	Yobe	Muslim	NE
Tijani Baba	Yobe	Muslim	NE
Karma Hosea Hassan	Taraba	Christian	NE
Agboola Oshodi-Glover	Lagos		SW
Kayode Aderanti	Osun	Christian	SW
Felix Ogundeji	Ondo	Christian	SW
Fredrick Taiwo Lekanu	Lagos	Christian	SW
Rashidi O. Akintude	Ogun	Muslim	SW
Hilda Idiruro Harrison	Edo	Christian	SS

Source: compiled by the researcher from various government publications

From Table 2 above, it is deducible that no Igboman is among the leadership of the Nigeria Police Force. The Nigeria Police Force Management Team is composed of all serving Deputy Inspectors-General (DIG), Assistant Inspectors-General (AIG), the 12 Police Zonal Command AIGs and the Force Secretary, etc from where the national policing policy directions are formulated, discussed and implemented at the level of Nigeria Police Management Team; from where they are implemented as instructed by the 37 serving State Commissioners of Police (CP) and others (Umeagbalasi, Igboeli, Umeche and Ezinwanne, 2018). The Chief of Staff, Secretary to the Government of the Federation and Attorney General of the Federation and very key personnel of government all selected from the North.

**Table 3: Statistics Information on Exclusion of South Easterners in Headship of Military Formations in South Eastern Nigeria under President Muhammadu Buhari**

Name	Position	Zone& Religion
Major Gen Adamu Baba Abubakar	GOC 82 Division, Enugu	Northern Muslim
Col Sagir Musa	Deputy Director of Information, 82 Division	Northern Muslim
Lt Col C.O. Ibrahim	Commanding Officer, Onitsha 302 Cantonment Military	Northern Muslim
Lt Col Sidi Kasim Umar	Comm Off 144 Batt, Ukwa-Ngwa 14 Brig-Ohafia	Northern Muslim
Brig Gen I.H. Bature	Commander, 34 Brigade, near Owerri, Imo State	Northern Muslim
Brig Gen Mark Mamman	Commander of 44 Engineering 82 Division	Northern Xtian
Brig Gen A.I. Adegboe	Commander, Army Supply, 82 Division	
Brig E.A. Anaryu	Commander, Army Transport, 82 Division	
Brig Gen Abdul Kalifah Ibrahim	Commander, 14 Brigade, Ohafia	Northern Muslim
Navy Captain Abdulahi Aminu	Commander, Naval Sch of Fin & Log, Owerre-Nta,	Northern Muslim
Lt Col Abubakar Saleh	Commanding Off, 14 Field Engr Reg Osha Military	Northern Muslim
Navy Captain Mohammed Dahiru	Commander, Naval Outpost, Ogbaru, Anambra State	Northern Muslim
Air Commodore Paul Misyer	Commander, 155 Base Service Group of NAF, Enugu	Northern Xtian

Source: Compiled by the researcher

Table 3 above shows overarching subjugation of the people of South Eastern Nigeria (the Igbos) perhaps for the fact that they did not vote for President Buhari in 2015. All military formations in the zone are headed by Northerners of Hausa/Fulani extraction. That is not as if Igbos are appointed into such positions in other geopolitical zones. Of far more importance is the claim that out of 280 CSI promoted to ACI over 250 are of northern/ Muslim extraction. The President Buhari led federal government has persistently discriminated against some regions, geopolitical zones and states in resources/value allocation and appointment considerations even against the provisions of Section 14(3-4) of the 1999 constitutions as amended and the Federal Character Principle. This pattern of corruption follows line discrimination on the bases of religion, ethnicity and state of origin. Although Federal character principle discriminates against students from particular geographical zones who are denied admission because less intelligent students from other areas must be admitted, it discriminates against optimal location of industries, because they must be spread throughout the nation rather than in the best locations. It also discriminates against promotions and appointments because they must be seen to reflect our diverse ethnicity rather than merit (Enahoro, 2018). Promotions and appointments in this administration has not reflected the diverse ethno-religious diversities in Nigeria.

In about three years into the life of the Buhari led federal government, significant values have been unduly allocated to Katsina state. The federal government has completed 3 water projects in Daura axis (Sabke dam, Dutsi and Mashi water schemes) with estimated capacity of serving about 100,000 people daily, signed a memorandum of understanding with the government of Niger for the building of a refinery that has a capacity of producing about 150,000 barrel of oil daily, a set of power plants, etc. All in Katsina state because the President is from there and must influence resources distribution to favour his people. What is refinery doing in Katsina state? Is it viable? The principle of comparative and even absolute advantage should have been applied to decide where refineries are

12 - 14 JU Need. Or would it not have been best for existing refineries to be optimized. Well, ethnic and nepotic considerations are the bane of national development in Nigeria. They constitute the worst forms of corruption that stifle creativity and innovation.

The public bureaucracy in Nigeria is plagued with a number of problems that have hindered its effective role in the country (Okotoni, 2001). One problem encountered by the public sectors is the politicization of jobs in the sector. Bureaucrats are supposed to be non-partisan but some positions in the public sector in Nigeria are highly political. Some positions in the public sector during the military era have some political influence, offices like the Permanent Secretary and the Head of Service were given to political military officers. Although there is nothing wrong with civil servants having an interest in politics, it can sometimes undermine the decisions made by their office. Public perception on such a decision will be highly criticized as being unprofessional and unfair because of their political party affiliation (Okotoni, 2001).

### **Implications of Ethnicity and Nepotism on the Nigerian Public Sector**

The implications of ethnicity (tribalism), nepotism, favouritism and cronyism are immense on the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria (Olabode, 2012). Tribalism singularly stunted our political development and stagnated our economic prosperity. It succeeded in fragmenting our national unity and gave us impression that our nation didn't need the best-hand-for-the-job neither was competence nor capacity for proffering solutions to national challenges the required qualities to public offices. The most important thing was 'our-brother-is-in-charge'. Unfortunately, it's only the crooked elites that benefit from this arrangement. Nepotism and Cronyism have succeeded in channeling the commonwealth into the hands of very few citizens in the system. Where majority (about 86 million citizens) is languishing in extreme poverty, and middle-class is being eroded by the day and yet very countable citizens are daily being announced as belonging to the richest persons in the world club, that system is bound to be guilty of cronyism. This depicts of preferential treatment. You must be within a circle to access societal values or you struggle out of the laws risking death to be counted amongst the nobles.

Nepotism encourages laziness because, if a young man realizes that, whether he works hard or not, there is a job waiting for him somewhere by the virtue of his father or mother having been at the top, he will say to himself, what then is the need to work hard? But, for a young man who knows that he has no firm anchor or support from anybody or community; who knows that his destiny is in his own hands, who knows that, if he doesn't deny himself some pleasure even when his peers are enjoying, his hope of a better tomorrow becomes a pipe dream if he doesn't move from his comfort zone to shape his tomorrow (Uhara, 2014). But, the unfortunate thing is that when he works harder to get his due, nepotism will only deny him that except, he displays a stubborn resilience by going extra mile to satisfy the law of extra miles before it sparks divine intervention to his favor.



Ethnic, nepotism and favouritism considerations are very common behavioural patterns in business life (Araslı, Bavik and Ekiz, 2006: 296). In organizations with intense preferential treatment, the human resources departments fail to independently carry out its activities. Thus, under such conditions, appointments based on competence and knowledge accumulation seem impossible as it is today in Nigeria. Recruitment and selection processes into public offices especially civil/public service is based on letter-headed papers from high profiled personalities as clearly seen in the case of the Nigerian Immigration Service in 2016, the Federal Inland Revenue Service, et cetera. Recruitment and selection into juicy public offices have been going on unannounced with privileged individuals favouring their families and friends. Vacancies are rarely declared in contemporary Nigeria public service. If employees are in competition with a privileged individual, their probability of getting considered for promotion is quite low (Abdala, Maghrabi-Al-Dabbagh, 1994). Moreover, working under an incompetent person is distressing situation for an employee subject to preferential treatment. Inequality between the contribution rate and the benefit offered makes employees think they work in an unfair environment. The lack of confidence that appears in such circumstances negatively affects job satisfaction, organizational commitment and individual performance.

An efficient and neutral public bureaucracy is essential in a democratic system because it leads to an efficient and effective public bureaucracy. The public bureaucracy has a significant role to play in the administration of government, it ensures that the delivery of goods and services are evenly distributed to ensure equity. A corrupt bureaucracy can lead to a decrease in the quality of goods and services being provided by the government.

### **Concluding Remarks**

All in all, ethnic and nepotism considerations are primordial relations that constitute some of the major forms of corruption which impede public sector performance in Nigeria. The constructs have so permeated the psyche and fabric of the President Buhari led federal government that it currently forms the major obstacle to national development, cohesion and national unity. Hence, the rhetoric about restructuring that has left Nigeria deeply divided. Loyalty and even patriotism are more to ethnic and nepotism affiliations than to Nigeria. Appointments, recruitment, promotion and other privileges in the public service are determined by sub-optimal indices. All those abuses violate the principles of impartiality and impersonality of the public service (Ayo, 1998, and Ajayi, 2001). It therefore retards performance and service delivery in grandiose dimensions that have stagnated socio-political and economic development of Nigerian public space.

It is further observed that prevalence of primordial ties and considerations in government business is grossly a function of weak institutions of governance that invariably imbue political leaders and their cronies ambience for perpetuation of preferential treatment.



The paper finally recommended the adoption of best practice in forms of integrity, accountability, adherence to competence and meritocracy, discipline, professionalism, patriotism, and impartiality in the observance of the federal character principle in Nigeria.

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