

The Theory and Practice of Federalism as a Structural Mechanism of Governance: How Adequate for Gender Struggle and Representation in Nigeria?

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ABSTRACT In this paper we examined the concept of federalism as a political arrangement that has been adopted for the practical realisation of the principles of democracy in Nigeria and other similar polities within the world. More importantly, following a thorough theoretical consideration of the subject-matter of federalism as one of the structural paraphernalia of true democratic practice, we zeroed-in on the inadequacies of the Nigerian federalism as it affects most aspects of the existence of the citizenry today. Apart from suggesting the reversal of its present centralizing tendencies, we identified its lack of recognition of gender equity among its other defects. Consequent upon this, we called for a real restructuring of the Nigerian federalism. In other words, we called for a federal structure that has constitutional provisions for gender balance in ways conducive for a proper feminisation of some aspects of the political process in line with the principles of rule of law which would go a long way to better the lots of the female citizens. This, in our opinion, would put a desired stop to the constant femocracy which, apart from its being an anti-democratic female power structure, has now taken on a near-epileptic nature in Nigeria, looking at the way its now acclaimed institutions or attributable benefits, (e.g the Better Life for Rural Women Programme, Family Support programme, Family Economic Advancement Programme etc.) have been intentionally, though, appropriately, terminated in Nigeria with constancy each time the military transfers power to itself or change itself through a palace or whatever type of coup d'état. Infact, the non-real recognition by the Democratic Government of the Fourth Republic, of these femocratic structures, particularly the Office of the First Lady, due among other reasons, to lack of constitutional backing for them, and, their being mere relics of femocracy, practically shows the emptiness of femocracy to women's political emancipation. It equally shows it, as a mere plastering of the wounds vis-à-vis women's political relevance in Nigeria.

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