



## Nigerian Democracy and Elusive Development: Restructuring as a Panacea

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**Abstract.** Nigeria's political landscape is still shaped by the after effects of colonialism and internal conflict, which influence the country's path toward democracy. Although Nigeria's 1999 democratic transition was met with great anticipation, most Nigerians have not yet felt the benefits of improved governance and economic progress. This essay explores obstacles to Nigeria's development, including bureaucratic lethargy, economic inequality, and corruption. Drawing on academic discourse, this study examines the fundamental principles of democracy and development and highlights the importance of economic welfare and equality within democratic frameworks. A close examination of the available literature sheds light on the harsh realities of Nigeria's developmental path. The main contention is that reorganizing Nigeria's political and economic structures provides a solution to deal with these issues. This study supports a more responsive and inclusive governance model by promoting the decentralization of power and giving local communities more authority over resources. This lays a roadmap for attaining sustainable development and promoting shared prosperity through practical policy suggestions and constitutional modifications. This study emphasizes the importance of re-evaluating Nigeria's democratic experiment from a restructuring perspective. Nigeria may move toward a future characterized by greater justice and prosperity by tearing down the legacy of the colonial era and supporting grassroots efforts. Restructuring appears to be a concrete way to fulfill the dreams of the people as the country struggles with its developmental obstacles.

**Keywords:** Economic progress, democracy, development, restructuring.

### 1. Introduction

Nigeria's 1999 democratic transition has been a watershed in history. Nigerians had great expectations for a new era of governance marked by accountability, openness, and socioeconomic advancement after years of military dictatorship marred by corruption, human rights violation, economic mismanagement and violence (Abdulrasheed 2021; Akinyetun, 2021a; Allen 2024). It was expected that major reforms addressing long-standing problems and improving the people's standard of living would accompany the restoration of civilian authority. This is because democratic governance prioritizes people's needs and rights, promoting inclusive growth and fair resource distribution. However, even after this shift more than 20 years ago, Nigeria still faces several obstacles that prevents the realization of these goals. The country continues to grapple with difficulties including poverty, inequality, unemployment, corruption, instability, and inadequate infrastructure, despite having an abundance of natural and human resources (Ata-Agboni et al., 2024). Millions of Nigerians struggle to meet their fundamental requirements and reach their full potential, and the divide between the privileged and marginalized continues to be glaring. As democracy has not yet completely delivered on its promises, Nigeria's democratic journey needs to be continuously re-evaluated, and new ways to develop and govern explored.

The marginalization of vulnerable groups, economic mismanagement, and elite corruption are some of the long-standing issues confronting Nigerian democracy. Elite corruption remains pervasive, with politicians and other privileged individuals using their positions for personal advantage and misusing public funds meant for development and basic services (Fisayo et al., 2023). This widespread corruption weakens the

rule of law, erodes public confidence in democratic institutions, and feeds inequality and the poverty cycle. The detrimental impacts of corruption on Nigeria's political and economic landscapes have been well-documented in the literature. Chidi et al (2023) highlight the role of corruption in aggravating poverty, degrading public services, and promoting social unrest. Nigeria's battle with economic mismanagement has made it difficult for it to use its wealth of resources for inclusive prosperity. Nigeria's abundant oil reserves has been stifled by glaring poverty, underdevelopment, and a growing population (Akanle & Shittu, 2022). The structural hurdles that Nigeria's economy faces have been examined by scholars like Collier & Goderis (2007) and Harrison (2022), who have identified a number of major obstacles to sustainable development, including an over reliance on oil revenue, inadequate infrastructure, and weak institutional ability.

Nigeria's complicated ethno-regional dynamics have exacerbated political instability and social differences, making democratic consolidation even more challenging. Local communities have been disadvantaged and conflicts among marginalized groups have been exacerbated by the federal government's centralization of power (Olumba, 2022). Nigeria's federalism and ethno-political dynamics have been examined by scholars, such as Rotimi Suberu and Richard Joseph, who have highlighted the necessity of inclusive governance structures that can meet the varied interests of the country's multi-ethnic population (Erubami, 2018). In light of these difficulties, restructuring is a strong alternative to address Nigeria's developmental problems. Restructuring entails a comprehensive reorganization of the nation's political and economic structure with the goals of strengthening fiscal autonomy, fostering equitable development, and decentralizing power (Baridam et al., 2022).

Restructuring empowers communities, encourages participatory governance, and guarantees accountability at the local level by giving states and local governments greater authority. Resource control measures provide states with more authority over their natural resources, allowing them to use the money generated for regional development, and lessen their reliance on federal funding (Yu et al., 2023). Institutional reforms provide an atmosphere favorable for social progress and sustainable development by bolstering democratic governance, advancing transparency, and improving inclusivity. Through the integration of theoretical knowledge and literature review, this study presents a thorough examination of restructuring as a means of advancing Nigeria's

democratic transition and socioeconomic advancement. The ultimate objective is to add to the body of knowledge regarding Nigeria's democratic development, while providing practical suggestions for resolving the urgent issues faced by the country.

### **1.1 Methodology**

Through a qualitative analysis of research on democracy, development and restructuring, this study examines Nigeria's democratic journey and the structural barriers to its development. It contextualizes Nigeria's democratic journey and critically examines various academic perspectives on democracy and development. This study identifies patterns, paradoxes, and complexities in Nigeria's political and economic environments through a qualitative analysis. It examines trends across time and finds connections between variables. This study used primary and secondary sources, including journal articles, government reports, policy documents, and international organizations, to gather, synthesize, and evaluate data, ensuring the reliability and accuracy of the analysis.

### **1.2 Theoretical Underpinning**

The idea of institutional economics provides a useful theoretical framework for analyzing the connection between restructuring, democratic government, and economic growth in Nigeria. Institutional economics focuses on how formal laws, unwritten conventions, and governance frameworks influence economic activities and create a community (Iskandar et al. 2022). Using this approach, one can examine how restructuring initiatives affect institutional settings, which in turn affect democratic governance and economic outcomes. The notions of 'institutional quality' and 'institutional change' can be used within the institutional economics framework to evaluate how restructuring has affected Nigeria's political and economic environments (Aberé & Akinbobola, 2020). Institutional quality refers to the efficacy, efficiency, and integrity of formal and informal institutions such as governmental agencies, legal systems, and social standards (Nguyen et al., 2023). On the other hand, intentional attempts to reorganize or modify existing institutions to enhance their functionality and align them with more general development goals are referred to as institutional transformation (Waddock et al., 2022).

This theoretical framework can be used to investigate how decentralization initiatives impact institutional quality and change in Nigeria through a restructuring analysis. Decentralization efforts, such as seeking to

transfer authority to subnational entities, may result in modifications to the allocation of power, procedures for accountability, and methods used to provide services (Atisa et al., 2021). Restructuring may improve institutional quality by encouraging openness, responsiveness, and involvement of local citizens through decentralizing governance systems. Moreover, restructuring can promote institutional change by questioning vested interests, power structures and governance procedures. Public institutions' restructuring efforts can promote innovation, competition, and accountability by introducing new laws, regulations, and decision-making procedures (Adekoya 2023). However, societal acceptance, administrative ability, and political will are only a few variables that affect the effectiveness of restructuring interventions and the success of institutional reform will ultimately be.

By analyzing shifts in institutional quality metrics, such as the rule of law, efficacy of government, and corruption control, academics can evaluate the effects of restructuring on democratic governance and economic growth through the prism of institutional economics.

Democracy and development are theoretically linked. Research has focused on the theoretical relationship between democracy and development, with researchers such as Francis Fukuyama providing insightful analyses of the connection between political rule and socioeconomic advancement. In his ground breaking book "The end of history and the last man", Fukuyama argues that liberal democracy is the pinnacle of human conceptual development and provides the best conditions for both political freedom and economic success (Fukuyama, 2006; Sibuh, 2021). Fukuyama contends that democratic government offers the institutional framework necessary for upholding social stability, promoting innovation, and safeguarding individual rights – all of which are critical for long-term economic development and prosperity. He contends that democracies are more suited to controlling social unrest, advancing the rule of law, and offering incentives to encourage investment and entrepreneurship (Fukuyama, 2018). Fukuyama's viewpoint emphasizes the fundamental relationship between political liberties and economic results, arguing that a democratic government is both a political aspiration and necessary economic condition for attaining long-term progress (Onyango, 2023).

Other scholars, on the other hand, emphasize the significance of context-specific elements and historical legacies in his view of the connection

between democracy and growth. Gil-Garcia et al. (2020) recognize that enhanced accountability, openness, and public involvement are some of the ways democratic governments may promote economic development. Oduor (2022) drew attention to the difficulties and shades of democratization in various postcolonial nations, such as those in Africa. Clark (2019) contend that civilizations must naturally develop democracy from the inside, taking into consideration their distinct historical, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions. Democracy cannot be imposed on them. In contrast to the one-size-fits-all methods imposed by others, Omotola (2021) highlights the necessity of inclusive and participatory democratic processes that prioritize local ownership, institution building, and consensus building.

## 2. Democracy and Development: The Nexus

Scholars have studied and debated the intricate relationship between political governance and socioeconomic advancement in terms of democracy and development for many years. A basic question that runs across this discussion is: How much can democracy promote or impede development, and how can development promote democracy? Democracy proponents contend that political involvement and freedom are necessary preconditions for sustained development (Hamladji, 2024). Scholars such as Robert Dahl and Amartya Sen have highlighted the inherent value of democracy as a framework that supports human potential, social fairness, and individual liberty. Sen (1999) contends that democracy offers the institutional framework necessary for people to express their concerns, hold government responsibility, and influence public decisions in a manner that prioritizes the welfare of all people. Dahl also argues that democratic governments, which are marked by free and fair elections, the rule of law, and respect for individual liberties, make it easier to resolve disputes amicably, foster creativity, and strengthen social cohesion, all of which are favorable to the expansion and advancement of the economy (Dahl, 1989).

Opponents of democracy contend that the quest for economic growth might call for authoritarian policies that curtail political liberties and jeopardize democratic institutions. To promote rapid industrialization and modernization, scholars such as Lee Kuan Yew and Fareed Zakaria have argued for the "developmental state" paradigm, in which a powerful, centralized government has strict control over public resources and economic policy (Moon & Moon, 2020). This viewpoint holds that prioritizing economic growth over political liberties has allowed nations

such as China and Singapore to achieve exceptional economic success, suggesting that democracy may not be a requirement for prosperity.

However, research indicates that democracy and development are linked processes that reinforce one another rather than being mutually exclusive, with each being strengthened and aided by advancements in the other. Even when used as a stand-in for democracy, good governance, which includes important institutions, procedures, citizen voice, participation, and inclusion, is crucial to developing and fostering a democratic culture (United Nations, 2013). As the United Nations (2013) further argues, there is no evidence that development requires the loss of democracy or that autocracies focused on development are more successful over the long term. When combined with state capabilities such as safety, security, the rule of law, access to justice, healthcare, and education, core characteristics such as inclusion, participation, responsiveness to citizen demands, and accountability can directly or indirectly contribute to development. Meanwhile, poverty, hunger, and illness can make it more difficult for people to exercise their civil and political rights, which erodes their confidence in established democratic systems (United Nations, 2013).

Mohammadi et al. (2023) emphasized the beneficial relationship between democracy and sustained economic growth. They contend that democratic governance fosters investment, entrepreneurship, and innovation – three key drivers of economic development – by upholding political stability, rule of law, and property rights. Cheema (2020) stresses the significance of inclusive institutions and sound governance in promoting sustainable development. They contend that democratic governance, which is marked by open and transparent decision-making procedures, responsible public institutions, and active citizen participation, can contribute to the reduction of corruption, lessening inequality, and the advancement of fair resource distribution, all of which serve to establish the foundation for inclusive growth and human development.

In the Nigerian context, democracy is defined as a form of government marked by political pluralism, free and fair elections, defence of human rights, and public accountability. It is an embodiment of the popular sovereignty theory, which holds that citizens have the power to execute their collective will through representative institutions (Allen, 2024). Following years of military dictatorship, democracy in Nigeria became a ray of hope, with the country's transition to

civilian government in 1999, ushering in a new age of democratic governance.

However, for democracy in Nigeria to be truly effective, it must incorporate ideas of socioeconomic justice and go beyond simple procedural rules. The equitable distribution of money, resources, and opportunities within society is referred to as socioeconomic justice (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2019). This guarantees that every citizen has equal access to their needs, including housing, work, healthcare, and education. Socioeconomic justice is necessary to create an inclusive and equitable society in Nigeria where poverty, inequality, and social exclusion are widespread.

In the Nigerian context, development is the process of raising people's standard of living, enhancing their well-being, and expanding their prospects. This includes social advancement, human development, environmental sustainability, and economic growth (Adejumo, 2020). Real development is multifaceted, tackling the underlying causes of marginalization, poverty, and inequality, while enabling people to reach their full potential as individuals and communities.

Crucially, for development in Nigeria to be significant and long-lasting, socioeconomic justice concepts must serve as the foundation (Lawan, 2011). This means tackling institutional flaws that support social and economic inequality as well as corruption and other structural obstacles to opportunity and inclusion. Prioritizing the needs and goals of marginalized groups such as women, youth, indigenous people, and people with disabilities is also necessary to ensure that nobody is left behind in the pursuit of advancement. Socio-economic justice is closely related to the relationship between democracy and development in Nigeria. Development can be accelerated by a democratic government that respects the values of accountability, openness, and citizen involvement, because it can create inclusive governance, strengthen social cohesiveness, and give marginalized people more influence. Similarly, development plans and initiatives that place a high prioritize socioeconomic fairness can bolster political stability, advance social cohesiveness, and fortify democratic institutions.

### 3. Impediments to Development in Nigeria

Nigeria faces a complex interplay of political and economic issues ingrained in its social fabric, which impede its progress toward sustainable development. These intricacies have been thoroughly studied by academics who have illuminated the structural impediments militating Nigeria's progress (Dumuje, 2023; Ojo & Clarke, 2021; Torhemen et al., 2023).

Corruption is a recurring subject in the literature as an enduring problem impeding Nigeria's growth trajectory (Nwogbo & Ighodalo, 2021). Many studies have been conducted on the negative impacts of corruption on Nigeria's political and economic domains, highlighting the ways in which corruption skews resource allocation, erodes public trust, sustains inequality and increases the incidence of poverty (Abdulai, 2023; Panao, 2022). According to Akinyetun et al. (2021), poverty remains a major problem in Nigeria and has several facets that go beyond a lack of money. In urban slums and rural areas, a lack of access to work opportunities, education, healthcare, and basic amenities feeds the cycle of poverty and social isolation. Poverty is a major obstacle to Nigeria's development goals, because it increases social inequality, fosters animosity, and erodes social cohesiveness.

Furthermore, the ethno-regional variety of the country seriously hampers its effective administration and national cohesion. Nigeria's federal system was created to serve the country's diverse population, but political elites have frequently used it to maintain patronage networks, heighten tensions between ethnic groups, and obstruct national progress (Okibe 2022). To address structural inequities and promote inclusive governance, proposals for decentralization and the devolution of authority have been proposed (Omondi, 2019). However, reforms have met with resistance from entrenched political interests, underscoring the entrenched character of Nigeria's political elites. According to Akinyetun (2024), identity politics in Nigeria plays a major role in fostering conflict and impeding national unity, especially when seen through the eyes of the youth. Political elites have frequently taken advantage of the nation's varied ethnic and religious makeup to provide rally support along ethnic and religious lines, escalating divisions, and social tensions. Identity-based factors frequently take precedence over meritocracy and justice under various circumstances, including political campaigns, resource distribution, and opportunity access.

Furthermore, Nigeria's extreme reliance on oil earnings makes it more susceptible to external shocks from the outside world and worsens its economic imbalances. Nigeria's inability to convert its abundance of natural resources into broad-based affluence is ascribed to inadequate governance, corruption, and deficiency in economic diversification (Akinyetun et al., 2021). The fluctuating costs of oil worldwide highlight the urgent need for economic change and investment in other industries to promote sustainable growth. Additionally, attempts to encourage economic growth and draw on foreign

investment are hampered by Nigeria's institutional flaws, which include judicial inefficiency and lack of enforcement procedures (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). Nigeria faces significant development issues due to the lack of a strong legal framework and impunity, which hinders innovation and encourages a corrupt culture.

Another impediment to development in Nigeria is insecurity. Armed banditry is a serious security threat in Nigeria in addition to police brutality. Particularly in Northern Nigeria, armed banditries have grown to become a profitable criminal industry because of issues such as unemployment, poverty, and poor governance. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons, along with a culture of impunity and inadequate law enforcement, have made it relatively easy for criminal syndicates to operate, causing community instability and undercutting development initiatives (Akinyetun, 2022). Meanwhile, insurgency continues to plague the country. Insurgency is a multifaceted security challenge originating from grievances associated with socioeconomic marginalization and relative hardship. Poverty, unemployment, and government indifference have all contributed to the Boko Haram insurgency in North-eastern Nigeria, providing an environment conducive to radicalization and violence. This insurgency has caused extensive displacement, fatalities, and economic destruction, making peace building and reconciliation efforts extremely difficult in impacted areas (Akinyetun, 2020). Moreover, as Akinyetun (2021b) opines, extra-judicial executions by the police constitute a serious violation of human rights and a sign of structural problems in Nigeria's law enforcement agencies. Against its mandate of fighting violent crimes, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) has been linked to multiple incidences of abuse, torture, and extrajudicial killings, particularly involving young Nigerian people. Exacerbating social discontent and undermining efforts towards security and stability, these acts have fostered grievances against the state and destroyed public trust in law enforcement authorities.

Restructuring Nigeria's political and economic structure appears to be a viable strategy to overcome these obstacles. Decentralization of authority and resource management techniques can stimulate efficiency, creativity, and competition among federating units. Additionally, strengthening national resilience and unity, reducing ethno-regional conflicts, and promoting social peace can be achieved by empowering local communities and promoting inclusivity.

#### 4. Restructuring as a Panacea for Enhanced Democratic Governance

Reorganizing Nigeria's political and economic system has a lot of potential for improving democratic governance, encouraging fair growth, and resolving issues with marginalization. This section examines the various advantages of restructuring, as well as the theoretical foundations for its use in Nigeria. By giving underprivileged people and areas more authority and influence, restructuring offers a chance to lessen marginalization. Restructuring makes it easier to create localized governance systems that are suited to the unique requirements of various populations by transferring power to federating units, such as states and local governments (Onapajo & Babalola, 2021). Decentralizing decision-making processes gives marginalized people a say in how policies are formulated, which reduces their sense of isolation and alienation. By promoting social cohesiveness and integration, this inclusive strategy helps create a more cohesive society in which the interests of all members are considered.

By empowering local communities and regions, restructuring can promote equitable development, which is another attractive feature. Restructuring makes it possible to create customized development plans that cater to the particular demands of constituents by giving states and local governments more power (Otusanya & Lauwo, 2019). This deliberate distribution of resources encourages investment in vital fields, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, closing the wealth gap between rich and poor regions. Restructuring also makes it possible for balanced growth to occur across the country, reducing differences in the distribution of opportunities and advancing sustainable development plans. According to Olu-Adeyemi (2018), restructuring has the potential to improve democratic governance by promoting greater accountability, transparency, and public involvement. Restructuring lessens the concentration of power at the federal level by decentralizing resources and power, which increases government responsiveness to people's needs. By involving the public, elected leaders are held accountable for their acts and a culture of transparency and accountability is fostered. Moreover, restructuring creates the foundation for a strong and resilient democratic system by bolstering democratic institutions, preserving the rule of law, and defending civil freedom.

Restructuring gives communities the chance to bolster local governance institutions and structures, enabling them to handle their particular problems successfully.

Restructuring promotes the establishment of responsive and responsible local governments by transferring authority to the local level (Olu-Adeyemi 2018). By allowing communities to customize policies and programs to meet their unique requirements, this decentralization of authority fosters more effective service delivery and increases citizen participation in the governing processes. By restructuring the country, it will significantly enhance socioeconomic integration by reducing the distance between rural and urban areas. Restructuring makes it easier to invest in rural infrastructure, healthcare, and education by giving local governments the tools and power to conduct development projects (Otusanya and Lauwo 2019). This focused investment promotes balanced regional development across the nation, lowers migration to metropolitan areas, and boosts economic activity in rural towns.

In resource-rich areas such as the Niger Delta, restructuring provides a means of enhancing the management of people and natural resources. Restructuring guarantees that resource richness translates into real benefits for local inhabitants by giving states and communities more authority over resource distribution and revenue production (Onapajo and Babalola 2021). This resource control system lessens complaints and disputes over resource ownership by promoting environmentally friendly development methods, fair resource revenue distribution, and sustainable development practices. In Nigeria's political landscape, ethnic diversity has been a source of both strength and life. Through the promotion of inclusive governance systems, restructuring can act as a catalyst for national unity and inter-ethnic cooperation (Akinyetun 2024). Restructuring fosters trust and unity among various communities by allowing for increased participation of multiple ethnic groups in decision-making processes and decentralizing power. Ethnic conflicts are lessened, societal cohesion is strengthened, and a sense of shared identity and belonging is fostered through inclusivity.

By providing underprivileged groups, especially women and youth, with more access to economic and political opportunities, restructuring offers a chance to empower these groups (Akinyetun et al., 2021). Restructuring addresses past injustices and advances social justice by supporting affirmative action programs and guaranteeing fair representation in the local government systems. In addition to bolstering democratic institutions, empowering women and young people promotes inclusive and sustainable development.

## 5. Challenges of Implementing Restructuring Reforms

To guarantee viability and success, restructuring measures in Nigeria must consider a number of factors and problems. Firmly established political elites may oppose restructuring efforts if they believe that the reforms would jeopardize their power and interests. Disagreements between political parties and stakeholders regarding the extent, type, and timing of restructuring measures may lead to political inertia and gridlock. Restructuring efforts in Nigeria are severely hampered by the country's deeply ingrained identity politics and ethno-regional conflicts (Akinyetun, 2024; Okibe, 2022). Divisive attitudes driven by worries about marginalization or favoritism may prevent agreement on reorganization plans, especially if certain groups believe that changes hurt their privileges or interests.

The efficient implementation and maintenance of decentralized governance systems, fiscal autonomy, and resource control may be hampered by inadequate administrative and institutional competencies at different levels of government. Initiatives to increase capacity, educational programs, and technical assistance are necessary to improve policy implementation and to fortify government institutions. Restrictions imposed by the constitution and law may make it more difficult to alter important laws to implement restructuring reforms (Nguyen et al., 2023). To ensure legitimacy and compliance, planned restructuring measures must be harmonized with current constitutional laws, which call for serious consideration and legal competence.

Macroeconomic stability, budgetary restrictions, and prospective income losses must be carefully considered in light of the economic problems posed by resource control, revenue-sharing reforms, and fiscal decentralization. It is imperative to employ alternative revenue streams, make budgetary adjustments, and exercise careful financial management to reduce economic risks and preserve the fiscal autonomy of the state and local governments (Mohammadi et al., 2023). Due to the general public's limited comprehension of the advantages and consequences of structural reforms, extensive public education campaigns, stakeholder engagement programs, and public consultations are crucial. Gaining agreement and support from stakeholders during the reform process requires fostering communication, openness, and inclusivity.

## 6. Institutional Reform as a Necessity

To address Nigeria's developmental issues and improve democratic governance, policy recommendations seeking to reorganize the nation's political and economic structure must be implemented. To clearly define the distribution of power between the federal, state, and local levels and to prioritize decentralization, constitutional amendments ought to be implemented. Clauses that acknowledge federating units' rights to resource control, self-governance, and equitable representation should be included in these changes (Baridam et al., 2022). To promote cooperation and consensus building, mechanisms for intergovernmental coordination and dispute resolution must be established.

A revenue-sharing formula which provides a more equitable allocation of funds among the federal, state, and local governments, is a crucial component of restructuring is examining and modifying the revenue-sharing formula. Strengthening state and local governments' financial independence and assisting development initiatives means giving them a larger portion of tax money (Baridam et al., 2022). When allocating resources, considerations, such as population size, internal revenue generation, development indicators, and social requirements, should be considered (Olu-Adeyemi, 2018), to give state and local governments more control over land, minerals, oil, and gas that fall within their purview. To guarantee that profits from resource extraction support local economies and sustainable development, transparent revenue-sharing schemes must be implemented. Furthermore, strong legislative frameworks and community consultation procedures are required to preserve community rights and safeguard the environment during resource extraction.

To improve inclusivity, openness, and integrity in the electoral process, restructuring initiatives should include electoral institutions and procedures. This entails implementing policies to combat violence and electoral malpractices, thus bolstering the basis of democracy. Moreover, efforts to strengthen capacity should be directed towards enhancing accountability and service delivery, thereby strengthening local governance systems (Omondi, 2019). To ensure accountability at all governmental levels, independent oversight organizations and anti-corruption authorities must be established to examine and prosecute cases of power abuse and corruption. Moreover, Effectiveness, independence, and integrity of the judiciary are critical to the success of restructuring initiatives (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). The main goal of judicial reform is to enhance accountability, openness, and autonomy

within the judiciary. Prioritizing prompt and fair resolution of conflicts pertaining to resource management, interstate relations, and constitutional issues is important. Alternative dispute-resolution processes, such as arbitration and mediation, should be supported to expedite the resolution of conflicts in a fair and efficient manner.

### **7. Policy Implications and the Way Forward**

Implementing policy recommendations aimed at promoting fair development, strengthening democratic governance, and building national unity is vital to effectively solving Nigeria's socioeconomic and governance difficulties. To bolster democratic institutions, expand federating units' authority, and reshape the relationship between the federal, state, and local governments, a thorough constitutional reform process ought to be stated (Baridam et al., 2022). Constitutional modifications should prioritize fiscal federalism, resource control, and equitable representation to guarantee more equitable allocation of power and resources.

It is essential to make Laws to provide state and local governments more authority over the distribution of resources, the creation of revenue, and the control of spending. To guarantee justice and equity, this decentralization should be complemented by an examination of revenue allocation methods, considering variables such as population density, potential for revenue generation, and requirements for regional development (Atisa et al., 2021). The government must be willing to pass laws giving state and local governments more control over the land, minerals, oil, and gas that fall under their purview. It should also create accountable and transparent revenue-sharing arrangements to guarantee that the money extracted from resources supports local economies and sustainable development projects.

To improve the fairness, transparency, and inclusivity of the political process, electoral reforms should be implemented with a particular focus on voter registration, campaign funding laws, and electoral administration. It is important to implement policies that support underrepresented groups' increased engagement in politics and decision making, particularly for women and young people (Akinyetun, 2021b). Also, efforts must be made to fortify local governance frameworks and enhancing service delivery, accountability, and transparency at the local level; allocating resources to capacity-building programs, training initiatives, and technical assistance. The government must strive to improve local governance procedures and encourage public

involvement and democratic decision-making through town hall meetings, neighbour-hood forums, and participatory budgeting projects.

To promote economic diversification, the government should make policies to shift the economy's strong reliance on oil and gas exports to industries including technology, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture. Investments in infrastructure, human capital development, and innovation should be made in tandem with diversification to foster long-term economic growth and job creation across a range of sectors and geographical areas.

Efforts must be made towards enhancing national reconciliation and conflict resolution. Through discussions, reconciliation, and peace building activities targeted at addressing ethno-regional tensions, inter-communal conflicts, and instability, the government must strive for national unity, social cohesion, and collective resilience (Akinyetun, 2024). Encourage cooperation, alliances, and intergovernmental cooperation to address common issues and shared development goals in the spirit of solidarity and togetherness.

### **8. Conclusion**

This study emphasizes the critical necessity of resolving Nigeria's enduring development issues, which have impeded the nation's advancement and jeopardized people's welfare. Nigeria continues to struggle with issues of poverty, inequality, corruption, and political instability, which threaten to undermine its long-term stability and prosperity, despite the abundance of natural and human resources. The main findings of this study highlight the importance of restructuring Nigeria's political and economic structure to improve democratic governance and socioeconomic advancement. Nigeria may realize its full potential and build a more just, inclusive, and resilient society by adjusting institutional structures, distributing authority to federating units, and implementing resource control measures. Restructuring provides an opportunity to tackle the underlying reasons for marginalization, encourage better responsibility and openness in government, and support regional autonomy. This study also advocates additional research and lobbying to achieve the restructuring goal in Nigeria. Comprehensive research is required to better understand the possible advantages, difficulties, and ramifications of restructuring reform. It is also necessary to include stakeholders and increase the public awareness of the significance of this problem. Policymakers, academic institutions, and civil society organizations must work

together to advance the restructuring agenda and garner support for reform initiatives. Indeed, reorganizing Nigeria's political and economic structure is both a practical and moral requirement for achieving the nation's full potential and guaranteeing a better future for all of its residents. It calls for fearless leadership, thoughtful decision making, and steadfast dedication from all facets of society. Nigeria can overcome developmental obstacles and create a more inclusive, successful, and democratic country for future generations by cooperating to implement restructuring changes.

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