

“Resource Control In Nigeria: The Current Controversy”

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Abstract: *The theme of resource control has become a very controversial one in the Nigerian politics as the battle over who gets what of the nation’s wealth takes the centre stage. The states which constitute the federating units claim to own resources and to them it is logical that the control of the nation’s resources be allowed to them. For now, the Federal Government of Nigeria is solely enjoying the monopoly of resource control. Resource control is a constitutional matter and the constitutional provision is that the mining of minerals including petroleum oil and gas is an exclusive Federal responsibility. If this provision has to be reversed in favour of the states, it has to go through a rigorous process of constitutional amendment. The focus of this article is to x-ray resource control in colonial and postcolonial era with a view to giving appropriate recommendations. Qualitative – historical approach was adopted as method of data collection and analysis.*

Key Words: *Resource Control, Nigerian Politics, Federating Units, Constitutional, Oil and gas.*

I. Introduction

Over the years, the controversy on resource control has remained unresolved partly because of the differing interpretation of what the concept is and what the nation’s constitution says about it. Presenting his own understanding of resource control, Governor Osoba (Emeritus) once said: “I must have a reasonable say in the taxes that the Federal Government is collecting for the proceeds in granite mined in my state. It (resource control) does not mean oil even though we are being short sighted. We all think of oil. It is oil today; it may be gold in Jos tomorrow or silver in Sokoto tomorrow. All we are saying is let those from where these resources are coming have strong say in those products.” (David Dafinone 2001:5)

The Southern Governor’s summit held on March 21, 2001 at Benin city adopted the definition of “resource control” as the practice of true federalism and natural law in which the federating units express their rights to primarily control the natural resources within borders and make agreed contributions towards the maintenance of common services of the sovereign nation state to which they belong (David Dafinone, 2001:1).

Colonial Era

Northern control of resources:

The Northern regional government was in control of the natural resources in the region. Motivated by this right of control, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of Northern Nigeria, set up Groundnut marketing Board through which he utilized all the accruing revenue from the export of groundnut to United Kingdom. The revenue was used in the development of the Northern region. The then regional government built the Ahmadu Bello University, the Bank of the North among other things. (Nnoli, 1978:181)

Eastern Control Of Resources:

The palm produce Marketing Board empowered Dr. Michael Okpara’s government in the Eastern region as it had control of the revenue accruing from the export of palm produce to the United Kingdom. The funding of African continental Bank and University of Nigeria Nsukka among others therefore was easy. (Nnoli, 1978:185)

Western Control of Resources:

In the Western region, within the colonial era, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, set up cocoa Marketing Board and utilized the accruing revenue from cocoa export to United Kingdom in setting up the first television network in the country and in funding a free primary education policy in the Western Region (Nnoli, 1978:183)

Post-Colonial Era:

In the post colonial era, resource control is consolidated in the hands of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The pre-requisite to this situation is the petroleum Decree of 1969 passed during the regime of General Gowon, which gave the right to the federal government to monopolize the control of oil and gas. Given this scenario, the regions (states) from where oil was being exploited had to depend on the Federal Government for allocation of resources. And, to consolidate the Federal Government gain, General Obasanjo’s regime in 1978 passed the land use Decree which declared the Federal Government the owner of all lands within the geographical entity called Nigeria.

Explaining the implication of the Land use Degree vis-à-vis the use of resource control and the national question. Dr. Chidi Amuta, a media consultant and public analyst said that:

under the present arrangement a man builds his house on his ancestral land, but whatever minerals that lie underneath that house belong to the federal government while his continued right to the land on which his house stands is subject to the claims of the state government under the Land Use Degree. Illustrating further, Amuta said, the implication is that when the oil companies find oil under your hut, they sign an agreement with the federal government, go ahead and pull down your house, pay you a pittance and dispossess your environment and leave you in the dark ages of human civilization (David Dafinone, 2001:5)

Current Agitation

Every state is rich in mineral and non-mineral resources. Therefore, every state should be allowed to wholly control its own resources while paying taxes to the federal government. This has been the clamour of the Niger-Delta region and a greater percentage of other Nigerians. The advantage of allowing the states to control the resource within their domain is that the states will be sufficiently empowered and caused to fast track development within their locations. Moreso, the scenario of over dependent on oil as a major foreign exchange earner will be reduced. Although, there is the tendency of breeding over bearing and corrupt state governors. However, the activities of the state governors could be curtailed through existing institutions such as independent and corrupt practices commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), relevant legislations and judicial processes among others. Below is a list showing distribution of solid minerals in Nigeria.

Distribution of Solid Minerals In Nigeria

State	Mineral Resources
Abia	Glass sand, limestone, salt, shale, ball clay, galena, granite, Marble, laterite, bentonite, phosphate, kaolin, pyrite, feldspar, petroleum, lignite, gypsum, sphalerite, clay
Adamawa	Granite, clay, gypsum, limestone, uranium, kaolin, coal, Trona, barite, salt, marble, magnesite, laterite
Akwam Ibom	Clay, glass sand, salt, silica sand, granite, coal, petroleum, Natural gas, petroleum, sand stone, kaolin, pyrite, lignite
Anambra	Clay, iron stone, natural gas, petroleum, sand stone, kaolin, Pyrite, lignite.
Bauchi	Kaolin, trona, gypsum, cassiterite, mica, clay, tantalite, Galena, iron ore, gemstone, sphalerites, silica, sand, barite, Columbite, tin, glass sand, salt, monazite, feldspar, graphite, Wolfram, coal, agate, tantalum, rutile, tungstem, copper, Talc, ilmenite, zircon.
Bayelsa	Salt petroleum, natural gas, silica sand Bentonite, crude salt, Petroleum, limestone, glass sand
Benue	Gemstone, barites, feldspar, marble, mica, silica sand, quartz, galena, lead, zince ore, silica sand, clay, coal, gypsum, kaolin, anhydrite, calcium, sulphate, brick clay, crushed and dimension stone, fluorspar, wolframite, bauxite, shale, magnetite, ilmenite, brenite
Borno	Silica sand, natural salt, sapphire, topaz, mica, quartz, Gypsum, uranium, iron ore, magnesite, feldspar, granite, aquamarine, nepheline, limestone, kaolin, bentonite, laterite clay, refractory clay, trona, gold, tin, potash.
Cross River	Salt, limestone, coal, manganese, mica, ilmenite, gold, quartz, glass sand, tourmaline, petroleum, natural gas, kaolin, tin ore, mica, sharp sand, clay, spring water, salt desposits, talc, granite, galena, lead zinc, tin ore, goethite, muscovite, uranium, barites.
Delta	kaolin, lateritic clay, gravel, silica sand, nautral gas, Petroleum, ball clay, bauxite, granite, river sand, clay,

	Spring water.
Ebonyi	Lead/Zinc ore, salt, limestone, ball clay, refractory clay,
Edo	Gypsum, granite chamockite, copper, gold, marble, granite, gypsum,
Ekiti	Petroleum, diorite, lignite, limestone, ceramic clay Clay, chamockite, quartzite, lignite, limestone, granite, gemstone, bauxite, cassiterite, columbite, tantalite, feldspar, kaolin
Imo	Crude oil, natural gas, kaolin, laterite sand limestone, salt Marble.
Jigawa	Glass sand, granite, laterite clay, silica, kaolin, iron ore quartz, potash, talc, limestone.
Kaduna	Muscovite, granite, gold, manganese, clay, graphite, sand, Zircon, kyanite, tin ore, ilmenite, gemstone, columbite.
Kano	Clay, laterite, cassiterite, columbite, ilmenite, galena, Phyochlorite, kaolin, gemstone, silica, tin ore, monazite, Wolframite, thorium, granite, hyalite, kaolin, beryl, amethyst, gold
Katsina	Gold, Manganese, lateritic clay, feldspar, black tourmaline, amethyst, quartz, kaolin, mica, gypsum, silimanite, clay, granite sand, uranium, asbestos, tourmaline, serpentine (chresolite asbestos), chromites, ilmenite, diamond, grapite, Iron ore, potash, silica sand
Kebbi	Salt, iron ore, gold, feldspar, limestone, quartz bauxitic Clay, manganese, kaolin, mica
Kogi	Clay, iron ore, gemstone, marble, limestone, feldspar, dolomite, phosphate, mica, cassiterite, granite, omamental stone, coal, kaolin
Kwara	clay, kaolin, silica sand, quartz, dolomite, marble, feldspar, Gold, tantalite, cassiterite, granite, limestone
Lagos	Silica sand, bitumen, sharp sand, gravel, petroleum, laterite
Nassarawa	Cassiterite, gemstone, amethyst, beryl, chrysolite, emerald, Gamet, sapphire, topaz, barites, galena, monazite, zircon, glass sand, coal
Niger	Ball clay, kaolin, limestone, granite, glass sand, iron ore, red clay, feldspar, gold, graphite, cyanite, silica sand, quartz asbestos, marble, talc, gemstone
Ogun	Kalin, feldspar, silica sand, mica, granite, clay, phosphate, Gypsum, limestone, quartz, tar sand
Ondo	Marble, gold gemstone, clay, diorite, lignite
Osun	Clay, granite, talc, dolomite, limenite, feldspar, quartz, Limestone, mica, clay
Oyo	Clay, feldspar, granite, ilmenite, iron ore, kaolin, quartz, talc, marble, dolomite, tourmaline, aquamarine, amethyst
Plateau	Monazite, columbite, feldspar, clay, cassiterite, gemstone, Kaolin, dolomite, mica, zircon, marble, ilmenite, barites, quartz, talc, galena
Rivers	Petroleum, natural gas, silica sand, glass sand, clay
Sokoto	Silica sand, clay, salt, limestone, phosphate, gypsum, Kaolin, laterite, potash, granite
Enugu	Lateritic clay, crude oil, kaolinitic clay, ball clay, iron- ore, glass sand, petroleum, gypsum, coal, silica sand, ceramic clay
FCT – Abuja	Kaolin, limestone, granite, marble, feldspar, mica, dolomite, Clay, sand, talc
Gombe	Graphite, kaolin, limestone, silica sand, uranium, coal, halites, clay, gypsum, diatomite, granite
Taraba	Fluospar, gamet, tourmaline, sapphire, zircon, tantalite, columbite, cassiterite, barite, galena, gypsum, limestone,

Yobe	laterite, calcite, bauxite, magnetite, pyrite, lead/zinc ore salt, trona, diatomite, clay, gypsum, kaolin, silica sand, Limestone, epsomite, iron ore, trona, shale, uranium, granite, bentonitic clay
Zamfara	Gold, Alluvial gold, granite, chromites, chamockite, clay, Feldspar, spring water

Source: raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC), Abuja, Nigeria.

II. Recommendations/Way Forward:

The existing land use decrees should not be limited to petroleum resources alone. It should as well be applied to the production and management of solid mineral resources as a credible and alternate source of revenue generation.

There is every need for sufficient effort and resources to be invested by the Federal Government of Nigeria towards the cultivation and central control of solid mineral resources in Nigeria.

Nigeria ought to take the bull by the horns by operating true federalism. It is within this plat form that the issue of resource allocation and control be properly addressed and redressed.

The 13% formula for the development of oil producing states (Niger Delta States) be raised to 18% with tight measures to monitor the utilization of funds to avoid mismanagement which may not be rule out in a country like Nigeria that is infested with the cancer worm of corruption.

Public opinion over this important subject should not be handled with levity, rather, it should be seen as a necessary input capable of yielding desired results for the good of the nation.

The section that has to do with resource control in the Nigerian constitution that is undergoing review process should be given adequate and critical attention with a view to adopting a balance position in line with Nigeria National interest.

III. Conclusion

During the colonial era in Nigeria resource control was the exclusive reserve of the regional governments. However, in the post colonial era, this situation was reversed with the emergent of petroleum Degree of 1969 passed by the regime of General Gowon which gave the right of resource control to the federal government, and the Land use Degree pass in 1978 by General Obasanjo's regime. But today the state that constitute the federating units are clamouring that the right of resource control be given to them as it happened in the colonial era. The justification of the states being that the resources are found within the geographical location of the states and so the control should rightly be theirs. In the wake of a situation where the federal government lay strong hold on resource control the states are left to fall on resource allocation as last resort.

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