**CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

**BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

The process of evolution/attainment and development of nation/statehood is not achieved overnight mistakes are made, lessons are learned; considerations, concession, compromises, sacrifices, loses, and gains are made; symbiotic, parasitic or commensalism relations and cohabitation occur and do change with time and circumstances; conflicts of different dimensions occur and never end, while controversies trail some other issues, even wars are sometimes fought and reconciliations made in the long or short run. This is typical to the Nigerian state, and her evolution and development process. Characteristically, Nigeria, according to Orewa (1997) is a calabash floating on a lake and although it may not sink, it has no definite direction/destination; and all chances to fix the Nigerian state at different times are missed, despite the efforts made by her leadership despite the importance of the leadership to every state, society and or organization (Wooi, Salleh & Ismail, 2017). Thus, Amuwo, Agbale, Suberu and Herault (2003) admit that Nigeria's political development has been dislocated and disrupted and hence, the needs for both structural and institutional coherence.

For the longest part of Nigeria‟s political history, calls/agitations/clamour for constitutional reviews, amendments, conferences, national question, restructuring, among others, have partly dominated the public discourse. The political atmosphere also remains heated from time to time with military interventions and transitions, elections, opposition parties, marginalized elites/politicians/the public, and geo-regional, ethnic and religious groups, among others. These have prompted various constitutions making and re-making; constitutional conferences and amendments; establishment of Constituent Assemblies, MAMSER, National Political Reforms Conference, Oputa Panel, various Revenue Allocation and Minority Commissions, and National Reconciliation Commission (NARECOM), among others. All the instances identified above have remained manifestations of restructuring/realigning the Nigerian body polity (Suberu, 2015). While some of the challenges are not new, for they have been there since the pre-independence era, but manifesting in different forms and dimensions, in the recent, substantial part of such have consistently came from the South-Western Region of Nigeria, being one of the three major regions that make up the Nigerian entity since the colonial amalgamation of January 1, 1914. Such calls/agitations have, however, been simultaneously defied and resisted by the other parts of the country, specifically, the Northern Region/part until recently. After what may be partly regarded as previous insistence on status quo maintenance, hide and seek play (calls for National Conference and or Sovereign National Conference, General Abacha‟s Constitutional Conference, 1994, Obasanjo‟s National Political Reforms Conference, 2005, Jonathan‟s National Confab, National Reconciliation Commission), virtually every region of Nigeria is now responding to and accepting (willingly or because of political pressure) the quest/calls for the restructuring Nigeria. This restructuring is, however, enveloped in fear, anxiety, hope, despair and desperation, and the elite‟ interests in continuous access to power and resources, with firm control and consolidation of the same. The Northern Region of Nigeria, which had in the past resisted virtually all these calls/agitations for the restructuring is submitting to same, but still with mixed feelings and emotion - feelings among some Northerners that whatever may fall from the heaven, it is time stop the hide and seek and face bull by the horn and let whatever happen. All the same and with whatever motive, for the restructuring to be meaningful and functional, there are critical issues that must be addressed. This study will explore Nigeria‟s restructuring formula and the critical issues, which must be the focal point of the restructuring for those have been both the unifying and thorny issues in the unity and prosperity of the Nigerian state. The study will explore those issues, which form the bedrock of any restructuring/geo-political alignment and balance, and are the determinants of Nigeria‟s future in relation to unity, cohesion and stability among the component parts of the state.

**Research Problem**

Nigeria, a British make up in 1914, is still carrying and being weighed down by “burden of difficult history” (Unegbu, 2003; Oliver & Chandos, 1962). The atmosphere of Nigerian public/political discourse is presently clouded with calls/agitations/clamors for restructuring. Parceled in such calls and agitation‟s clouds are fears, anxiety, hope, optimism, pessimism, threats, and illusions, among others. Ever since the involuntary amalgamation of various ethno-religious, geo-regional and political nationalities that made up the Nigerian entity on January 1, 1914, the country has been undergoing one critical socio-economic and political trial or the other.

The issues and trends have been messy, characterized by uncertainty, conflicts (sometimes violent), controversy, compromise, and sacrifice. Resistance to the unity and cohesion of Nigeria has also dominated the Nigerian political scene over national question/national conference/restructuring, devolution of powers/true federalism, among others. However, reactions vary from one part of Nigeria to the others. Dealing with the issue has been complex and sensitive having transcended across ethnicities, religions, geo-politics, among others, and also persisted since the amalgamation, colonial and post-independence period as well (Momoh & Adejumobi, 2017). Most governments while in power had been resisting such calls/and only play gimmick when much pressurized, some parts of the country have together with the national leadership irrespective of North or South at the headship, resisted and or manipulated such calls/agitations largely due to the questions of constitutionality of such and fear of the known and unknown consequences, including the possible disintegration of the Nigerian state. While some of the proponents of the restructuring maintain that anyone who does not benefit from the state has the right to question being part of its unity (Ojukwu, 1989). The leadership, which is essential to the success of every state and society as noted by Wooi, Salleh and Ismail, (2017), therefore, needs to do something to address the situation. The elites on the other hand, especially who lose out in the political merchandise, keep pressuring for the restructuring; other elites use it as a means to secure political relevance and accommodation in the political space, circle and access to the state power and resources (Adetunberu & Bello, 2018); the mutual suspicion, fear, despise and resentment, and North/South gap has widened; there is a general feeling of inferiority/superiority complex among the components of the Nigerian federation; some regard others as parasites, and others as betrayers. Poverty, increased manipulation of religion and ethnicity, inability to withstand election defeat, manifesting dissatisfaction with leadership quality, etc., have been further fuelling the agitations/calls for the restructuring. Many of the calls/agitations center on what Nigerians refer to as „true federalism‟ by which they mean a decentralized federation with weak center and strong component states/regions with resource control autonomy. There have been consolidating threats to the cohesion, further integration and unity of the Nigerian state with signs and symptoms of not only disaffection, but escalation of insecurities – conflicts over revenue allocation/resource control, cattle rustling, kidnapping, cultism, armed banditry, attacks on oil facilities and installations, bitter politics of ethno-religious and regional identities, ethno-religious intolerances, poverty, ethno-religious, conspired and orchestrated Fulani/herdsmen-farmers conflicts, unemployment, socio-economic and infrastructural deteriorations and above all, corruption. These have altogether also re-engineered and fuelled the disaffection and partly fuelled the calls for Sovereign National Conference, restructuring, etc., in different names and dimensions (Oyadiran & Toyin, 2015:41; Baba & Aeysinghe, 2017:42, Mohammed & Aisha, 2018; Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2018). With those critical issues and problems, Bello (2018:93) notes that the Nigerian state is on a „Keg of gunpowder‟ and needs to do some things to arrest the situation and prevent the country from collapse.

**Research Objectives**

The main objectives of this study are as follows: to explore the formula for restructuring Nigeria. A conceptual model is used and the formula identified as influenced by many factors and interests with special reflections on the background history, geography, heterogeneity and politics of the Nigerian state.