

The experience from 1960 however, shows that this is still a burning issue. The creation of more states and local government areas do not seem to have been particularly helpful as there still continues to be a clamour for more. Quota system, ethnic balancing, federal character and similar mechanisms rather than ameliorate the problem seem to have exacerbated it as the dominating group seem to be using these selectively to advance its own agenda.

In the recent Conference of Nationalities held last December in Lagos where many nationalities were represented along with other civil society actors it was unanimously agreed that:

"Ethnic Nationalities shall be the building blocks of the Federation, with the right to self-determination The Federating units shall have powers comparable to the Regions in the 1963 constitution and they shall have their own constitutions."

ii) *Revenue Allocation* has to be carried out on the basis of what is needed to run each tier of government depending on the powers allocated to it. Derivation has to play a prominent role. This is not only to sustain the goose that lays the golden egg but also to make sure that parasitic region formations are not encouraged.

Before the coming of the army in 1966, the 1960 Independence and 1963 Republican Constitutions allocated revenue on the basis of derivation: 50% of the revenue went to the area from which it was extracted while 50% went to the Federal government. Out of this, the Federal government was only allowed to retain 20% while 30% went into the distributable pool which went to the regions including the region of origin which had previously got its 50% share. It is important to note that the Constitution defined a region to include the continental shelf abutting the region.

The various military governments have distorted this negotiated principle to vest most of the mineral rights in the Federal government giving back little or nothing to the areas of derivation. However, the environmental despoliation of the oil producing areas has escalated over the years. The obvious development in other areas of the country and the visible corruption and embezzlement of this resources by various individuals has brought this issue to a critical boiling point. Some of the indigenes of the oil-producing areas are up in arms and lots of peoples both nationally and internationally sympathise with them. Instead of trying to solve their problems, the response has been the military occupation of their homes, raping of their women and the hanging and killing of their people.