

Failed State and the Challenges of Economic Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated failed State and the challenges of economic development in Nigeria. The specific issue is to understand if Nigeria is a failed State judging from the established index of State failure by scholars and looking at its economic development challenges. The study is a documentary research and data were analyzed through qualitative descriptive method. Using Marxist Theory of the State, the paper found that the economic development measured in terms of national income in Nigeria far exceeds human development. This however does not result to State failure. Rather it is a manifestation of weak economic structures resulting in slow economic development. Therefore, we recommend that Nigerian leaders should embrace strong political leadership capable of pursuing viable economic development measures. Such a strong political leadership will also address the issue of corruption which is the root of underdevelopment in the country.

Keywords: State, Economic, Development, Marxist, Leadership

Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall ushered in unprecedented frequency of the phenomenon of State failure which is a consequence of the disappearance of State institutions. The origin of the term 'failed state' dates back to the rent-seeking literature which laid emphasis on the economic costs of State intervention which were previously ignored by welfare economists (Di John, 2008:1). However, recent political discourse on State failure (especially in less-developed countries) has gone beyond the reasons why government policies and regulations may or may not promote economic growth and economic development to focus on the breakdown in the legitimacy and political viability of States. Again, the spread of terrorist organizations (especially in Afghanistan) as well as the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States elicited more academic and foreign policy attention on State failure as it is assumed that failed States are havens for terrorist organizations and international criminal networks.

Even though scholarly debates about failed States emerged in the early 1990s, the notion of State failure has been embedded in the literature on political economy of international relations for centuries, as shown in the fact that the issue of State failure was of prime concern to the colonialists. As a result of this, Dorff (2000) acknowledges that powerful countries often intervened in poor, weaker States to stem social disorder that potentially threatened their security and trade interests. The weak States thus inadvertently provided the great powers with an opportunity for territorial expansion.

There are certain minimal functions which will ensure the security and well-being of citizens as well as the smooth operations of the international system which independent States are expected to perform. Political science literature is inundated with the identification of the reasons why some States fail to perform such functions. Hence Torres and Anderson (2004:5) contend that States that fail to meet these minimal standards can be described as weak, fragile or poorly performing. The more extreme cases are labelled as failed or collapsed State.

The last half of the twentieth century witnessed a dramatic growth in the number of newly independent States. This is aptly captured by Rotberg (2003:2) when he asserted that:

In 1914, in the wake of decline of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, there were fifty-five recognized national polities. In 1919, there were fifty-nine nations. In 1950, that number reached sixty-nine. Ten years later, after the independence movements in Africa, there were ninety nations. After more African, Asian, and Oceanic territories became independent, and after the demise of the Soviet Union, the number of nations increased dramatically to 191; East Timor's independence in 2002 brought that total to 192.

This astronomical rise in the number of newly independent States placed the issue of State failure on the limelight. The case of Somalia, where the national State wholly ceased to exist, played a crucial role in shaping the thinking of analysts about States and State failure. However, the focus on newly independent States is germane because scholars like Moore (1966), Tilly (1990), Mann (1993), and Crammer (2006) among others have noted that historical evidence suggests that the process of state formation is riddled with conflict, violence and uncertainty over the institutional structure as groups compete to establish positions of power and legitimacy. Implied here is the fact that States in formation are prone to failure more than the already established ones.

It is believed in many quarters that there are a number of socio-economic, political and military problems associated with failed States (Iqbal & Starr, 2007:2). These set of problems are seen as having a wide-range of negative implications for the people of the failed State in particular and the neighbours, regions and international community in general. This is no doubt one of the major reasons why *The Economist* (2005:45) warned that the chief reason why the world should worry about state failure is that it is contagious, hence the need to measure and check the level and effect of State failure. The attempts to measure the level of State failure is jeopardised by the lack of consensus on what really constitutes State failure (Pha & Simon, 2003:1). Be that as it may, State failure must be understood to be an obstacle to the overall development of the State involved.

Anyanwu (2005:109-117) in his work entitled *Failed States in Africa: The Nigerian Case Since 1960* subscribes to the idea that Nigeria, alongside many other African countries, is a failed State. He hinges his argument on the failure of African politicians to deliver the glamorous promises of economic development made at the dawn of political independence. Anyanwu conceived a failed State as *a state that is unable to meet their own part of the social contract they entered into with the governed*. He further noted that, *a failed state as opposed to a capable state is a state which has failed to provide for its citizens, such basic needs like adequate security, food, water, electricity, health care, good roads etc.*

In a book captioned, *Failed States: the Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*, Chomsky listed three essential attributes leading to a failed State:

Their inability or unwillingness to protect their citizens from violence and perhaps even destruction; their tendency to regard themselves as beyond the reach of domestic or international law, and hence free to carry out aggression and violence; and if they have democratic forms, they suffer from a serious “democratic deficit” that deprives their formal democratic institutions of real substance.

Nigeria, according to Lubeck *et al* (2007:7), is a classic example of the ‘paradox of plenty’. It has, by all accounts, amassed a large amount of money over the past four decades, largely through oil sales, but has failed to use this oil windfall to develop the infrastructure and economy of the country. Instead Nigerian economy has remained mono-cultural. The agricultural sector has been left to subsistence farmers who still rely on rudimentary farming implements. This lull in the agricultural sector equally affects the industrial sector. Lubeck *et al* estimate that Nigeria has earned more than USD 450 billion in the past 35 years in oil revenues alone. A report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the country’s oil revenues in 2005 amounted to USD 50 billion and with oil price well over USD 50 per barrel, between 2006 and 2020, it is estimated that Nigeria could earn more than USD 750 billion in oil income (Lubeck *et al*, 2007:3). The juxtaposition of government wealth and personal poverty has fuelled popular discontent, especially in oil-producing areas, where there is little evidence of oil revenues being spent on development. Between 1970 and 2000 the percentage of people in Nigeria subsisting on less than one US dollar a day grew from 36 to 70 per cent (Watts, 2007), a tremendous increase, considering growing oil revenues. In 2007 estimates vary, but somewhere between 50 and 75 per cent of the population continues to live on a dollar or less a day. Between 1980 and 1996 poverty levels increased dramatically, and then fell slightly between 1996 and 2004 (UNDP, 2006:35), suggesting that the situation might be improving, albeit marginally. Perhaps the inclusion of Nigeria on the Failed State Index was informed by these staggering figures on economic and human development.

The paper is divided into five parts. Following the introduction are the theoretical framework, Contestations of State failure in Nigeria using an established index, Manifestation of weak Economic Structures arising from Economic Development Challenges in Nigeria and conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

Our evaluation of failed State and the challenges of economic development in Nigeria will be predicated on the Marxist Theory of the State. The State, according to Engels (1942:155), is a product of society at a certain stage of development. It is the admission that the society has become entangled in an irresolvable contradiction with itself hence, splitting into two irreconcilable opposites. But since the opposite classes with conflicting interests shall not consume themselves in fruitless struggle, it becomes necessary to have a power that seemingly stands above the society to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of order. This seemingly neutral power standing above the society is the State.

It should be noted that the State exists to preserve the existing social and political order. This order should not be seen as denoting only stability of government and absence of open political disorder in a strict sense. Rather, it also encompasses the broader question of maintaining the global order necessary for the reproduction of the interest of the dominant class at the political, economic and ideological levels. In other words, the interests pursued by the State always correspond with that of the dominant class. To this end, Karl Marx asserted that "the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie".

It is this order pursued by the State that Western liberal scholars put forward as being beneficial to all even though this order is designed mainly to protect the interests of the dominant class. The Marxist Theory of the State postulates that this order is not neutral rather, it is an order in which some people dominate, exploit and appropriate the labour of others.

Neo-Marxist scholars have advanced this classical theory of the State to take care of the character of neo-colonial States. Most of these scholars believe that the classical theory of the State did not fully explain the character of neo-colonial States. For instance, Alavi (1973:146-147) opines that in the post-colonial society, the problem of the relationship between the State and the underlying economic structure is more complex than the context in which it was posed in the European society. It is structured by yet another historical experience and requires fresh theoretical insight.

Corroborating this fact, Ekekwe (1986:12) pointed out that the difference between the two forms of capitalist State is thus: that whereas the State in the advanced capitalist formations function to maintain the economic and social relations under which bourgeois accumulation take place, in the periphery of capitalism, factors which have to do with the level of the development of the productive forces make the State a direct instrument for accumulation for the dominant class or its elements.

Colonialism shaped the character of post-colonial States in the sense that in their quest to secure and perpetrate their economic interests, the colonizer discouraged the rise of a strong indigenous bourgeoisie and instead planted stooges. Having a very weak economic base, these stooges resorted to using the State for primitive capital accumulation thus becoming a ready instrument for class formation and class domination.

One implication of the rudimentary development of the State in Africa, according to Ake, is the *Hobbesian character of political struggles*. In the absence of autonomizing mechanisms is the post-colonial State, the resources of physical coercion becomes the tools of particular groups, especially the hegemonic factions of the ruling class, and the affinity between the coercive institutions and these hegemonic factions has inevitably become particularly visible. Also, the only effective check on the use of the coercive resources becomes merely the prudence of enlightened self-interest of those who control them. So we have essentially relations of raw power in which right tends to be coextensive with power and security depends on the control of power. The struggle for power, then, is everything and is pursued by every means. This is amply reflected in the fact that as a general rule, in the politics of post-colonial Africa efficiency norms prevail over legitimacy norms.

In a seminar work, Simutanyi (2006:1) agrees that the post-colonial State in Africa bears resemblance to the colonial State. Like the colonial State, the post-colonial State was authoritarian, divisive, predatory, exclusive, and an instrument in the service of the dominant capitalist class. The

over-arching desire for economic development in the immediate post-independence period was to lead to justifications for the State to play a prominent role in promoting economic development.

Thus Ake (1981:128-129) asserted that to begin with, we have a State that is interventionist and involved in the class struggle, that is to say a State already dragged into politics and politicized. Partly because of this fact (whose significance is the perception of the state as being very partial), and partly because the State power in question is highly developed, there is a bitter struggle to gain control of it.

Elaborating further in a subsequent work Ake (2001:6-10), noted that colonial rule left most of Africa a legacy of intense and lawless political competition amidst an ideological void and a rising tide of disenchantment with the expectation of a better life. The political environment at independence was profoundly hostile to development. Hence the struggle for power was so absorbing that everything else, including development, was marginalized. As those elites outside the corridors of power sought to garner credible force to challenge those in power as well as to limit to a significant extent their own vulnerability to harassment and abuse, those in power were obsessed with consolidation of power and crushing of any form of opposition. In a highly statist post-colonial polity, they did not even have the option of channelling their ambitions into economic success, which was primarily a matter of State patronage. Political power was everything; it was not only the access to wealth but also the means to security and the only guarantor of general well-being.

Besieged by a multitude of hostile forces ... those in power were so involved in the struggle for survival that they could not address the problem of development. The elites made token gestures to development while trying to pass on the responsibility for development to foreign patrons. Development plans were written and proclaimed. But what passed for development plans were mere aggregations of projects and objectives informed by the latest fads of the international development community. As these fads changed in the larger world, so they were abandoned. The summary of Ake's argument is that the main obstacle to development ... is not so much that the development project has failed as that it never got started in the first place.

On his part, Ihonvbere (2000) noted that one of the consequences of colonialism in developing societies is the legacy of the reification of power. Since the colonial State was absolutist in every sense, it combined the power of life and death and dispensed power without consultation or accountability. Thus the indigenous elites that had been structurally incorporated into the power and economic networks of colonialism in the aftermath of the Second World War were nurtured in the context of undemocratic values.

Given the tenuous relation of the African elite to productive activities, political independence witnessed the capture of political power bereft of economic power. As a consequence, accumulation, survival and domination could only be guaranteed through the unmediated control of State power. The new elite were thus forced to devise strategies of ideological containment, de-politicization, diversion, violence and human rights abuse to ward off opposition. Thus this scenario raised the premium of power to few and frightening proportions. In order to capture, control and effectively deploy political power, villages were raided, taxes were imposed, communities were punished for not voting rightly and suspected enemies of the State were found all around the society. The State instruments of coercion were strengthened as private security outfits and armed to the teeth.

Thus in Nigeria today, the yawning gap between the rich and the poor widens with each passing day despite lofty poverty alleviation/eradication policies and programmes. This compels one to wonder whether these policies were not designed so as to make their implementation unproductive. As the income gap widens, a great number of people are forced into abject poverty with a concomitant rise in crime wave. Discontent with the existing social order equally heightens. Solution to these vices lies explicitly on redressing the imbalances within the political system and not by wholly embracing one alien development agenda or the other going by the fact that such foisted development agenda have a history of massive failure in Nigeria. This cannot be done by outside forces as they can only gloss over the problems in question but never solve it in its entirety. Bereaved of a government capable of formulating and implementing people-oriented policies and programmes, development has continued to be a mirage in Nigeria.

Contestations of State failure in Nigeria using an established index

A thorough examination of the extant literature shows that there is no consensus on the definition and characteristics of State failure. Indeed, scholars look at the phenomenon of State failure from different perspectives. In fact, most of these scholars have been subjected to criticisms over their excessive obfuscation of the phenomenon (Iqbal & Starr, 2007:4; Cojanu & Popescu, 2007:3). For the purpose of this study, a state can be said to have failed when the non-performance of the basic functions of the state leads to the emergence of armed opposition challenging the existing order and leading to the collapse of the structures of the state or a mass revolt resulting in the sacking of the government. Below is a tabular representation of the various perspectives from which state failure has been conceptualized.

Table 1: Representing some major Scholarly Characterization of State Failure

SCHOLAR	BASIS	FEATURES OF STATE FAILURE
Helman and Ratner (1993)	Humanitarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inability to maintain public order; - Chaos leading to the exodus of citizens to other countries.
Zartman (1995)	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-performance of the basic functions of the State; - The structure, authority, law and political order have fallen apart and needs to be reconstructed in some form, old or new.
Gross (1996)	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public authorities are either unable or unwilling to carry out their end of the social contract.
Ignatieff (2002)	Despotic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of monopoly of the means of violence by the Federal Government; - Rise of several armed groups threatening to overthrow the State.
Miliken and Krause (2003)	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inability to provide public goods; - Extreme disintegration of state authority.
Rotberg (2003)	Not Specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persistent internal conflicts; - Inability of the government to deliver political goods to its citizens; - Loss of legitimacy; - Growth of criminal violence; - The State is bitterly contested by warring parties; - Inability to control borders; - The exercise of official power is limited to the capital city and some other major cities; - Provision of only limited quantities of essential political goods; - Privatization of effective educational and health systems; - Unusual prevalence rate of destructive corruption; and, - Inability to provide adequate food especially during disaster periods.
Ottaway and Meier (2004)	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Splitting of a country into different entities as one or more secessionist movements succeed in taking over part of a territory and form functioning new states; - Annexation of part or all of the territory by a neighbouring State; and, - Disappearance of any central authority.
The Fund for Peace (2010)	Not Specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of physical control of its territory, or of the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force therein, - Erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions, - Inability to provide reasonable public services, and, - Inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community.

Failed State Index (2010)	Social, Economic, Political	<p>Social Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mounting Demographic Pressures, - Massive Movement of Refugees or Internally Displaced Persons creating Complex Humanitarian Emergencies, - Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia, - Chronic and Sustained Human Flight, <p>Economic Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uneven Economic Development along Group Lines, - Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline, <p>Political Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State, - Progressive Deterioration of Public Services, - Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights, - Security Apparatus Operates as a “State Within a State”, - Rise of Factionalized Elites, and, - Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors
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Source: Compiled by the researcher, 2017

The table representing some major characterizations of State failure by scholars like Helman and Ratner (1993), Zartman (1995), Gross (1996), Ignatieff (2002), Milken and Krause (2003), Rotberg (2003), Ottaway and Meier (2004) and the Fund for Peace (2007) is a summary of the characterizations of failed States. The essence is to avail us at a glance attributes of a failed State and to aid us in seeing to what extent the attributes apply to Nigeria. Such a glance quickly reveals that most of the characterizations of failed State are not significantly present in Nigeria. For instance, the views of Helman and Ratner expects a failed State not to be able to maintain public order and to experience chaos leading to the exodus of citizens to other countries which are not yet the case in Nigeria.

The definition of Zartman (1995) which focuses on a breakdown of the structure, authority, law and political order as evidence of failure do not yet apply to the Nigerian State. Ottaway and Meier’s (2004) views are yet to manifest in Nigeria as the country has not split into different entities, no part has been annexed and the central authority in Nigeria is still in place.

The manifestations of State failure noticeable in the Nigerian State as characterized by various scholars are discernible in the definition of State failure by Ignatieff (2002), Rotberg (2003) and a few others. Here Ignatieff talks of the rise of several armed groups threatening to overthrow the State while Rotberg included that a failed State experiences persistent internal conflicts, has a growth of criminal violence and unusual prevalence rate of destructive corruption.

For the Fund for Peace and the Failed State Index, loss of physical control of the territory and lack of monopoly of legitimate physical coercion prevails in a failed State. Humanitarian crises and uneven development, sustained human flight and the presence of many aggrieved groups are also manifest. It is a known fact that Nigeria interacts freely with other States in the international system and has been known to champion peace-keeping operations in several African countries.

Since there are some characterizations of State failure that are applicable to Nigeria, we may have to take a look at some of these variables as they relate to Nigeria. One such variable is conflict. At the root of conflict in Nigeria is the existence of more than 250 ethnic groups each striving for self-assertion. This diversity makes competition with other ethnic groups for self-assertion more volatile. In fact, as early as 1967, Nigeria had a full blown civil war. In other words, managing this cultural diversity has been the greatest challenge to Nigeria’s nationhood. This is so because from the onset of Nigeria’s nationhood, the dominance of major ethnic groups over the minority ones raised cries of marginalization and subjugation. As noted by Abdullahi and Saka (2007:22), “the proliferation of ethno-religious and political turbulence in the country is therefore necessitated on one hand by cultural, communal and religious differences and on the other hand by fear of domination nursed by minority groups”.

Even before independence, crisis erupted in many parts of the country (notably the Northern Region) following the motion for self-government in 1956 moved by late Anthony Enahoro of the Action Group (AG) at the House of Representatives in Lagos in 1953. This was followed by a series of political conflicts albeit with ethno-religious undertones. These include the Census Crises of 1962/63, the Action Group Crisis of 1962, the Federal Elections Crisis of 1964, the Western Nigeria Election Crisis of 1965, the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War of 1967-1970, the General Election Crisis of 1979, the 1983 General Election Crises and the June 12, 1993 General Election Crisis. It should be noted that a greater percentage of the above crises occurred during military regimes.

With the return to civilian rule in 1999, conflicts continued to erupt albeit sporadically in many parts of the country. There has been an escalation of conflicts especially with the inception of democratic rule in 1999. Buttressing this fact, Elaigwu (2005) and Abdulrahman (2006:121-132) contend that *no fewer than one hundred (100) conflicts were recorded in Nigeria between 1999 and 2004*. It has equally been noted that within this period, at least 10,000 people lost their lives while about 800,000 people were displaced (Global Internal Displacement Project, 2005 & Nwabufo, 2005). In the same vein, the Nigerian Red Cross Society and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre in 2006 reported that in February 2006, as many as 50,000 people were internally displaced and about 150 sent to their untimely graves in a spate of violence sparked off by protests against the cartooning of Prophet Muhammad by a Danish Newspaper. There was also recurrence of crises in Jos as well as the Boko Haram Sect attacks. Militia activities, kidnappings and detonation of explosives at designated spots are also being witnessed in Nigeria.

These conflict situations have increased the rate of insecurity in the country. This fact was captured by Retired General Ibrahim Babangida in 2002 when he asserted that:

Such conflicts most often resulted in enormous wastage of human and material resources, pose serious threat to security of life and property, resulted in the disinvestment of the fragile economy due to capital flight and contributed to the weakness of the political process. Given the irreparable loss of lives and property that most often result from these conflicts one can safely argue that these conflicts impacted negatively on the economies of the local communities and by extension that of the nation as a whole.

As a corollary to the above, Abdullahi and Saka (2007:23) quotes ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo while lamenting on the mayhem caused by ethno-religious conflicts as noting that

Violence has reached unprecedented levels and hundreds have been killed with much more wounded or displaced from their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification. Schooling for children has been disrupted and interrupted; businesses have lost billions of naira and property worth much more destroyed (Obasanjo, 2004).

The above scenario is an indictment on the Nigerian government and its efforts to provide security in the country. For purposes of brevity it is necessary to represent these and some other major conflicts in the country since 1999 in a tabular form.

Table 2: Representing Major Conflicts in Nigeria 1999-2010

Warring Parties	Nature/Cause(s)	Date	Geo-Political Zone
Ijaw-Itsekiri		1999	South South
Odi Massacre		1999	South South
	Conflict over the introduction of Sharia	2000	North Central
Ife-Modakeke		2000	South West
	Religious crisis between Muslims and Christians in Jos	2000	North-Central
Jos	PDP Ward Congress Crisis	2002	North-Central
Jos	Yelwa Shendam	2004	North-Central

Jos	Jos religious crisis	2008	North-Central
Borno	Boko Haram Insurgency	2009	North East and North West
Jos	Jos Ethno-religious crisis	2010	North Central

Source: Compiled by the researcher, 2017

The abrupt disruption of the peace and tranquilities of the people are not restricted to conflicts. Violence of varying magnitudes also interferes with the safety of the citizens. Table 3 below tries to capture some instances of these incidents of violence across the country.

Table 3: Representing Incidents of Violence

Parts of Northern Nigeria	Post-election violence claims hundreds of lives	April 2011	Northern Nigeria
Bornu	Bomb explosion in Maiduguri	June 16, 2011	North East
Abuja	Bomb explosion at the Police Headquarters	June 16, 2011	North Central
Maiduguri	Bombs kill 25 in Maiduguri	June 27, 2011	North East
Maiduguri	Boko Haram Muslim Sect Attacks Nigerian Customs Office	June 27, 2011	North East
Bauchi	8 killed in sect-style killings	June 20, 2011	North East

Source: Compiled by the researcher, 2017

From these tables above, it could be seen that there are various conflict cases in Nigeria with the resultant destruction of lives and properties. Indeed, conflicts occur very frequently leading to the questioning of the capacity of the Nigerian State to provide security for its citizens.

A case in point is the Jos crisis which has been recurrent since 1994 with its attendant loss of lives and properties. The April 12, 1994 riot was over the creation of Jos North Local Government Area by the Ibrahim Babangida regime in 1991. On September 7, 2001 another crisis erupted over the Chairmanship seat of the Local Government. According to *Newswatch Magazine* of January 22, 2010, *more than 1000 people were killed while a similar crisis in 2004 claimed 500 lives. On November 2008, 700 people were also killed in Jos North Local Government crisis. On January 17, 2010, 350 people were killed by recruited armed thugs.* Furthermore, *Newswatch Magazine* reported that on March 7, 2010, 500 people were massacred in four villages (Dogo-Nahawa, Zot, Rasat and Kutgot) in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State in an ethno-religious crisis. The victims were reported to have been either matcheted or slaughtered by armed men suspected to be Fulani herdsmen. This sparked off protests from youths of the area. The tension created by the protests forced Jos residents to abandon their businesses and hurriedly return home. The Plateau State Police Command later announced the arrest of 200 suspects in connection with the mayhem. The Command said the suspects confessed to have committed the crime and that they were sponsored. Arms recovered from the group included 44 guns, 5 ammunition, 35 live cartridges, 26 bows and arrows, 4 matchets, 12 knives, 3 axes, 129 swords, 4 spears and charms

The crisis in Jos can therefore, be said to have become persistent because of the insincerity of the government and lack of commitment by security agencies. Indeed, the citizenry need the protection from the government of the day to be able to go about their endeavours without any molestation. In a volatile city like Jos, it is hard for the inhabitants to sleep with two eyes closed.

Mention should also be made of the conflict in the Niger Delta which has accounted for the loss of several lives and properties. The Niger Delta crisis has led to growing security threats. Although the Niger Delta issue has been present for decades, the emergence of organized and militant pressure groups in the 1990s added a new dimension to the crisis – protests and outright rebellion against the Nigerian State. From the 1990s to the present, the manifestation of these conflicts, which have reached crisis proportions (Hutchful & Aning, 2004:212). The violent character of the rebellion which included the complete shutdown of oil installations and platforms, kidnapping of oil workers, cross-killing and

maiming of militants, State security forces and innocent citizens, and the unprecedented practice of hostage-taking and oil bunkering has been thriving in recent times.

The obvious fact is that none of the above conflict situations has succeeded in usurping the existing political order. In fact, the Nigerian government has demonstrated a capability in quelling crises and preventing same from escalating further. It should also be noted that conflict situations in Nigeria are sporadic and none has managed to gain an intractable status. Nigeria, therefore, cannot be rightly said to be a failed State based on this criteria.

Conclusion

This paper discussed failed State and the challenges of economic development in Nigeria. It was discovered that the concept of State failure in political discourse is not very clear thus making writers to fall into the trap of confusing State failure with State weakness, State fragility and State collapse. In the Nigerian case, it was discovered that economic development measured in terms of national income far exceeds human development. This however does not result to State failure. Rather it is a manifestation of weak economic structures resulting in slow economic development.

In sum therefore, granted that Nigeria's economic development is somewhat retarded, it does not make Nigeria a failed State. This is so because the inherent weak structures and the over-developed bureaucracy is what have been rendering the Nigerian State inefficient. If the Nigerian State has failed going by the indices that Zartman, Rotberg and others set out, it means that the Nigerian State has never really existed. This assertion stems from the fact that right from the time of independence, the living conditions of the people (measured in terms of GDP, GNP and HDI) have been in progressive decline while poverty level continues to maintain an upward rise.

It therefore follows that the slow pace of economic development in Nigeria cannot objectively stand as evidence of failure. Rather, it is an indication that the Nigerian State is yet to transcend the colonial legacy. Indeed, the possession and use of coercive instruments (which ideally is the exclusive preserve of the State) by militia groups and unauthorised individuals does not indicate the inability of the Nigerian State to contain uprisings. Instead, they are expressions of discontent and frustration over the inability of the State to meet the aspirations of the citizenry.

On the relationship between economic development and State failure in Nigeria the study contends that since there are many indicators that point to State failure as seen in the study, some of which are political, some social and others economic, there is a relationship but which is limited to the extent that economic indices are implicated in the assessment of how the Nigerian State is fairing. However, since the indices of State failure are not limited to economic issues alone, decline or failures in the economic scale alone do not constitute State failure.

The conditions which State failure scholars outlined as being the indicators of State failure are not fully present in Nigeria. Rather, the cases of sporadic conflicts especially in the Niger Delta and parts of Northern Nigeria have only succeeded in placing Nigeria at the brink of State failure. The introduction and acceptance of the Amnesty Programme by the militants is an indication that the Federal Government is still in control.

What is needed in Nigeria is strong political leadership capable of pursuing viable economic development measures. Such a strong political leadership will also address the issue of corruption which is at the root of underdevelopment in the country. In the absence of corruption among public office holders, infrastructural development and other social welfare services will be improved. The leadership should also be able to engender national cohesion, the absence of which is one of the major causes of conflict in the country.

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