

Twenty Years of Democratic Governance in Nigeria – Unmet Expectations and Unfulfilled Promises

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ABSTRACT: *Democracy has been embraced by a growing number of countries since the early 80s and today only a handful of states remain outside the democratic fold. Among the several attractions of democracy was the assumption that popular participation would engender good governance leading to better life outcomes for the citizenry. Using a modified framework developed by Seers (1969) this paper explored the experience of Nigerian's under democracy which had been in place in the country over the past twenty years. For a country that wasted away under military dictatorships, a return to democracy was welcomed with lots of enthusiasm accompanied by high hopes. However, available statistics show that in the key areas of security, poverty, inequality and unemployment Nigerians have not enjoyed the dividends of democracy, promises made were not kept and expectations remained unmet.*

Keywords: *Boko Haram, democracy, inequality, Nigeria, security.*

I. Introduction

On Wednesday 29th May, 2019, MuhammaduBuhari took the oath, for the second time, as Nigeria's elected president, having served out his first term in office. In the build up to the swearing-in, President Buhari had in an interview he granted the government-owned Nigerian Television Authority, NTA, regurgitated all of those problems that had bedeviled Nigeria, promising that having secured a renewed mandate from the Nigerian electorate he was going to hit the ground running and surprise those that had pejoratively labeled him "Baba go-slow" – a reference to what many in Nigeria saw as the tortuously slow pace of the administration given the high hopes and expectations that heralded a government whose selling point was change.

Nigerians desirous of change had in March 2015 thrown out an incumbent president and voted in the candidate of the opposition party which had "change" as its slogan and the broom as its symbol – sweeping away all that the then ruling party, Peoples Democratic Party, which had been in power for 16 years, stood for. Whether President Buhari had met the expectations of Nigerians for change is certainly debatable, while his supporters point to his reelection for a second-term as an endorsement of his policies and programmes in his first-term, others are of the view that the reelection has more to do with the woeful performance of the Peoples Democratic Party whose abysmal period in governance Nigerians were not in a hurry to forget.

This paper examines the promises that democracy was said to hold for Nigeria and Nigerians at the return of democratic rule in 1999 and whether the lot of the common man was positively impacted these past 20 years, what the issues were and what needs to be done. We begin with an examination of the Nigerian state and the salient features of the state which had helped to define and shape its trajectory since it attained nationhood. In subsequent sections we shall explore the promises that were made categorically or impliedly regarding what Nigerians should expect on account of embracing democracy and discuss where the nation is at 20 years after interrupted democratic governance. We conclude the paper with recommendations on what is required to take Nigeria to a level where majority of the citizenry live a decent life, enjoy good health and quality life.

II. What is the state for?

We begin the discussion from the age old question that has been posed by philosophers from early times – what is the rationale for the existence of the state? What purposes does the coming into being of the state serve? By attempting to provide answers to these questions, the goal of philosophers was to explain how man that was born free found himself subject to state controls and thus under bondage. Some philosophers felt that man's ultimate goals and ambitions cannot be realized outside the agency of state, and thus it is a necessary evil.

In one of the early classics on the state, Plato, the Greek philosopher, said the state can be "just" or "unjust". A just state is one that promotes justice, which Plato says include making possible the conditions under which all can feed, clothe and shelter themselves. An unjust state is the opposite of the just state, people live in penury, fear and deprivation. Thus, at a minimum, according to Plato, any political community will need to perform four

functions: 1. to make and exchange material goods; 2) produce food; 3) defend the community against aggression; and 4) adopt its laws and shape its institutions [1].

Another philosopher, Hobbes, has based the necessity of the state on the need for an institution that could tame and channel man's innate tendency towards violence; thus without the state, "life will be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". A measure of the success or otherwise of the state can be gauged by how far or close it is to the state of nature. The state is thus a "social contract" between the people and the state represented by a sovereign for a secured, prosperous life [2].

III. The promise of democracy

Nigeria's return to democratic rule must be seen as part of the global intolerance to non-democratic states especially since the unbundling of the old Soviet Union in the 1980's, as countries of the Eastern bloc came to embrace democratic ideals in what is called Democracy's third wave. Looking specifically at the third wave democracy, reasons are adduced for why it happened at the time it did.

Huntington [3] gave five major factors which he claimed accounts for the timing and occurrence of third-wave transitions to democracy:

1. The deepening legitimacy problems of authoritarian regimes in a world where democratic values were widely accepted, the consequent dependence of these regimes on successful performance, and their inability to maintain "performance legitimacy" due to economic (and sometimes military) failure.
2. The unprecedented global economic growth of the 1960s, which raised living standards, increased education, and greatly expanded the urban middle class in many countries.
3. A striking shift in the doctrine and activities of the Catholic Church, manifested in the Second Vatican Council of 1963-65 and the transformation of national Catholic churches from defenders of the status quo to opponents of authoritarianism.
4. Changes in the policies of external actors, most notably the European Community, the United States, and the Soviet Union.
5. "Snowballing" or the demonstration effect of transitions earlier in the third wave in stimulating and providing models for subsequent efforts at democratization (pg. 13).

However, just as nations transit to democracy, they could also slide back to authoritarian rule. Nigeria had returned to democracy in 1979 but it was short-lived, the military truncated its development in 1983. Huntington [3] offered the factors that contribute to transitions away from democracy to include:

1. The weakness of democratic values among key elite groups and the general public;
2. Severe economic setbacks, which intensified social conflict and enhanced the popularity of remedies that could be imposed only by authoritarian governments;
3. Social and political polarization, often produced by leftist governments seeking the rapid introduction of major social and economic reforms
4. The determination of conservative middle-class and upper-class groups to include populist and leftist movements and lower-class groups from political power;
5. The breakdown of law and order resulting from terrorism or insurgency;
6. Intervention or conquest by a nondemocratic foreign power;
7. "Reverse snowballing" triggered by the collapse or overthrow of democratic systems in other countries (pp. 17-18).

IV. The Nigerian State

One of the defining characteristics of the Nigerian state is its heterogeneity – it is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country made up of people with variegated cultures and world-views that have, for good or otherwise, remained together and carried on as one. The country had survived three years of civil war and had had its journey along the democratic trail derailed and truncated by nearly 30 years of military dictatorship between January 1966 and May 1999 when democratic governance was restored. Nigeria remains the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world. Her estimated population as at 2017 is 190 million, with about 63 percent of that figure under 25 years of age [4]. The socio-economic consequences of this youthful population help to confound the issues that are at the core of this paper.

Just as Nigeria is Africa's most populous country so is her economy Africa's largest. One of the leading members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, and the country's economic strength is derived largely from the oil and gas reserves, which make up 99 percent of export revenues, 78 percent of government revenues, and 38.8 percent of the GDP. Agriculture contributes about a third to the GDP, with manufacturing accounting for about 3 percent. The public enterprise sector accounts for an estimated 50 percent of the total GDP, 57 percent of investments, and 33 percent of formal sector employment [5]. An estimated 36.1

percent of the population lives below the absolute poverty line of \$1.90 per day [6] although recent estimates put the figures much higher.

A major point of contention in Nigeria is the contest for political power and political control. Political elites have exploited Nigeria's regional, religious and ethnic fault lines deploying them as arsenals in their quest for power. Attempts were however made, as part of the foundation precedent to the take-off of the Second Republic in 1979, to dilute and reduce the resort to and effects of ethnic and religious irredentism through constitutional provisions that attempt to balance and even out those tendencies. Political parties were expected to have national outlook and spread in terms of presence and leadership, not to mention objectives and goals. Thus, when Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999, following the cessation of the military rule which truncated the Second Republic that lasted from 1979 to 1983, Nigerian politicians and political parties have become resigned to the fact that for them to get the nod of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, the body charged with registering political parties and conducting elections, they should have a national not regional agenda and the leadership and membership of the parties should reflect the diversity of the Nigerian state.

V. The Promise of Democracy

The inclusive nature of democracy, where citizens have a say in who governs them, is touted as not only good but it also is conducive to better human prosperity. Democracy is taken to be, if not synonymous with good governance, a necessary condition without which good governance may well be unattainable. In democracies there are constitutions, which spell out duties of the different arms of government as well as the rights of the citizen. At a basic minimum, governments are held accountable and judged by how loyal they were to the letter and spirit of the constitution. In addition to assurances contained in the constitution, political parties also make promises to the electorate, presenting voters with mouthwatering offers to entice them to elect their candidates. Beginning with constitutional provisions, a look at Chapter II of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution [7] (as amended) titled Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, states:

13. It shall be the duty and responsibility of all organs of government, and of all authorities and persons, exercising legislative, executive or judicial powers, to conform to, observe and apply the provisions of this Chapter of this Constitution.

14 (1) The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice.

(2) It is hereby, accordingly, declared that:

(a) sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority;

(b) the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government, and

(c) the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

When countries embrace democracy, the hope and aspiration is that life would be better for the vast majority of the populace. Democracy is a compact between the electorate and their elected representatives at various levels of government and across the two arms – legislative and executive. Because politicians lobbied for votes citizens were right, in fulfillment of promises made, to expect and demand improved welfare and security – the dividends of democracy. Thus, in the same way that people ask questions of the chair and board of the companies in which they have investments, the electorate must interrogate what the gains are to them as individuals and collectively as a nation of Nigeria's democratic governance this past 20 years. What, if any, dividends have accrued to Nigeria and Nigerians?

To help arrive at answer to this question, I turn to the framework developed by the British development economist, Dudley Seers. Seers [8] had worked for various United Nations institutions concerned with development issues and was director of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. He maintained a robust interest in development up to his death in March 1983. In laying the ground to the answer to his most famous essay, "What is development?", Seers [8] first sought to know what the situation was in three key areas – poverty, unemployment, and inequality:

What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment?

What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have become less severe, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned.

If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result "development" even if per capita income has soared (Seers 1969, pp. 3-4).

It is the contention of Seers [8] that the lived experience of the people is what counts for development. Poverty, unemployment, and inequality are real and have real consequences for people, their severity and spread among

people of a country should be a cause for worry and concern, especially in one that purports to be a democracy with a constitution that explicitly promises the good life.

Borrowing from Seers, we now examine the situation in Nigeria with respect to security, poverty, inequality, and unemployment since the country returned to democratic governance in 1999. It is our belief that the four issues are intertwined, an increase in any one of those is more than likely to lead to an increase and intensification of the others.

VI. Security situation in Nigeria 1999 to the present

Intra- and inter-communal conflicts have remained a recurring source of concern to governments and people of Nigeria for long. During periods that the military were in power, however, such conflicts were less frequent and more muted, fearing the harsh and swift reprisal that may be visited on the recalcitrant communities by the military authorities. Apologists of military rule are thus quick to praise the relative security in Nigeria prior to democratic government in 1999 to the discipline and order that were the hallmark of authoritarian regimes. A counterpoint to that position, however, is to argue that any order imposed by fiat by the military was artificial, issues that required addressing were swept under the carpet and left attended. The return to democracy was expected to foster security, given democracy's inclination toward accommodation of divergent interests and tolerance for differences. Through the agencies and instruments that democracy provides, dissent should be managed such that it was not allowed to escalate to the level of armed confrontation.

Institutions like the legislature, the judiciary and the media, in a democracy, help check the excesses of the executive arm of government, ensuring that arbitrary and wanton infringement on the rights of the citizenry does not happen, and people have somewhere to turn to if such happens. Even the provision for periodic elections was democracy's way of empowering the electorate to vote out nonperforming governments, while referenda and plebiscites may be used to settle hot and contentious issues in between election periods. There is no doubt, therefore, that conflicts, disagreements, and tensions are best managed, resolved, and defused under a democratic dispensation making resort to self-help unnecessary and unjustifiable.

A discussion of the security situation in Nigeria should be preceded by an understanding of what security entails. The International Peace Academy, IPA, [9] provides one of the most elaborate conceptual clarifications on security thus:

Security has traditionally been defined as the protection of the territorial integrity, stability, and vital interests of states, through the use of political, legal, or coercive instruments at the state or international level. In the 1990s the definition was broadened to include non-military threats that lead to violent conflict and affect the security of individuals, communities, and states. Such threats range from civil wars and resource conflicts to transnational crime and population movements. 'Security' therefore refers to the search to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts – whether the threat originates from other states, non-state actors, or structural socio-economic conditions (p. 2).

With a clear view of what security means as given above, we can now see what the case is in Nigeria. The period since 1999 in Nigeria is that of a worsening security situation – farmers/herders clash, intra- and inter-communal conflicts, elections related riots and religion-linked disturbances. This disturbing list has been extended further by another security concern – kidnapping for ransom. However, out of all these, the most terrifying was the emergence, in December 2003, of the Boko Haram, the terrorist movement that took control and held sway in much of North East Nigeria from which base it made deadly forays into other parts of the North and the federal capital, Abuja. The activities of Boko Haram had consequences beyond Nigeria, spilling into the neighbouring states of Chad, Cameroon, and Niger.

The magnitude of the Boko Haram terrorist activities is best illustrated by the advisory issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO, which cautioned British citizens against travels to Nigeria. The FCO, [Fig. I] advised against all travel to all of the North East, advised against all but "essential" travel in much of the North West, South-South and part of the North Central. Travellers were further cautioned to refer to the FCO's travel advice before venturing into other parts of Nigeria. The grim message is that Nigeria is not safe, not only for foreigners, but also for Nigerians. Boko Haram terrorist activities have resulted in the death of thousands and the forced displacement of several thousand others as internally displaced people and refugees.

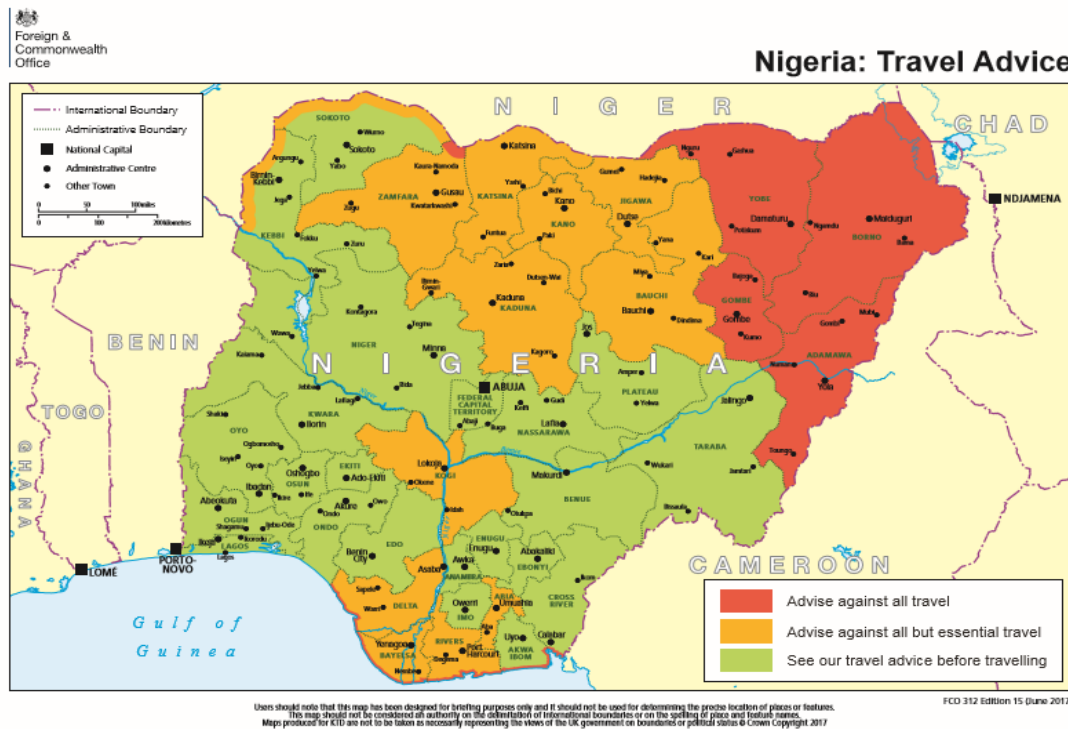


Figure I. Nigeria: Travel Advice Source: GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk>

Both as result of terror attacks by Boko Haram and rural banditry, farming has been severely affected since even those farmers that were not dislocated from their villages and communities are fearful of venturing out to the farms to avoid being victims. Cattle rustling which was a smallscale affair also increased several fold in the Northwest threatening the fragile economy of an already precarious region. Deprived of livestock and prevented from accessing their farms, peoples and communities that depend on those as source of livelihood are going to be pushed into destitution and hunger. Most of the people who faced this grim prospect are already located in places where there was little or no government presence and had never or only marginally ever benefitted from some form of governmental project or scheme.

The insecurity that was foisted on large sections of the North East and Northwest regions as well as other parts of Nigeria by the combined onslaught of Boko Haram and armed rural bandits could result in a citizenry that is forced into a state of resignation and despondency, on the one hand, or one that becomes emboldened such that it decides to take matters into it's own hands. Neither of these two positions is desirable, both are inimical to democracy and good governance. Democracy thrives best under keen competition fuelled by an electorate determined to be active in the interrogation and choice of who governs at various levels of the state; when citizens lose interest, no longer caring who is in control, democracy becomes imperilled. Resort to armed self-help by people who feel helpless on account of government's failure to secure their lives and property, at a minimum, undermines the legitimacy of government and its institutions.

Democracy has not made Nigerians feel more secured, they have not felt like government was doing its utmost to protect them from an assortment of criminals including Boko Haram, rural bandits, kidnappers and agitators of all hues. The combined consequences of the lack of security in Nigeria include worsening socio-economic situation – employment, income, productivity, education and health all of which have been impacted negatively since 1999. In addition, people are beginning to have aversion to democracy as only a handful, a tiny fraction of the elite, appear to be benefitting from it.

VII. Poverty situation in Nigeria since 1999

On 12 June, 2019, Nigeria's new Democracy Day, President Muhammadu Buhari pledged to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty over the next 10 years. Deepening poverty and rising levels of misery, fuelled in large part by the unresponsiveness and indifference of the ruling elite, has reached critical levels earning the country some unenvious place among countries where life has degenerated to the Hobbesian state of being "nasty, brutish, and short". The Brookings Institution, using estimates generated by the World Poverty Clock showed

that, as at May 2018, Nigeria had knocked out India and is now the poverty capital of the world. In other words, the largest number of people living in extreme poverty – less than \$1.90 a day are found in Nigeria. Extreme poverty rise in Nigeria by six people each minute according to the World Poverty Clock. Unfortunately, Nigeria is one of the 18 countries where extreme poverty is rising; resource rich Nigeria is in the same league with Sudan, South Sudan, Chad and Niger among others.

When the international community held the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, it focused on four core issues – poverty alleviation, unemployment, social exclusion and an enabling environment for social development. Looking closely at poverty, the Summit adopted and endorsed a multidimensional definition of poverty. The manifestations of poverty were said to include:

1. lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods;
2. hunger and malnutrition;
3. ill health;
4. limited or lack of access to education and other basic services;
5. increased morbidity and mortality from illness;
6. homelessness and inadequate housing;
7. unsafe environments;
8. and social discrimination and exclusion;
9. characterized by lack of participation in decision making and in civil, social and cultural rights [10].

All but one of the above manifestations are present in and throughout Nigeria, more acutely so in the areas where terrorists claiming to be Boko Haram and rural bandits could and do strike at will, with the security agencies apparently at their wits end. Those who were not in poverty were pushed into poverty and those that were already in poverty were pushed into its extreme variant. Democracy is imperilled by poverty for, as the Uwais Report [11] cautioned:

Democracy cannot take firm roots and flourish in an environment of hunger, poor health, inadequate shelter, social injustice and physical insecurity. Indeed, poverty and its twin brother, corruption, have been the banes of Nigerian politics and electoral processes in the post independence period (p. 87).

A frightening submission made by Dapel [12] was that the level of poverty in Nigeria was so deep and entrenched that on account of the low level of life expectancy some Nigerians may spend their entire life in poverty with no prospects of ever exiting. By his estimation “about 72 percent to 91 percent of Nigeria’s poor are at risk of spending their entire life below the poverty line” (p. 1). Oxfam [13] laments that:

Poverty in Nigeria is particularly outrageous because it has been growing in the context of an expanding economy where the benefits have been reaped by a minority of people, and have bypassed the majority of the population (p. 4).

VIII. Inequality in Nigeria since 1999

Inequality, like other issues under discussion, was expected to decline in Nigeria following the return to democratic governance, a rapacious, self-centered elite political elite took over and cornered state resources to the detriment of the poor masses. The ruling elite were not only indifferent to the growing chasm between the masses and the elite, they were also callously insensitive. Former President Jonathan was reported to have ejected the figure of the poor in Nigeria being bandied around, saying it was exaggerated. He pointed to the number of private jets in the country as his reason for his doubts that poverty was so endemic in Nigeria and that there were people who could not access basic necessities of life. Inequality widened considerably even as the Nigerian economy experienced growth between 2004 and 2010, during which period:

people living below the national poverty line ... increased from 69 million in 2004 to 112 in 2010, equivalent to 69% of the population. In the same period the number of millionaires increased by approximately 44% (Oxfam, 2017:5).

State capture ensured that the political interests mesh into economic ones and become indistinguishable, policies and programs are designed with an eye on how much it was going to serve the pecuniary interests of those in government, their friends and cronies. In a country that does not pay a living wage, Nigerian legislators are paid outrageous salaries and allowances:

Nigerian lawmakers are one of the best paid in the world: the average annual salary is \$118,000, equivalent to 63 times the country's GDP per capita (in 2013). Costs of maintaining the machinery of government are also inflated by the excessive staff numbers, inflated salaries and benefits, arbitrary increase in the number of government agencies and committees, hidden allowances and oversized retirement packages. The high cost of governance reinforces inequality because it means that few

resources are left to provide basic essential services for the wider, growing Nigerian population (Oxfam, 2017; pp. 5-6).

A consequence of putting self above the citizens by Nigerian legislators is the starving of critical areas of public sector importance such as health, education and infrastructural development of budgetary provisions in sufficient amount to address acute shortages and needs. While public schools are shut on account non payment to teachers of their salaries and allowances, in a nation where the schools lack basic facilities, legislators and others in government pride themselves in posting pictures of their children and wards graduating from foreign institutions. Sometimes, a governor or legislator would take his or her entire family to such graduation and post pictures of the celebration.

Meanwhile, back home, several thousands of young Nigerians continue to battle for limited spaces in public tertiary institutions that are poorly staffed, poorly funded and are bereft of the minimum acceptable standard of laboratory and teaching equipment. Labour unions in the tertiary institutions are the only ones who, through their periodic strikes, attract attention to the sector and squeeze something out of the government to help shore up the tertiary education sector. Government had refused to honour agreements it freely signed with the labour unions in the tertiary education sector on the pretext that there were no funds or that there were other equally critical areas that require funds.

It is not education alone that suffers neglect, the poor masses cannot access quality health care and die from preventable diseases and infections as a result of the inequity in resource allocation:

The shares of government budget allocated to education, health and social protection are among the lowest in the region. For example, in 2012, 6.5% of the budget was allocated to education, 3.5% to health and 6.7% to social protection (in 2010). By comparison, in Ghana these shares were, respectively, 18.5% (in 2015), 13.8% (in 2015) and 9.1% (in 2010), (Oxfam, 2017 pp. 5 – 6).

The health indicators in Nigeria are among the worst, as the country is said to shoulder 10 percent of the global disease burden and was making slow progress towards achieving the 2015 targets for health related MDGs [14]. Poor attention and funding of the health sector has exacerbated the rise in medical tourism, with wealthy Nigerians heading to India and Egypt for medical procedures, in addition to the US, UK, Germany and Dubai. In fact there were suggestions that what was spent by Nigerians in medical tourism is much more that what the country budgets for the entire health sector [15].

IX. Unemployment situation in Nigeria since 1999

If inequality and inequity were not accompanied by rising unemployment in Nigeria the struggling youth would have been comforted by the fact that they have jobs from which they could eke out a living. The unemployment situation has remained less than cheering since 1999. On a daily basis there are reports of applicants overwhelming recruitment centers in search of non-existent jobs or a multitude scrambling for the few available openings. The unemployment problem is not restricted to the uneducated and the unskilled, even graduates are now finding it difficult to secure jobs.

High rates of poverty and unemployment, particularly among the youth, poses grave dangers to the entire society and may be linked to the rising incidences of restiveness, kidnappings for ransom and other criminal activities. A look at Table I shows how unemployment figures continue to remain high:

Table 1: Unemployment Rate, Nigeria 1999 - 2017

Year	UNR (%)
1999	8.2
2000	13.1
2001	13.6
2002	12.6
2003	14.8
2004	13.4
2005	11.9
2006	12.3
2007	12.7

2008	14.9
2009	19.7
2010	21.4
2011	23.9
2012	27.4
2013	24.7
2014	25.1
2015	28.2
2016	29.8
2017	30.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistics: Report of the Review Committee on Unemployment Statistics

The reason for the high unemployment in Nigeria can be linked to the poverty of ideas among the ruling elite, resources are mismanaged and there were no cogent policies to prioritize home industries by an elite whose stock is conspicuous consumption of foreign luxury goods. The inability to address the glaring infrastructural deficits – especially power generation and distribution – has led to the closure of many factories and left those that continue to operate to do so at considerable cost, a cost that is passed on to the consumer.

The youth unemployment rate is consistently as a result of the injection yearly, of a sizable number into the labour pool. The unemployment situation is best illustrated by what happened when a government agency tried to recruit about 4,000 people into its services:

The situation of the unemployed reached desperate levels when on 15th of March 2014, 6.5 million people visited recruitment centres to apply for 4000 vacant positions in the Nigeria Immigration Service. At least 16 people died in the stampede that ensued during the process (Oxfam, 2017 p. 6).

More than four years after the above scandal, the officials responsible for the tragedy are still being taken to the slow to dispense justice courts of Nigeria and nobody would be surprised if, at the end of the day, no Nigerian public official goes to jail for such a calamitous atrocity. All the triggers for conflict are there so manifestly visible, when the youth are poor and unemployed, including those that have skills and education, when they feel excluded and marginalized and bear no hope, democracy may not seem to them like the elixir they had yearned for and these past twenty years that has been their experience.

X. Conclusion

The chief merit of democracy is that it empowers the citizenry, with people having basic freedom and with choice to determine key aspects of their lives. In Nigeria, the promise that democracy had appear not to have been realized. Since the country returned to civil democratic rule in 1999, all the indices of development took a nose dive, insecurity of lives and property now permeates the length and breadth of the country. Democracy has failed to address past iniquities let alone confront issues of hunger, poor health, poverty, social injustice and physical insecurity all of which are growing in leap and bounds. Democracy itself is imperiled in the absence of good governance, accountability and economic empowerment of the people. It is therefore in the enlightened self-interest of even the political elite to reform and transform the Nigerian economy so that it geared toward addressing the disempowerment, exclusion and marginalization of the vast majority of the populace.

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