Leadership and the Failed State Status of
Nigeria (2010 -2012). An Enquiry

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Abstract: The main objective of this paper is to evaluate the impact of leadership in redressing the failed state status of Nigeria with a focus on the present administration (between 2010 and 2012). For the past three years, Nigeria has been keeping the ugly company and ranking consistently as the fourteenth on the list of failed states, but the governing elites have been making spirited campaigns and slow haste in explaining away this situation. Through heavy reliance on secondary sources of data, the utilization of elite theory as framework, backed by the analytical approach to the issues raised/discussed, the paper observed that the ranking of Nigeria on the failed state index ignores some historical facts and current situational realities which make the failed criteria suspect and questionable. There is therefore the need to rethink and tinker with some of these criteria to reflect socio-economic and political performance in realistic terms. Purposeful and people –centered approach to governance capable of redressing the dysfunctions of the Nigerian state is also canvassed.

Keywords: leadership; failed state; status; evaluation

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a mega-state within the continent of Africa. Most of the characteristics of African political environment and those of other developing nations apply to Nigeria and can offer an efficient way of learning about these countries. However, making a generalization or conclusion on these countries from the Nigerian point of view would require a degree of care and caution. It is striking and perhaps curious to observe that as a socio-political formation, Nigeria is defined by its failures (Mimiko, 2010). Nigeria typifies the paradoxical characterization of the dominance of affliction in the face of seeming affluence (Ibeanu, 2008). This point

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was corroborated by Mimiko (2010, p. 12) thus: "It is a personification for abundance of resources that are largely paralysed by mis-governance and perfunctory commitment to the corporate good by insensitive (ruling) elite". One major reason why Nigeria has continued to perform very poorly in socio-political and economic spheres is the nature and character of successive governing elite, who are very predatory and carriers of particularistic interests and tendencies. Their failings and failures to rise to the challenge of sacrifice, dedication, example and commitment to nation building which constitute essential ingredients or hallmarks (Achebe, 1983) in leadership effectiveness reinforces this position.

There are issues and developments flowing from the 1914 amalgamation of the colony of Lagos, the protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria as one political entity and other self-inflicted ills that seem to suggest that Nigeria is failing or has failed as a nation-state. The governing elite (past and present) at the centre have invigorated efforts at repudiating this notion, yet consistently, the country has been keeping the ugly company of Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Congo (DRC), Haiti, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Iraq, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Pakistan and Yemen to rank 14th on the list of failed or fragile states. There are indices for measuring if a nation-state has failed or is failing, this include security, absence of rule of law/constitutionalism, state legitimacy, factionalism and group grievances (Nwosu, 2011).

Other indices or factors explaining state failures are weak governance or collapse of major state institutions which manifests in the locus of power and economic benefits being concentrated in the hands of a tiny majority (ruling elite and their cronies) who are motivated by greed and personal interests; inefficient and distorted national economic management giving rise to unbridled corruption and waste; achievements versus capability and potential disconnect; absence of common national identity and lack of vibrant civil society organizations/activities (Mgbenwelu, 2002; Iyayi, 2002). This paper will interrogate the current situation/state of affairs in Nigeria against the backdrop of the above mentioned indices through the analytical approach to secondary data in order to determine the actual status of the country. The discourse is segmented thus: Abstract; Introduction; Conceptual clarification; The Nexus between leadership and failed state status of Nigeria; Conclusion and Recommendations. The next section of this paper is devoted to the clarification of the concepts of leadership and failed state.

2. Leadership

Leadership connotes different things to different people. Definition or perception of leadership by academics and practitioners tend to diverge. Leadership is defined as influence, that is, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals (Weihrich and Koontz 1993, p. 490).

Leaders act as facilitating and inspiring agents in a group in order to accomplish organizational goals. Weihrich and Koontz (1993) affirm that optimum performance or capacity utilization is directly linked to good leadership skills. Another way of defining leadership which has been aptly qualified as 'managerial leadership' sees it "as the process of directing and influencing the task related activities of group members". (Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert, 2000, p. 470).These authors established that there are four important implications of their definition of leadership which are as follows: people (employees or followers); power; influence and values.

Explaining the implications, the trio goes further to say that, people (employees or followers) underline the very essence of leadership. By employees' willingness to accept directions from their leader, the group members/employees help define the leader's status and make the leadership process possible. Without people or followers to lead, the best of leadership qualities remain useless and largely irrelevant and unproductive.

Leadership involves unequal distribution of power between leaders and the led. Although, people or employees can and do shape group activities in a number of ways, the leader nonetheless wield more power than the group. The group however legitimizes the leader's power base. Power is defined as "the ability to exert influence, that is, to change the attitudes or behavior of individuals or group". Influence however is any action or examples of behaviour that cause a change in attitude or behavior of another person or group". (Stoner et al, 2000, p. 470).

Leadership entails the use of influence to achieve or direct group behavior in a number of ways. This includes getting employees or followers to make sacrifices that will be beneficial to group/corporate interest. Leadership has to do with values and also requires that followers be given adequate knowledge of alternatives so that they can make intelligent choices between different courses of action.

The above explanation of the implications inherent in the definition of leadership by these scholars have been corroborated by Weihrich and Koontz (1993) through reference to the same issues as ingredient of leadership such as the ability to use power effectively and responsibly; the ability to comprehend that human beings have different motivational forces at different times and in different situations; the ability to inspire and the ability to create/develop a conducive environment and to arouse motivation.

Cole (1997, p. 49) conceptualizes leadership as "a dynamic process at work in a group whereby one individual over a particular period of time and in a particular organizational context influences the other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goal". From this definition, it is deductible that leadership is a dynamic process, it entails the use of influence and motivation, and it is also directed at accomplishing organizational/group goals. It can also be safely inferred that leadership usually and mostly a management role.

3. Nature of Good Leadership

Leadership may entail the leader's ability to satisfactorily meet promises, tasks and targets set by the leader or followers or both. Leadership can be said to be good or bad only in comparison to the set tasks and targets (i.e. manifesto, constitution and programme) or any other thing that is regarded as a common expectation. Good leadership is a perception of the followership in the leader's ability to satisfactorily meet targets and tasks. Therefore, if followership believes that leaders have successfully, fairly, and equitably met their promises, tasks and targets, then, they generally think or perceive that such leadership is good.

Maxwell (2001:7-9) posits that good leaders must possess the following attributes: let go of your ego; become a good follower first; build positive relationships; work with excellence; rely on discipline not emotion; make adding value your goal and give your power away.

The following qualities where also identified by Maxwell (1999) as being "indispensable" for good leaders: character; charisma; commitment; communication; competence; courage; discernment; focus; generosity; initiative; listening ear; passion; positive attitude; problem solving; relationships; responsibility; security; self-discipline; servant hood or service; teaching ability and vision.

In addition to the above, the right type of leadership must think globally; anticipate opportunity; create shared vision; develop and empower people; appreciate cultural diversity; build teamwork/spirit and partnership; embraces change; apply technological savvy; encourage constructive challenge; ensure customer satisfaction; achieve competitive advantage; demonstrate personal mastery; share leadership and value. (Suleiman, 2002:35). A leader must remember always that to succeed and be a good leader, he must be a good follower. A good leader must be humble enough to work for the common good of the people by harnessing resources and using people effectively to achieve ends.

Le Bœuf (1989) sums up with an assertion that good and effective leaders get results and that is the greatest management principle in the world. Le Bœuf argues further that the keys/strategies which good leaders apply, anchor on positive reward reinforcement which is as follows: award solution instead of quick fixes; risk taking instead of risk avoiding; applied creativity instead of conformity; decisive action instead of paralysis by analysis; smart work instead of busywork; simplification instead of needless complication; quiet effective behaviour instead of squeaking joints; quality work instead of fast work; loyalty instead of turnover; and working together instead of working against.

4. Meaning and Determinants of Failed State

Attempts at defining the concept of failed state and tracing its origin have been mired by controversy despite the avalanche of literature and scholarly writings on the subject. Cojanu and Popescu (2007, p. 114) documented that the initial work on a similar topic, titled 'Quasi states' is traceable to Robert H. Jackson in 1987. In the same vein, Cojanu and Popescu (2007) posited that the concept of state failure was popularised by Madeline Albright and others at the United Nations in the early 1990s, and this was captured in the essay by Gross (1996) on "taxonomy of failed states in the New World Order".

The account of early works on state failure as recorded by Cojanu and Popescu include "saving failed states" by Helman and Ratner (1993); "The Coming Anarchy" by Kaplan (1994); "Collapsed States" edited by Zartman (1995); Gross (1996); Baranyi and Powell (2005); "Failed States by Noam Chomsky (2006) in Masud, Ahmmed, Choudhury and Mustafa (2013: 64). Huria (2008, p. 1) commented that "…*the discourse on failed states has been around since the end of*

the cold war, it gathered momentum after the event of 9/11…" She elaborated that "the aftermath of which the US identified states like Afghanistan and Somalia as potential terrorist havens...a fear reflected in its 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategy".

The concept or notion of failed states presupposes that there are successful states and the latter are presumed to be the norm, in which states control defined territories and populations, conduct diplomatic relations with other states, monopolise legitimate instruments of coercion, and provides social and public goods to the citizenry (Brooks, 2005). John Curry's work (2005, p. 2) presented the US as an automatic example of a strong or successful state. A synthesis of the contributions of Huria (2008), Brooks (2005) and Curry (2005) tend to give the impression that state failure is a construct traceable to the USA, the West and World Bank as arrow heads of global capitalism. However, the critique of the concept of failed states is reserved for another part of this paper and should not be belaboured here.

Zartman (1995) in Cojanu & Popescu (2007, p. 115) posited that state failure occurs when "the basic functions of the state are no longer performed". Huria (2008, p. 1) took this point further that " most accounts of failed states centre on the erosion of state capacity or their inability to perform the basic functions of state responsibility like ensuring peace and stability, effective governance, territorial control, and economic sustainability".

Llosa (2005, p. 1) argued differently that many countries fail due to an excess not absence of government power. This author sought to correct the idea that "centralization is the best way to fight lawlessness –a view that can translate into backing authoritarian rule in countries where that type of rule is at the heart of the problem". Rwanda and Burundi were cited as examples of stratified societies caused by too much state power. Peru and Venezuela also typify failed states "with too much state power or excessive government" rather than absence of state power. Curry (2005, p. 1) categorized nation states on the levels of strong, weak, failed and collapsed. The determinant in these categorizations is on state's ability to "… effectively deliver the most crucial political goods…" to the citizenry.

Curry (2005) corroborated thus: *States are relied upon by the citizens to provide such political goods as security against internal and external threats, freedoms to include the right to participate in all aspects of the political process, requisite infrastructure, fiscal and monetary systems, social systems and environmental*

protections. These political goods are analogous to the bottom tier of Maslow's hierarchy that contains base requirements; delivery of these political goods is a base requirement of viable nation-states. The degree to which a state can effectively provide these political goods determines the state's position along the spectrum.

Strong states are characterized by the following basic political deliverables: adequate provision of internal and external security, full opportunities and participation of citizens in the political process, adequacy of infrastructural facilities like transport networks; utilities and ports, fiscal and monetary structures are firmly established and functional, social and medical services are available, and environmental protections are provided.

Weak nation-states on the contrary experience declining GDP per capita; high crime rate; intercommunal tensions; deteriorating infrastructure; dysfunctional schools and medical services; geographical, physical or fundamental economic constraints; or internal antagonisms, management flaws; greed; despotism or external attacks- all these explain why political goods are not effectively delivered to the citizenry.

It has been documented by curry (2005, p. 3) that failed states are bedeviled by persistent inter-communal violence that brings the state to the point of failure. There are extensive crimes and civil wars directed at the government, polarization of the society into "haves" and "have-nots", the military becomes the political tool of self-serving tyrannical leaders, prevalence of ethnic, sectional and divided identities, existing side by side with very predatory elites who continue to enjoy the loot of their avaricious and rapacious machinations.

The emergence of sub- state actors without any vestige of power or control within the state is said to be the main feature of a collapsed state. Sub-state actors are divided along inter-communal lines, clannishness and warlordism become the order of the day, there is the prevalence of disorder, anomic behaviour, anarchic mentality and entrepreneurial endeavors such as gun and narco-trafficking that is compatible with external networks of terror. In all the above conditions, leadership especially the committed and purposeful type can play tangible roles in reversing ugly and downward plunge, together with institutional checks, state reconstruction strategies and well- intentioned external (international) organizations interventions.

Chomsky (2006) in Masud, Ahmed, Choudhury and Mostafa (2013, p. 64) operationalized failed state to be those states that "have lost their physical control

over … territory… legitimate authority has increasingly (become) minor; public services have lessen; totally unable to interact with other states with trust; internationally which position is dubious". The implication of state failure is that the central state authority and control do not exist in reality, and institutions of law and order have totally or partially collapsed. It has geographical, political, international, historical, sociological, democratic and legal underpinnings/ explanations.

The USA based "Fund for Peace" (think tank) and "Foreign Policy" (a well-known magazine) have been publishing "Failed States Index" which shows five types of state failure in terms of their intensity: alert (if index is 90+), warning(if index is 60+), dependent territory, moderate(if index is 30+), sustainable (Masud et al, 2013). For each indicator, the ratings are placed on a scale of 0 (low intensity) to 10(high intensity). There are twelve indicators which demonstrate state failure, so total scores range from 0 to 120. Out of the twelve indicators, four are social, two are economic and six addressed political issues. These indicators are explained here under; social indicators

1. Demographic pressures- high density in population in comparison to supply of food and other complementary resources, reserved ownership of land and transport; religious and historical sites under strict national control

2. Humanitarian and social security problems- massive movement of refugees and internally displaced peoples (IDP) by forced uprooting of large communities or ethnic groups.

3. Social Identification- atrocities are committed with impunity against communal groups or specific groups, institutionalised political and communal identity over nationality.

4. Continual Human Flight- the "brain drain" of professionals, intellectuals and political dissidents and intentional emigration of the middle class ethnic populace to other places of the State or any other states.

5. Economic Indicators

1. Imbalance in Economic Development: inequality and injustice against a group or tribe in education, jobs and economic status according to their communal or religious identity.

2. Stern Economic Decline: high rate of inflation, fall in foreign investment, debt payments, deflation of the national currency and a growth in drug trade and smuggling.

6. Political Indicators

1. Lack of Transparency- Widespread corruption and political elites use their positions to oppose transparency and accountability.

2. Lack in Public Services- states become useless and fail to defend citizens from terrorism and violence; and fail to provide crucial services, such as health, education, sanitation, public transportation and essential commodities.

3. Violation of Human Rights through Politicization- widespread abuse of legal, political and social rights, including those of individuals, politicisation of the judiciary, internal use of military for political ends.

4. "State within a State"- state sponsored or state supported private or religious militia will increase terrorism and religious riot. This 'army within an army' will protect and promote the interests of the dominant military, religious or political elite.

5. Rise of Political Elites- continuous conflict between the ruling elites and state institutions, national decision will be taken in line with religious, tribal or nationalistic or sub-nationalistic identity.

6. Foreign Intervention- receives free interference in internal affairs through military and economic assistance in accordance with foreign interest (Masud et al, 2013, p. 65)

It has been argued that defining and identifying failed states, present some problems of measurement because of divergent estimates reflecting differences in criteria used to define state failure and weighting of various aspects of governance. Cojanu and Popescu (2007) documented three comprehensive and well respected systems for evaluating state performance. One of them is the twelve (12) indicators discussed above developed by the Fund for Peace (a USA think tank). Another criterion is the World Bank`s Worldwide "Governance Indicators" (WGI) comprising six aspects of good governance namely: Voice and Accountability; Political Stability and Violence; Government Effectiveness; Rule of Law; and Control of Corruption.

Voice and Accountability (VA) implies the extent to which a country`s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, freedom of expression and of association, and free media. Political Stability and Absence of Violence (PV) refers to perceptions on stability of government or change in government by violent or unconstitutional means including political violence or terrorism. Government Effectiveness (GE) translates to the quality of public services, the performance of the Civil Service and degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and credibility of government`s commitment to such policies. Regulatory Quality (RQ) entails the ability of government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that promote private sector development.

Rule of Law (RL) means the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, constitutionalism, the quality of contract enforcement, the police, judiciary and the likelihood of crime and violence. Control of Corruption (CC) signals to what extent public power is converted to private gain, including petty and grand forms of corruption, and capture of the state by elites and private interests.

The third yardstick canvassed for defining and identifying state failure is the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) which provides two rankings and two trend indicators that present results of the comparative analysis. The two rankings are: **The Status Index** and **Management Index**. The Status index shows the state of development that a country had achieved on its way to democracy and market economy. This index overall result represents the mean value of scores for "Political Transformation" and "Economic Transformation" dimensions.

The criteria for measuring political transformation are: stateness; political participation; rule of law; stability of democratic institutions; political and social integration. The score for economic transformation is obtained by calculating the mean value for these criteria: level of socioeconomic development; organization of the market and competition; currency and price stability; private property; welfare regime; economic performance; and sustainability.

The Management Index shows a classification of the quality of transformation management and the trend gives the information on the direction of development on democracy and market economy in each country. The methodology for BTI is represented by qualitative assessments of experts and has been modified slightly due to experience and suggestions obtained in the recent past.

The measurement and application of some criteria to the state failure has been seriously criticized by the theorists from the third world. One of the major shortcomings of the discourse on failed states is that it offers an ahistorical account of the weakening of states. Apart from glossing over the historical processes (like colonialism) accounting for the state failure, it diverts emphasis and responsibility for the failed condition on the state itself and ignores external factors. Support for these assertions are that "the current system of state is arbitrary and irrational (Meyer in Brooks, 2005:21). In addition, "globalization limits the capacity of nation-states to fully control borders, run its economy autonomously and perform security state functions (Held in Brooks 2005, p. 21).

It has been further argued that it is incorrect to treat states as isolated entities that alone are responsible for what goes within their boundaries. It is also plausible to state that the evolution of modern nation-states demand more rigorous nation-building efforts and activities that cannot take place in few decades, especially when viewed against the backdrop that European states developed into nation-states over a period of four to seven countries (Ayoob in Huria, 2008, p. 4). Many third world countries states that have been classified as failed are highly plural and sharply divided societies which are not yet politically and socially cohesive.

The indicators for failed states appear to be a "catch-all framework" embracing every problem of governance that faces the developing countries. This reckoning makes the concept suspect and a questionable analytical tool because of its vagueness, imprecision and lumping of dissimilar political crises into the same investigative category. Predicated on these, a more holistic and balanced set of criteria would be more helpful in verifying the weakness/ failure of states as a construct.

The next section of this paper is devoted to the theoretical framework considered applicable to this discourse.

7. Theoretical Framework: Elite Theory

There are several versions of the elite theory ranging from that developed by Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca to those of C.W. Mills, Floyd Hunter and Raymond Aron. A combination of these versions will therefore be utilized as framework of analysis. The elite theory was first developed by two Italian sociologists namely: Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca. The earlier versions of

the theory emphasized personal attributes of leaders. Later versions dwelt more on institutional framework of society. Haralambos (1999, p. 107).

The thrust off the elite theory according to Pareto and Mosca are as follows:

- Elite owes its power to its internal organization and forms a united and cohesive minority in the face of an unorganized and fragmented mass.

- Major decisions which affect society are taken by the elite, and these decisions usually reflect the interest of the elite rather than the wishes of the majority.

- The mass of the population is largely controlled and manipulated by the elite, passively accepting the propaganda which justifies the elite rule.

- Major change in the society occurs when one elite replaces another. Pareto refers to this as "circulation of elites" and he added that, "all elite tend to become decadent". They decay in quality and lose their vigour. "They may become soft and ineffective with the pleasures of easy living and the privileges of power…" (Haralambos, 1999, p. 108).

- The rule by a minority is an inevitable feature of social life and that the ruling minorities are superior to the mass of the population who lack capacity for self-government and require the leadership and guidance of elite.

8. Application of Theory

The governing elite in Nigeria, by virtue of their social characteristics and privileges of office are united and operate as a formidable team against the hungry and poverty stricken mass of population who are easily divided and distracted on account of daily pressure for sustenance and necessities of life. The divide and rule by the elite thus inhibit any genuine effort to advance any common cause in form of qualitative education, shelter, basic infrastructure and other social amenities, which are grossly in adequate in the country.

Madunagu (2005) brings this to the fore by asserting that "the dominant fraction of the Nigerian ruling class do not use the wealth they loot…for the benefit of "their people" although these poor people whose names are invoked in vain are often mobilized to fight their imaginary enemies…" The latter part of Madunagu's view above and African Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ, 2004,

p. 16) position that "the exploitation of public and private resource for the gain of the public is embedded in institutionalized practices", corroborate this assertion.

The elite in Nigeria are not accountable to the Nigerian people. Various allegation of public treasury looting in print and social network media by public officials and serving Governors in the country brings this to the fore. And it is doubtful if there is anything the defenseless mass of the population can do about this, in view of the instrument of coercion at the disposal of the elite.

In addition to the foregoing, to the extent that the governing elite in Nigeria cannot rise to the challenge of service delivery and the qualitative life for the citizenry, they may have become decadent and ineffective due to pleasures of easy living and privileges of power in words of Pareto. ANEEJ (2004, p. 16) underscored this issue while positing the existence of a predatory state and elite in Nigeria, and concluded that "this may therefore explain the lack of development in the country…despite over thirty five years of oil wealth".

In conclusion, it is the use to which the governing elites in Nigeria have subjected power (conversion of state power to private benefits/advantage), their characteristics as carriers of particularistic interests and tendencies, lack of legitimacy in governance and policy outcomes created conditions that seem to be giving expression to state failure or implosion in Nigeria.

9. Contextualizing and Contesting Nigeria's Failed State Status

This section discusses the situational realities of Nigeria side by side with the indicators of a failed state as to enable us take a position on whether Nigeria is really a failed state or in the process of failing or a collapse state.

Nigeria began her journey into the league of failed state in 2007 when the country was ranked 17th among the failed states in the world. In 2008, the country's ranking improved marginally to 19th position before deteriorating in 2009 to 15th. Since 2010, Nigeria has consistently maintained its 14th spot on the index (Jideofor, 2012).

The reports on Nigeria's failed status since 2010 especially in 2012 indicates that Nigeria is only ahead of such countries as Pakistan, Guinea, Cote D Ivoire, Iraq, Yemen, Haiti, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Chad, Sudan, Congo Democratic Republic and Somalia (Punch, 2012 July 25).

Out of 120 marks, Nigeria got a total of 101.6. The researchers based their score on 12 indicators. Each of the 12 indicators is measured on a scale of 1- 10. Nigeria's scores in some of them are depicted below: massive movement of refugees or internally displaced people, 6.5, vengeance seeking group grievance, 9.7; uneven economic development, 8.9; sharp or severe economic decline, 7.5; progressive deteriorating of public service, 9.1; violation of human rights and rule of law, 8.6; and rise of factionalized elite, 9.8 (Punch, 2012, July 25).

Quite a number of commentators have joined their voices to portray Nigeria as a failed state such as Okhenaiye (2013); Ipinyomi (2010) to mention just a few. Generally, looking at some of these indicators, Nigeria's score card is worrisome and evidences abound that something drastic has to be done to remedy the situation. For instance, on massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons, it was observed that in Plateau State alone, the International Committee of Red Cross and the Nigerian Red Cross gave an estimate of at least 5,500 people displaced after the attacks on villages in Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas (Punch, 2012, July 25). On brain drain, which was also one on the indicators as mentioned earlier, it was claimed that:

As of 2004, up to 324 Nigerian's were in the United States alone… some 174,000 were information technology professionals, about 50,000 were engineers and another 250,000 were professionals in other areas including universities lecturers… only about 20% of Sub- Saharan Africa educated abroad returned home; the remaining 80 stayed in the country of study (Jubril and Obaje, 2008, p. 362).

In the same vein, Obasanjo (2007, p. 220) averred that:

Many of our best men and women, for lack of opportunity and challenge at home, have had to work outside our shores. We should challenge them to return home by putting in place the conducive atmosphere and the tools with which they will be able to give this country the full benefit of their education, training and experience. I recognize that just as there are good and bright Nigerian's abroad, there have remained many at home who have persevered. I assure them that their sacrifice, tenacity and perseverance will be recognized and rewarded by a grateful nation.

Another debilitating problem confronting Nigeria which also falls into failed state index is corruption. Nuhu Ribadu (cited in Banjo, 2012, p. 14) asserts that "… The major challenge that Nigeria faces is corruption. It is the major obstacle to the emergence of our progress and it represents one of the major barriers to democratic development in the country. He added that "let us be honest and frank to ourselves,

the major factor responsible for this catalogue of failure, I make brave to say is corruption" (cited in Banjo, 2012, p. 114).

Suffice to say that at the root of Nigeria's underdevelopment is corruption. It has stalled the development of the power sector; it is a major contributing factor to poverty and the sharp economic decline in the country; it has made it impossible for the country to attain the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Punch 2012, July 25).

Okhenaiye (2013) also submits that a failed state is one that is unable to perform its duties in several levels. He said in the case of Nigeria, nothing is working. This is evident in the high level of insecurity and poverty. In fact, power which is pivotal to economic growth is still in a state of uncertainty as far as Nigeria is concerned. The NYSC scheme that was established to foster peace and unity in the country is being threatened as Youth Corps members have become targets of attacks by terrorist and sundry rioters especially in the North. Parents, guardians no longer accept the posting of their children to the North.

Looking at the gloomy picture, can one conclude that Nigeria is a failed state? While the score card of Nigeria is discouraging in some areas, it is not bad in other areas.

For instance, looking at the population growth, vis-à-vis- food production, Jerome (2012) asserts that while the annual growth of Nigeria's population since independence is 4%, the rate of staple food production stands at 3.7%, thus there exists a variance of 0.3%. This is not a significant variance to tag Nigeria a failed state using that indicator.

Okupe (2013) described a failed state as one where there is erosion of legitimate authority and instability. The country cannot afford to provide public services like the provision of light, good roads, water supply and security services. In Nigeria, the legitimacy of the government in power is not contested, there are serving national and state assemblies, there are laws and order even in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa (where the federal government has just declared a state of emergency) because of the menace of Boko Haram. In addition, there is political stability as the country has witnessed civilian-civilian transition of government from 1999 till date. Onaiwu (2013), argued that the foreign direct investment (FDI) is already over $9 million, the largest in Africa, there is better communication, the transport system cannot be said to be totally bad.

At this juncture, it is necessary to probe further into the veracity of the failed state indicators. Jideofor (2012) opines that since 2010, Nigeria has maintained its 14th spot index and has been listed among the league of infamy even before the Boko Haram insurgence. This simply denotes that the Boko Haram terrorist activities did not reflect in the ranking position of Nigeria among the failed states. He equally added that indices of failed states are difficult to construct and even harder to perfect amid competing methodologies and data sources. The author argued that the failed state index uses several parameters that are mostly subjectively determined. Thus, conclusion of these kinds of indices often depends on initial assumptions of each parameter. It should be noted that these kinds of parameters which are often value judgments get loaded and can trigger controversies.

A good example is the work of Chomsky (2006) where he argued that the U.S itself was becoming a "failed state" and therefore a danger to its people by using different indices. The indices the author used includes America war on terror against other countries on the grounds that such countries possess weapons of Mass Destructions (WMD) and forcing democracy on them after their pyrrhic victory. This disposition has made the government to create so many enemies for the country and of course its citizens, thereby, endangering their safety in those countries tagged terrorists.

Furthermore, the concept of failed state appeared not very useful analytical tool as it is vague and imprecise. Huria, (2008) described it as a catch-all framework for every problem of governance associated with the developing world. The author argued that states in the developing world are relatively new entrants into the international system and it is only natural that they face challenges in the process of state building (Huria, 2008). A historical excursion into the colonization of some of the third world countries particularly Nigeria, reveals that the western countries caused major parts of the problems that now made such countries to be classified as failed states.

Another notable methodological weakness of the failed state index can be seen in the fact that it straightjacketed states as either failed or not failed states. The weakness in the methodological compilation is revealed in the work of Curry (2005) who classified states as strong, weak, failed and collapsed. The parameters used to classify states as failed or not by the Fund for Peace, an independent research and educational organization based in Washington DC, United States of America, made it difficult to locate a state on the continuum of the various

classifications of Curry. This is because while some countries may be weak, others might have failed or be tagged collapsed states. Such classifications cannot be done with the failed state index of the Fund for Peace. Another query on the classification of the countries as failed or not hinges on the variables used to measure and rank states in statistical forms which looks logically impressive. However, looking at the works of Huff and Geis (1973), "How to Lie with Statistics" that one can use figures, graphs and tables to hoodwink and blackmail others or make one appear cleverer than one really is, made one skeptical about the parameters of Fund for Peace in classifying states as failed or not. It cannot be ascertained whether they are intentionally or unintentionally lying using statistics.

Jideofor (2012) also asserts that the indices used for failed states are mischievous that countries in the west always used these indices to promote nationalism and internal cohesion, by subtly drawing the attention of their citizens to the relative ranking of their countries in these indices. This is to make them feel good that as much as things may be difficult for them, they are infinitely better off than people in several countries. For many in West Africa, the indices and their higher ranking in them attest to their superiority vis-à-vis other lowly ranked countries.

A critique of the failed state index is not to deny the fact that Nigeria is faced with serious challenges which are traceable to its formation that makes states building a herculean task. However, moving away from the political arena, there appear to be a glimpse of hope. The population resource profile, skilled manpower among others if well harnessed can be a catalyst for the emergence of a prosperous, peaceful and stable country.

It is necessary to add that leadership factor is very germane in the discussion of state failure. Most of the indices of failed state are problems of underdevelopment. Countries that had wriggled out of the conundrum of underdevelopment are countries that had purposeful leadership anchored on transformational people-oriented and programmes at one time or the other in their chequered histories. Examples include: the former USSR under Stalin, Japan under Hirohito, China under Mao Tse Tung to mention just a few. In the case of Nigeria it has been said repeatedly that the problem with Nigeria is that of leadership failure. Nkire the National Chairman of an opposition party- the Progressive People Alliance (PPA) asserts that: … it was rather unfortunate that PDP led federal Government in the last 13 years was not able to protect lives and property of Nigerians let alone provide employment, housing, steady electricity, good roads and cheap

transportation for the people … it was sad that rather than make the people prosperous, government officials made themselves richer and Nigerians poorer, through bad policies, huge allowances and corruption (Daily Sun Tuesday July 17, 2012, p. 8). This is a revalidation of Achebe's (1983) averment and the elite theory used as framework of analysis in this paper.

To further underscore the importance of leadership, Pfiffner and Sherwood, (1960 cited in Ejere, 2013, p. 130) declares that "get the right man (person) in the leadership job, and all your problems will be solved".

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper attempted to evaluate the impact of leadership in addressing some conditions that make Nigeria appear to be a failed state. The failed state indices (twelve in all) as propagated by the USA Fund for Peace were heavily interrogated through qualitative and quantitative data obtained through secondary sources and logical analytical approach. The elite theory as a framework also complemented the aforementioned method. The central thesis of this paper is that the ranking of Nigeria on the failed state index ignores some historical facts and current situational realities which make some of the measurement criteria suspect and questionable. However, there is the need for improvement in some spheres of life in Nigeria and the paper recommends as follows:

There is the need to rethink and tinker with the criteria of measuring countries in terms of socio-economic and political performance to include historical experiences and current situational realities rather than lumping countries together.

The intervention of foreign actors (state and non-state) should be driven and anchored on the principle of altruism and should take into cognizance the long term interest and needs of post-colonial states and their citizens. The role of prudent economic management on a sustainable basis and economic planning that focuses on massive utilization of labour that releases creative energies of the youths from violence/social ills and vices into productive activities cannot be overemphasized. Institutions of governance should be strengthened continuously to enable states live up to their billings in service delivery and provision of social/ public goods. Purposeful and people-centered approach to governance is a minimum irreducible condition to achieving some of the above suggestions and it is strongly canvassed in halting the numerous dysfunctions of the Nigerian State.

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