

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION ON  
NIGERIANS FROM 1999-2015**

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**SEPTEMBER, 2025**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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**SEPTEMBER, 2025**

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this work was carried out by **OSIKOROBIA IGBUNU ELIJAH** in the Department of History and International Studies, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

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**Date**

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to the Almighty God who made it possible for the successful completion of my studies. I also want to dedicate this work to the family of Efe Osikorobia, their love, good upbringing, financial and moral support all through the stages of my life made the attainment of this feat a reality.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO STUDY

#### Introduction

The declaration of a state of emergency is a constitutional mechanism activated by sovereign states in response to extraordinary disruptions that pose serious threats to public safety, political stability, or the effective functioning of government institutions. It serves as a legal and political framework through which the state temporarily assumes expanded powers that would normally be deemed excessive under regular conditions. These powers may include the restriction of civil liberties such as freedom of movement, assembly, and expression, the detention of individuals without trial, the deployment of military forces for internal security, and the centralization of executive authority. States of emergency are not intended to function as routine tools of governance, but as last-resort measures to restore order during critical periods of upheaval.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, the notion of emergency powers dates back to ancient Rome, where a temporary dictatorship could be declared during times of war or invasion, with strict time limits placed on the extraordinary authority granted. In modern constitutional democracies, the concept is enshrined in legal documents that attempt to balance executive responsiveness with legislative oversight and judicial review. For instance, many democratic constitutions, including those of France, India, South Africa, and the United States, provide clear procedures and limitations for the declaration and execution of emergency powers.<sup>2</sup> The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) also recognizes the legitimacy of such measures in times of national crisis, but with stipulations that certain rights such as the right to life and protection from torture remain inviolable, even under emergency rule. Despite the legal safeguards, states of emergency have often been criticized for serving as

gateways to authoritarianism or tools of political suppression. In some countries, what begins as a temporary security response can evolve into prolonged executive dominance, erosion of judicial independence, and suppression of dissent. The potential for abuse underscores the importance of well-defined legal parameters, transparency, and accountability mechanisms when invoking emergency powers. It is within this broader global and historical context that the phenomenon of state of emergency must be examined, especially in post-colonial states where fragile democratic institutions are often tested by internal conflicts and security threats.<sup>3</sup>

In the Nigerian context, the 1999 – 2015 period was marked by significant socio-political challenges, making the use of emergency powers a recurrent feature of governance. Following the country's return to democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria faced numerous internal disturbances, including ethnic and religious clashes, constitutional crises, and the growing threat of terrorism. These challenges tested the resilience of the nation's democratic institutions and prompted federal intervention through emergency rule. The constitutional basis for such declarations is enshrined in Section 305 of the 1999 Constitution, which empowers the President to proclaim a state of emergency when the nation or any part thereof is facing a clear and present danger. During this period, emergency declarations were implemented in various states to curb escalating violence and maintain public order.<sup>4</sup> Notably, in 2004, Plateau State was subjected to emergency rule following violent sectarian conflict that resulted in significant loss of lives and displacement. Similarly, Ekiti State in 2006 experienced emergency rule not due to violence, but as a response to deepening political and judicial crises that threatened constitutional order.

The most severe and prolonged emergency declaration occurred between 2013 and 2015 in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. This action was a direct response to the intensification of Boko Haram's insurgency, which had evolved into a full-

blown humanitarian crisis with mass killings, abductions, and the occupation of territory. The federal government, under President Goodluck Jonathan, justified the emergency declaration as a necessary step to reclaim national sovereignty and restore security.<sup>5</sup>

These declarations, while often perceived as necessary for national stability, had profound implications on the daily lives of Nigerians. Social activities such as markets, religious gatherings, festivals, and communal meetings were disrupted. Economically, restrictions on movement, closure of businesses, and general insecurity led to job losses, food insecurity, and the collapse of local economies. The experiences of communities during these periods reflect not only the direct impacts of emergency rule but also broader questions about governance, civil liberties, and the balance between security and freedom in a democratic society. While such declarations are intended to restore normalcy, they often come at a significant cost to the everyday lives of citizens. Economic activities are disrupted as markets close and transport systems are restricted. Social life also suffers, with religious gatherings, cultural festivals, and community ceremonies either banned or heavily policed. These socio-economic disruptions, though sometimes underreported, leave lasting impacts on the affected populations.<sup>6</sup> This study explores how these emergency declarations between 1999 and 2015 affected the social and economic lives of ordinary Nigerians, drawing evidence from newspaper reports and firsthand narratives where available.

### **Statement of the Problem of the Study**

Despite the constitutional intent behind emergency declarations, there remains a gap in understanding their direct effects on the socio-economic well-being of citizens. Were these emergencies truly necessary and effective, or did they worsen the lives of those they aimed to protect? The lack of accessible data on how markets, festivals, meetings, and day-to-day economic activities were affected has made it difficult to evaluate the broader implications of

such state actions. This study addresses that gap by focusing on real-life accounts and newspaper coverage of the period.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to analyze the socio-economic impacts of the declaration of a state of emergency on Nigerians between 1999 and 2015. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the social effects of emergency declarations on public gatherings, festivals, and communal life.
2. Analyze the economic consequences on local markets, businesses, and livelihoods.
3. Evaluate how newspapers represented these impacts.
4. Identify patterns in government responses and public adaptation during emergency periods.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for several reasons. It provides insight into the lived experiences of Nigerians during times of constitutional emergency. It also offers policymakers, scholars, and civil society organizations a detailed understanding of the human cost of these declarations. This study is also significant because it speaks directly to key areas of national development such as financial inclusion, rural livelihoods, MSMEs, and women in development. By highlighting how emergency rule disrupted these sectors and proposing practical ways forward, the research aligns with broader poverty-reduction and development objectives in the Nigerian context. Furthermore, it contributes to academic literature by bridging the gap between policy actions and their real-world consequences on communities.

## **Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on selected cases of state of emergency declarations in Nigeria between 1999 and 2015. It specifically examines the Plateau State in 2004, Ekiti State in 2006, Borno State, Yobe State, and Adamawa State in 2013 to 2015. This research relies on reports from reputable Nigerian newspapers such as The Guardian, ThisDay, Vanguard, Punch, and Daily Trust. These periods under review encompass multiple instances of emergency declarations in Nigeria that occurred between 1999 until 2015 and aims to analyze the socio-economic impacts of these declarations on Nigerian society, focusing on the various contexts and circumstances surrounding each case. The timeframe captures significant political, social, and economic developments during this period, providing a comprehensive understanding of the implications of states of emergency in Nigeria.

## **Research Methodology**

This study will employ both primary and secondary sources to explore the socio-economic impacts of state of emergency declarations in Nigeria from 1999 to 2015.

### **Primary Sources**

Primary data will be collected through interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, local leaders, affected communities, and experts in governance and security. Additionally, newspaper archives will be consulted to examine public reactions, media coverage, and firsthand reports of the events.

### **Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources will include books, academic journals, reports from NGOs, and relevant scholarly articles that provide historical and contemporary analysis of the state of emergency declarations. These sources will help provide context, theoretical frameworks, and analyses of the socio-economic consequences of such declarations in Nigeria.

## Literature Review

To achieve the highlighted research objectives of this study, a comprehensive review of the literature concerning the historical works, scholarly analyses, and relevant case studies on the socio-economic impacts of state of emergency declarations in Nigeria has been undertaken.

Hilary Matfess, “Institutionalizing Instability: The Constitutional Roots of Insecurity in Northern Nigeria.”<sup>7</sup> Hilary Matfess’ article is a critical exploration of the constitutional and institutional deficiencies that have contributed to persistent insecurity in Northern Nigeria. Rather than focusing narrowly on the insurgency itself, Matfess delves into how the Nigerian constitution facilitates emergency rule by leaving ambiguities in federal-state power dynamics and executive emergency authority. She argues that these constitutional gaps have allowed successive governments to normalize the use of emergency powers as politically convenient tools rather than last-resort measures. While Matfess provides a comprehensive institutional critique, her analysis is mostly focused on Northern Nigeria and does not deeply explore the socio-economic aftermath of emergency rule across the broader Nigerian landscape, especially in terms of displaced communities, disrupted economies, and social disintegration. Matfess’ work provides a foundational understanding of the structural enablers of emergency declarations, especially during the Boko Haram crisis.

Punch Newspaper, *In Search of Solution to Jukun/Tiv Unending Crisis* (2001).<sup>8</sup> This investigative report delves into the protracted conflict between the Jukun and Tiv communities in Taraba State, Nigeria, highlighting the deep-rooted ethnic tensions and the socio-political complexities that have perpetuated the crisis. The article underscores the significant demographic presence of the Tiv in Taraba and their perceived marginalization, which has fueled grievances and accusations of systemic injustice. While the article provides

a comprehensive overview of the political and social dynamics at play, it lacks an in-depth analysis of the long-term socio-economic impacts of the conflict, such as disruptions to agriculture, education, and local economies.

Guardian Newspaper, *Emergency Rule Begins in Plateau* (2004).<sup>9</sup> This report documents the events that led to the 2004 state of emergency in Plateau State, where President Obasanjo suspended democratic structures following deadly ethno-religious violence. While the report offers detailed accounts of human rights violations and political actions, it pays limited attention to grassroots socio-economic dislocations. Nonetheless, it is critical in showing how the suspension of democracy under emergency rule not only altered political dynamics but also had grave economic consequences.

Helon Habila, “2010 Jos Crisis.”<sup>10</sup> This work provides a detailed narrative of the devastating ethno-religious violence in Jos, Plateau State, in 2010, highlighting the massacre in Dogon Nahawa and the broader cycle of Christian-Muslim violence that had marred the city for over a decade. Habila emphasizes the socio-economic fallout, such as the destruction of key economic hubs like the Terminus Market and the resultant displacement and breakdown of social cohesion.

Punch Newspaper, *Ekiti Under Emergency Rule: The Full Story* (2006)<sup>11</sup>, and M. E. Aluko, “The State of Emergency in Ekiti State (2006).”<sup>12</sup> Both Punch Newspaper and M. E. Aluko have drawn critical attention to the 2006 declaration of a state of emergency in Ekiti State, underscoring the political tensions and constitutional irregularities surrounding the event. Punch presented the declaration as a dramatic federal intervention that suspended democratic processes, while Aluko rigorously critiques the legal foundation of the emergency rule, arguing that the federal government acted outside the constitutional provisions. While

strong on legal and political dimensions, both leave a gap in assessing socio-economic consequences.

Ilesanmi et al., “Ebola and Its Socio-Economic Impact on Nigeria” (2014).<sup>13</sup> This research explores the 2014 Ebola outbreak’s social and economic disruptions in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos and Port Harcourt. The authors document public health emergency measures, such as movement restrictions and curfews, and their effects on urban economies. While comprehensive on immediate impacts, it does not delve into long-term economic recovery or changes in public health policy beyond the crisis.

Guardian Newspaper and Sahara Reporters, “President Goodluck Jonathan’s 2013 Declaration of State of Emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa.”<sup>14</sup> Guardian Newspaper and Sahara Reporters provide compelling media documentation of the 2013 state of emergency declared by President Goodluck Jonathan in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States. Their reports chronicle the immediate military deployment and counterinsurgency operations, while also capturing socio-economic consequences such as market closures, agricultural disruptions, school shutdowns, and mass displacement.

Punch Newspaper and Guardian Newspaper, “Massive Loss as Boko Haram Rampages through Baga” (2015).<sup>15</sup> This joint investigative report offers a detailed account of the Baga massacre, which occurred under an active state of emergency in Borno State. Despite emergency measures intended to curb Boko Haram's insurgency, the report documents the failure of the military response and highlights socio-economic consequences such as movement restrictions, market disruptions, and collapse of local livelihoods.

David Dyzenhaus, *The Constitution of Law: Legality in a Time of Emergency* (2006).<sup>16</sup> David Dyzenhaus’ work provides a theoretical exploration of the relationship

between legality and emergency governance. He argues that states of emergency, while justified as temporary measures, tend to undermine constitutionalism when unchecked. Though focused on Western contexts, the book offers a conceptual framework for analyzing Nigeria's frequent recourse to emergency powers.

Ben Nwabueze, *Constitutional History of Nigeria* (2007).<sup>17</sup> Nwabueze provides a historical overview of Nigeria's constitutional development, focusing on ambiguities surrounding executive powers. He demonstrates how these ambiguities create loopholes that leaders exploit to impose states of emergency. While strong on legal history, the book does not analyze socio-economic outcomes.

Okechukwu Oko, *States of Emergency and the Rule of Law in Emerging Democracies: The Nigerian Experience* (2005).<sup>18</sup> Oko's work is one of the few to deal specifically with Nigeria's states of emergency. He critiques their use as political tools and warns of the erosion of civil liberties. While insightful, it does not fully address socio-economic impacts. Its value lies in its direct focus on Nigeria.

Amnesty International, *Nigeria: The Hidden Cost of Emergency Rule* (2014).<sup>19</sup> This report examines the socio-economic and human rights impacts of the 2013–2014 emergency rule in northeastern Nigeria. It highlights mass displacement, food shortages, and educational disruption. Though advocacy-driven in tone, it fills a gap by documenting the human costs of emergency governance.

International Crisis Group, *Nigeria: The Limits of Emergency Rule* (2015).<sup>20</sup> This report evaluates the federal government's reliance on emergency rule during the Boko Haram crisis. It argues that the strategy failed because it relied on militarization without socio-

economic recovery measures. Its policy-oriented insights help situate Nigeria's experiences within global debates on governance during crises.

## Endnotes

1. Okechukwu Oko, *States of Emergency and the Rule of Law in Emerging Democracies: The Nigerian Experience* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 112.
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4. 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 305.
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15. *Punch Newspaper*, "Massive Loss as Boko Haram Rampages through Baga," January 2015; *Guardian Newspaper*, "Massive Loss as Boko Haram Rampages through Baga," January 2015.
16. David Dyzenhaus, *The Constitution of Law: Legality in a Time of Emergency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
17. Ben Nwabueze, *Constitutional History of Nigeria* (Lagos: Spectrum Books, 2007).
18. Okechukwu Oko, *States of Emergency and the Rule of Law in Emerging Democracies: The Nigerian Experience* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).
19. Amnesty International, *Nigeria: The Hidden Cost of Emergency Rule* (London: Amnesty International, 2014).
20. International Crisis Group, *Nigeria: The Limits of Emergency Rule*, Africa Report No. 228 (Brussels: ICG, 2015).

## CHAPTER TWO

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CASES OF DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY

#### Introduction

This chapter examines the historical context and key cases of emergency declarations, with a particular focus on their profound socio-economic consequence rather than concentrating solely on the political motivations or legal frameworks, the analysis delves into how such measures disrupt livelihoods, deepen inequality, and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities within society. While this measure is typically justified as necessary to restore stability, its implications extend far beyond the immediate political and security dimensions. However, the suspension of civil liberties and the concentration of power often lead to unintended socio-economic fallout. Businesses collapse under restrictive measures, supply chains are disrupted, and marginalized communities bear the heaviest burden. Long after the emergency is lifted, the scars remain widening poverty gaps, eroded public trust, and institutional instability. By examining historical and contemporary cases, this chapter seeks to uncover patterns in how emergency powers reshape economies and societies, often leaving lasting damage that outweighs their purported benefits.

#### Overview of State of Emergency in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the declaration of a state of emergency is a significant constitutional tool that allows the federal government or state authorities to temporarily suspend certain normal constitutional rights and functions in response to crises such as insurgency, unrest, or threats to national security. A State of Emergency refers to a scenario where the government is empowered to take exceptional actions to restore public safety, uphold law and order, or respond to major crises<sup>1</sup>. In Nigeria, the legal basis for declaring such a state is outlined in the

1999 Constitution, as amended. The authority to proclaim a state of emergency comes specifically from Section 305 of this Constitution. This section grants the President the power to issue a proclamation under certain conditions. As per Section 305(3), the President can declare a state of emergency through an official Gazette publication only in specific situations, such as a war involving the Federation, an imminent threat of war or invasion, a breakdown of public order and safety requiring extraordinary measures to restore peace, threats to public order, natural disasters or calamities affecting the community or the entire country, any public danger or emergency threatening Nigeria's existence, or upon a request from a State Governor that has the approval of two-thirds of the State House of Assembly. These leaders are then responsible for convening their respective Houses to consider the situation. Approval by the National Assembly is required within a specified timeframe, if the proclamation is made while the assembly is in session, it must approve within two days, but if the assembly is not in session, approval must be granted within ten days. If the proclamation not be approve within this period, it automatically ceases to have effect<sup>2</sup>.

The state of emergency typically lasts for a period of six months, but it can be extended if the National Assembly passes a resolution with a two-thirds majority, recognizing the continued necessity of such measures. The proclamation can be revoked either by the President, who can publish an instrument in the official Gazette, or by the National Assembly, which may revoke it at any time through a simple majority vote<sup>3</sup>. Once a state of emergency is declared, the government may take certain measures if deemed necessary to restore order and security. These include restricting movement into or from affected areas, temporarily suspending specific constitutional rights and civil liberties, deploying security forces to restore public order, and implementing economic or political measures aimed at stabilizing the situation. The declaration of a state of emergency also impacts the role of state governors. Although the constitution does not explicitly remove governors from office during such a

period, historical precedents suggest that the President may appoint administrators to take over the executive functions of the affected states<sup>4</sup>. The declaration of states of emergency in Nigeria has consistently reshaped the constitutional balance between federal and state authorities, with governors and State Houses of Assembly often becoming subordinate to federal power during crisis periods. This pattern was particularly evident in Plateau State (2004) and Ekiti State (2006), where elected governors were temporarily replaced by military administrators appointed by the federal government<sup>5</sup>.

Nigeria's experience with emergency declarations dates back to 1962, when Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa invoked emergency powers in the Western Region following violent intra-party conflicts within the Action Group. The appointment of Dr. Moses Majekodunmi as administrator established an early precedent for federal intervention in regional governance<sup>6</sup>. This template resurfaced decades later in 2004, when President Olusegun Obasanjo declared emergency rule in Plateau State amid devastating ethno-religious violence, suspending Governor Joshua Dariye and installing Major General Chris Alli as administrator<sup>7</sup>. The 2006 Ekiti emergency followed a similar pattern, with Brigadier General Adetunji Olurin assuming control after the controversial impeachment of Governor Ayo Fayose. However, the 2013-2014 emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States marked a departure from this model, as President Goodluck Jonathan retained state governments while deploying overwhelming military force against Boko Haram insurgents<sup>8</sup>. This variation reflected both the unique challenges of counterinsurgency operations and growing concerns about the democratic implications of suspending elected governments. Prior to the full-scale northeastern emergency, targeted local government-area emergencies had been implemented in 2011, particularly in Borno and Plateau States, demonstrating the federal government's experimentation with graduated responses to insecurity<sup>9</sup>. Throughout these cases, emergency

declarations have served dual purposes as both security measures and political instruments, raising persistent questions about their effectiveness and constitutional propriety.

## **Major Emergency Declarations**

### **Plateau State (2004)**

In May 2004, the Nigerian government declared a state of emergency in Plateau State amidst escalating communal violence and unrest. President Olusegun Obasanjo declared a state of emergency in Plateau State following a surge in ethno-religious violence that resulted in widespread killings and destruction<sup>10</sup>. The violence was instigated due to ethnic and religious tensions, which resulted in the loss of numerous lives and displacement of communities. Governor Joshua Dariye and the State House of Assembly were suspended, and Major General Chris Alli (retd.) was appointed administrator to restore peace and stability, with security forces given expanded powers to manage the crisis<sup>11</sup>.

## **Constitutional Violations and Federal Overreach**

President Obasanjo's declaration of a state of emergency in Plateau State on May 18, 2004, only the second such use under Nigeria's Fourth Republic, exposed critical flaws in Section 305 of the 1999 Constitution. As legal scholar M.E. Aluko observes, Nigerian governors grow "jittery" at the mention of emergency powers precisely because the provision grants the federal executive unchecked discretion<sup>12</sup>. In Plateau's case, Obasanjo cited a "breakdown of public order" in Yelwa and Langtang LGAs to justify suspending Governor Joshua Dariye, his deputy, and the State Assembly<sup>13</sup>. Yet, as *The Guardian* reported, the proclamation was announced on national television before publication in the official gazette a direct violation of Section 305(1)<sup>14</sup>.

Moreover, the appointment of Major General Chris Alli as Administrator lacked constitutional basis. As Justice Williams (2004) argued, "No subsection of Section 305 empowers the President to remove a Governor or appoint an Acting Governor."<sup>15</sup> This illegality was compounded by the National Assembly's hasty ratification of the proclamation, an act *ultra vires* Section 11(4), which limits federal intervention to legislative functions, not executive removals. The paradox, noted by Aluko, is stark "Why a Governor would invite emergency powers under Section 305(4) if it guarantees his removal" This renders the provision a tool of political coercion rather than crisis management<sup>16</sup>.

### **Socio-Economic Consequences**

The illegal suspension of Plateau's elected institutions had dire socio-economic consequences. With the state government paralyzed, Maj. Gen. Alli's administration prioritized militarization over governance. As Vanguard documented, Agricultural subsidies for Jos farmers were halted, crippling Nigeria's largest potato-producing region<sup>17</sup>. By 2005, food output had dropped by 40% (NBS), inflating prices across Northern Nigeria<sup>18</sup>. Meanwhile, BusinessDay estimated ₦50 billion in losses from abandoned investments, noting that Jos Main Market once employing 15,000 traders, remained ash for two years<sup>19</sup>.

Justice Williams' critique that the federal government bore responsibility for security failures given its monopoly over armed forces was vindicated socio-economically. Federal security operatives focused on disarmament campaigns in rural villages while ignoring IDP crises. In Bukuru camp, Weekly Trust reported 3,000 displaced families sharing two boreholes, triggering a cholera outbreak that killed 142<sup>20</sup>. This neglect reflected a broader pattern of emergency funds that were diverted to military operations, and not rehabilitation. As Aluko contends, such federal overreach erodes local accountability, delaying Plateau's recovery for a decade<sup>21</sup>.

## **Ekiti State (2006)**

The declaration of a state of emergency in Ekiti State in October 2006 emerged from a volatile political crisis, yet its most profound consequences extended far beyond the realm of governance, seeping into the socio-economic fabric of the state<sup>22</sup>. The impeachment of Governor Ayo Fayose had plunged Ekiti into a leadership vacuum, marked by judicial controversies and fears of escalating violence ahead of the 2007 general elections. In response, President Olusegun Obasanjo invoked emergency powers, suspending democratic structures and installing Brigadier General Adetunji Olurin as administrator<sup>23</sup>. While framed as a necessary measure to restore order, this intervention triggered a cascade of disruptions that reshaped daily life, economic stability, and public trust in ways that lingered long after the emergency was lifted.

The immediate effect of the emergency rule was a visible militarization of public spaces, with heightened security presence altering the rhythm of civic life. Markets, usually bustling with activity, saw reduced foot traffic as movement restrictions dampened commerce. Small-scale traders, who formed the backbone of the local economy, faced dwindling incomes, while delays in government operations left civil servants unpaid for months, exacerbating household hardships<sup>24</sup>. The suspension of political activities did not just silence dissent, rather it froze community engagement, leaving many feeling disconnected from the processes that shaped their livelihoods.

Beyond the economic paralysis, there was the erosion of public services which deepened the crisis. Healthcare programs stalled, school administrations floundered amid bureaucratic uncertainty, and infrastructure projects were shelved as the state apparatus shifted its focus to maintaining security rather than sustaining development<sup>25</sup>. For ordinary citizens, this translated into deteriorating access to basic necessities, widening the gap between the government and the governed. The psychological toll was equally significant, the

climate of fear and uncertainty bred disenchantment, with many questioning whether the restoration of order had come at too high a cost. Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the emergency was the social fragmentation it left in its wake. The political factions that had clashed before the intervention found their divisions hardened, with distrust seeping into communities<sup>26</sup>. The federal government's heavy-handed approach, though intended to stabilize the state, inadvertently reinforced perceptions of distant authority imposing solutions without regard for local realities. Years later, the episode continued to serve as a cautionary tale about the unintended consequences of emergency powers, where short-term security measures risked long-term socio-economic instability.

### **Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States (2013-2015)**

The declaration of a state of emergency across Nigeria's northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa in May 2013 marked a critical federal response to the escalating brutality of Boko Haram's insurgency<sup>27</sup>. President Goodluck Jonathan's administration framed the measure as a necessary military strategy to reclaim territory, dismantle terrorist networks, and restore security in a region that had become the epicenter of violent extremism. However, unlike previous emergency declarations such as the 2006 Ekiti case, this intervention did not suspend elected state governments, reflecting a delicate balance between military action and political continuity<sup>28</sup>. Yet, while the move sought to stabilize the region, its implementation unleashed profound disruptions in civilian life, governance, and socio-economic stability, leaving scars that endured long after the emergency period officially ended.

By 2013, Boko Haram had transformed from a localized militant group into a full-fledged insurgent force, seizing towns, carrying out mass abductions (most notoriously the Chibok schoolgirls kidnapping in 2014), and imposing a reign of terror<sup>29</sup>. Faced with collapsing security, the federal government deployed thousands of troops, enforced curfews, and restricted movement in an attempt to isolate and weaken the militants. The emergency

rule also granted sweeping powers to security forces, including arbitrary detentions and intensified counterinsurgency operations. While this temporarily slowed Boko Haram's territorial advances, it also blurred the lines between protecting civilians and subjecting them to militarized control<sup>30</sup>. The most immediate and devastating impact of the emergency was the mass displacement of civilians. As military operations intensified, entire communities fled their homes, creating a humanitarian catastrophe. By 2015, over 2 million people had been internally displaced, with many forced into overcrowded camps where food, clean water, and medical care were scarce<sup>31</sup>. Farmers were unable to access their fields due to both insurgent threats and military restrictions, faced crippling losses, triggering food shortages and soaring prices. Trade routes were severed, markets collapsed, and the informal economy, which many depended on, ground to a halt.

### **Some Local Governments in Borno and Plateau (2011)**

Before the full-scale emergency declaration in 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan imposed targeted emergency rule in select local government areas of Borno and Plateau States in 2011, responding to escalating Boko Haram attacks and persistent communal conflicts<sup>33</sup>. This measured approach marked a strategic departure from previous blanket state-wide emergencies, focusing instead on specific flashpoints including Maiduguri, Gamboru Ngala, and Banki in Borno, as well as Jos North, Jos South, and Riyom in Plateau<sup>34</sup>. The decision reflected growing federal concern over Boko Haram's bold attacks, such as the bombing of Abuja's police headquarters in June 2011, alongside Plateau's intractable ethno-religious violence<sup>35</sup>. Unlike broader emergency declarations, this localized intervention created a unique governance paradox. While elected officials retained nominal authority, operational control shifted decisively to military Joint Task Forces, resulting in a fractured administrative landscape where civilian and security leadership operated in uneasy parallel<sup>36</sup>. The emergency's preemptive rationale aimed at containing violence before it escalated

further, it represented a doctrinal shift in Nigeria's crisis management, though its outcomes proved mixed. In Borno, the crackdown initially disrupted Boko Haram's urban networks, but inadvertently pushed insurgents into rural areas, accelerating their territorial spread beyond the emergency zones<sup>37</sup>. Meanwhile, Plateau State experienced a phenomenon of conflict displacement, where reduced violence in emergency-declared areas coincided with rising bloodshed in neighboring LGAs like Mangu and Bokkos, as combatants simply relocated beyond the military's immediate focus<sup>38</sup>.

The economic consequences were uneven, helping some areas while harming others. Markets in non-emergency adjacent areas, such as Jos East, saw unexpected booms as traders and residents fled restricted zones, while businesses in curfew-bound LGAs like Jos North reported closure rates exceeding 60 percent<sup>39</sup>. The ambiguity of partial emergency rule also sparked legal tensions, most notably when Plateau State Governor Jonah Jang publicly challenged the measure's constitutionality while simultaneously appealing for federal security reinforcements, a contradiction that laid bare the policy's inherent contradictions<sup>40</sup>. This 2011 experiment in localized emergency rule revealed both the potential and limitations of surgical security interventions. While it demonstrated the federal government's capacity for nuanced crisis response, the unintended consequences from economic fragmentation to conflict spillover, would later inform debates about the 2013 northeastern emergency.

### **Government Justifications and Public Reactions**

The Nigerian government's declarations of states of emergency have consistently been presented as necessary interventions to preserve national stability in the face of overwhelming crises. Framed as temporary but essential measures, these emergency proclamations draw their legitimacy from constitutional provisions that allow for extraordinary executive powers when the nation faces existential threats.<sup>41</sup> Whether

confronting violent insurgencies in the northeast, political breakdowns in Ekiti, or ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau, the official narrative emphasizes protection of lives and property as the paramount concern. Government statements typically portray these interventions as reluctant but unavoidable actions, positioning the state as both protector and restorer of normalcy in times of chaos.<sup>42</sup> For many citizens living under Boko Haram's terror or caught in political violence, emergency declarations initially brought relief, the promise of decisive action against long-standing threats.<sup>43</sup> This cautious optimism, however, frequently gave way to disillusionment as the realities of emergency rule set in. The imposition of curfews, movement restrictions, and militarized urban spaces created new hardships, with markets operating under constrained hours and farmers unable to access fields.<sup>44</sup>

Legal scholars and civil society groups consistently challenged the proportionality of emergency measures, arguing that temporary exceptions risked becoming normalized instruments of control.<sup>45</sup> The retention of democratic institutions during the 2013–2015 northeastern emergency, for instance, created paradoxical governance where elected officials' authority was circumscribed by security operatives.<sup>46</sup>

### **Impacts on Governance and Security**

The declaration of states of emergency has significantly altered Nigeria's federal balance, concentrating decision-making power in the presidency while leaving state governments operationally constrained.<sup>47</sup> The 2013 northeastern emergency exemplified this, as governors retained titles but saw their influence dwarfed by military commanders. Security outcomes present a paradox, while initial military deployments pushed back threats like Boko Haram's territorial gains, insurgents adapted through asymmetric tactics, prolonging conflicts.<sup>48</sup> The social and economic disruptions from paralyzed local economies to generational trauma in conflict zones, often surpassed the original security challenges, creating cycles of grievance that outlasted emergency periods.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### SOCIAL IMPACTS OF DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY (1999-2015)

#### Introduction

The imposition of states of emergency across Nigeria between 1999 and 2015 created profound social disruptions that extended far beyond their immediate security objectives. These emergency measures, while targeting specific political or security crises, invariably rippled through the social fabric, reshaping community life, cultural practices, and economic interactions in lasting ways.

#### Disruption of Markets and Daily Commerce

The declaration of emergency rule has historically triggered severe economic disruptions in affected regions, with restrictions on movement and public assembly proving particularly devastating.<sup>1</sup> These measures, though often framed as temporary security necessities, systematically dismantled local economies, eroding centuries-old trading systems and pushing vulnerable populations deeper into poverty.<sup>2</sup> The impact was most acutely felt in marketplaces both formal and informal that served as the backbone of community sustenance and commerce. In northeastern Nigeria, the 2013 state of emergency, imposed in response to escalating Boko Haram violence, brought prolonged curfews that brought commercial life to a near standstill.<sup>3</sup> The famed Monday Market in Maiduguri, a historic hub for foodstuffs, textiles, and artisanal trade, saw activity plummet by nearly 70 percent within weeks, according to accounts from local traders.<sup>4</sup> This market had functioned for generations as more than just an economic space; it was a vital social and cultural nexus, connecting farmers, herders, and merchants from across the Lake Chad Basin. With curfews severely limiting operating hours, many traders were forced to abandon their stalls, while farmers from surrounding villages found themselves unable to transport goods into the city.<sup>5</sup> The resulting

supply shortages sent food prices skyrocketing, with staples like millet and beans at times doubling or even tripling in cost. What began as a security measure quickly spiraled into a food security crisis, compounding the suffering of a population already grappling with instability.<sup>6</sup>

A similar unraveling occurred in Plateau State during the 2004 emergency, declared following a wave of ethno-religious violence. The Jos Terminus Market, which typically hosted over 10,000 traders each week, operated at a fraction of its usual capacity for eighteen consecutive months.<sup>7</sup> Rural farmers from Barkin Ladi, Riyom, and other outlying areas who supplied the market with fresh produce were effectively cut off, leading to spoilage of perishable goods and cascading losses across the agricultural supply chain. Women, who dominated small-scale food retail, were among the hardest hit, as many lacked the financial resilience to withstand such prolonged disruptions.<sup>8</sup> The decline of the market did not merely represent a loss of income, it eroded a critical institution that had sustained intercommunal trade for decades. Beyond these visible market collapses, the emergency measures also decimated the informal economy, the often overlooked sector that provided both livelihoods and essential services to the poorest communities. As researcher Adebayo documented, roadside food vendors, mobile hawkers, and artisanal repair workers vanished from the streets of emergency zones, leaving daily wage earners without affordable meals and households without access to basic repairs.<sup>9</sup> The collapse of this informal network did more than eliminate income streams; it removed the very mechanisms that allowed low-income households to cope with hardship.

The economic consequences of these disruptions lingered long after the emergencies officially ended. Many small-scale traders, having liquidated livestock, tools, or personal assets to survive, found themselves without the capital to restart their businesses. Others, particularly rural producers locked out of urban markets, migrated to cities in search of work,

further straining already fragile urban economies. Perhaps most damaging was the erosion of trust in public institutions, as repeated emergencies and the absence of meaningful recovery assistance pushed some toward illicit economies or even armed groups as alternative means of survival.<sup>10</sup> What emerges from these cases is not just a story of temporary economic interruption, but of systemic disintegration. Emergency rule did not simply pause local commerce, it dismantled the complex networks of exchange that had sustained communities for generations. Without deliberate intervention to restore these networks, the economic scars of such crises outlasted the curfews, the checkpoints, and the official proclamations of a return to normalcy.

### **Effects on Festivals, Religious, and Cultural Events**

Nigeria's vibrant tapestry of cultural and religious traditions suffered profound disruptions during periods of emergency rule, with centuries-old festivals abruptly canceled, religious observances curtailed, and intergenerational cultural transmission severely compromised.<sup>11</sup> These measures, though designed to address security concerns, inadvertently eroded social cohesion and altered the nation's spiritual and cultural landscape in lasting ways. Nowhere was this disruption more starkly evident than in the forced cancellation of the Durbar festival in Yobe State, an iconic equestrian celebration deeply tied to Hausa-Fulani heritage. For three consecutive years (2013–2015), the festival has been a colorful display of horsemanship, music, and royal pageantry that typically drew thousands of participants and tourists was suspended due to curfews and restrictions on large gatherings.<sup>12</sup> Local historians lamented the rupture of a tradition dating back to precolonial emirates, while artisans who relied on the festival for income, from embroiderers to drummers, faced financial ruin. The interruption not only deprived communities of a key economic driver but also severed a living link to their collective memory.

Similar cultural erosion occurred in Ekiti State during the 2006 emergency, when the Udiroko festival, marking the traditional Yoruba New Year, was indefinitely postponed. The festival, which typically featured royal blessings, masquerades, and communal feasting, had for generations served as a cornerstone of identity for the Ekiti people. Anthropologist Ogunlesi observed that the cancellation created a "generational gap in cultural transmission," as young people missed critical rites of passage and elders lost opportunities to pass down oral histories.<sup>13</sup> The disruption extended beyond symbolism: local economies reliant on festival-related commerce, from adire cloth dyers to food vendors, collapsed, further marginalizing communities already strained by conflict.

Religious practices were equally constrained. In emergency zones, Friday Jumu'ah prayers in mosques and Sunday church services were frequently disrupted by security operations, with worshippers subjected to searches, arbitrary detentions, or outright bans on assembly. Crusade and even concerts were cancelled.<sup>14</sup> The Pentecostal revival movement, which annually swept through Nigeria's Middle Belt during the dry season, vanished from Plateau State during its emergency years, altering the rhythm of spiritual life for millions. These restrictions not only violated constitutional guarantees of religious freedom but also reshaped communal worship, with many believers forced to adopt clandestine practices which emphasizes home fellowships, underground prayer circles that fractured traditional congregational bonds.

The cumulative effect of these disruptions extended far beyond temporary inconvenience. Cultural festivals and religious gatherings had long served as mechanisms of conflict resolution, bringing rival communities together in shared celebration. Their absence exacerbated tensions in regions already divided by violence. Moreover, the decline of these events struck a blow to intangible cultural heritage, from traditional drumming patterns to oral poetry, which depended on regular performance for preservation. As emergency

measures dragged on, the very fabric of Nigeria's pluralistic identity began to fray, leaving a void that, in some cases, would take decades to fill.<sup>15</sup>

### **Suspension of Public Gatherings and Ceremonies**

Emergency rule's prohibition on public assemblies struck at the heart of communal life, disrupting the rituals and ceremonies that traditionally bind Nigerian societies together.<sup>16</sup> These restrictions extended far beyond political gatherings, encroaching upon the deeply personal rites of passage that mark human existence, weddings, funerals, academic milestones, and traditional justice processes. The resulting social fragmentation left lasting scars on the fabric of affected communities.

In Borno State during the peak emergency years, wedding celebrations typically vibrant, multiday affairs involving hundreds of guests were reduced to stark, hurried ceremonies limited to immediate family members.<sup>17</sup> The rich cultural tapestry of Kanuri marriage traditions, from the ceremonial *sadaki* (dowry presentation) to the communal *biki* (celebration feast), was effectively erased by security directives. This not only deprived families of cherished cultural expressions but also crippled the local economies surrounding wedding industries, from caterers to musicians, who lost their primary means of livelihood. Funeral rites suffered similar distortions across emergency zones, where burials were often conducted under armed military supervision.<sup>18</sup> The Islamic requirement for prompt interment collided with security protocols that delayed corpse movements for "clearance," forcing families to bury loved ones without the traditional *janazah* prayer gatherings. In Christian communities, the prohibition of night vigils and restricted attendance at funeral services stripped mourning of its communal healing function. Anthropologists noted a rise in unresolved grief and psychological distress as people were denied these culturally sanctioned spaces for processing loss.

The educational sphere faced parallel disruptions, as documented by researcher Abdullahi in his study of northeastern universities.<sup>19</sup> Convocation ceremonies the crowning moment of academic achievement were either canceled entirely or relocated to Abuja, severing students' symbolic connection to their alma maters. Graduates interviewed described feeling robbed of closure, with many referring to their degrees as "incomplete" without the traditional pomp and circumstance. This rupture in academic tradition had practical consequences too, as the absence of formal ceremonies delayed the networking opportunities crucial for career advancement in Nigeria's relationship-driven job market.

Perhaps most damaging was the paralysis inflicted on traditional conflict resolution systems. The *bijimi* councils of the Berom people in Plateau State and the *Majalisa* assemblies common across the northeast community-based forums where elders mediated disputes over land, marriage, and resources could no longer convene. Sociologist Nwokocha observed that this created "a backlog of unresolved social conflicts that would later erupt violently," as grievances that might have been peacefully settled through dialogue festered into open hostility.<sup>20</sup> The suspension of these mechanisms not only exacerbated existing tensions but also undermined the authority of traditional institutions that had maintained social order for generations. By prohibiting gatherings meant to celebrate, mourn, learn, and reconcile, the state inadvertently dismantled the very structures that sustain social cohesion. What began as security measures evolved into a profound cultural dislocation, leaving communities structurally weaker even after the official lifting of emergency decrees.

### **Social Tension and Community Displacement**

Far from restoring social order, emergency measures frequently deepened existing societal divisions while creating new forms of structural vulnerability.<sup>21</sup> The implementation of these security regimes often reflected and reinforced the very tensions they were meant to resolve, leaving communities more fractured than before the crisis. In Plateau State, the 2004

emergency's security architecture became itself a source of communal tension, with certain groups perceiving the deployment patterns and checkpoint placements as reflecting partisan allegiances. The predominantly Christian communities of Jos South reported disproportionate numbers of searches and arrests compared to neighboring districts, while Muslim leaders in Riyom complained of being excluded from security planning meetings. These perceptions, whether accurate or not, fed existing narratives of state partiality, making post-emergency reconciliation significantly more difficult to achieve. Security forces found themselves caught in a dilemma: their very presence to keep peace was viewed through the lens of historical grievances, rendering their mission increasingly untenable.

The humanitarian consequences of northeastern emergencies created equally complex social challenges. As *The Guardian* documented during the peak displacement crisis of 2014-2015, host communities in Maiduguri, Yola, and Jos suddenly found themselves absorbing populations equivalent to 30-40% of their original size.<sup>22</sup> The resulting competition for scarce resources, particularly housing, water, and medical services generated what urban sociologists termed "compression conflicts," where the sudden demographic pressure exacerbated preexisting fault lines. In Maiduguri's Bolori district, rental prices tripled within eighteen months, while access to clean water became a daily struggle for both IDPs and long-term residents alike. Anthropological fieldwork in official and informal IDP camps revealed disturbing transformations in social structures.<sup>23</sup> Traditional family hierarchies broke down as displaced fathers, stripped of their economic roles as farmers or traders, lost authority over teenage children who adapted more quickly to camp life. New youth networks emerged, some providing vital mutual aid but others evolving into predatory systems of control. Most alarmingly, researchers documented cases where these disrupted social systems made adolescents more vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups, who offered alternative structures of belonging and purpose.

## **Media Coverage of Social Life during Emergencies**

The Nigerian press played a dual role during emergency periods documenting social transformations while simultaneously being transformed by the very conditions it sought to cover. National dailies like Daily Trust and The Punch attempted to maintain their watchdog function through regular features like "Life Under Emergency," but their reporting bore the unmistakable imprint of militarized constraints.<sup>24</sup> Journalists operating in emergency zones navigated a maze of security checkpoints, unofficial reporting restrictions, and self-censorship that collectively reshaped the media ecosystem.

Media scholar Umaru Pate's study of conflict reporting in Nigeria showed a clear shift in news coverage that usually appeared about six months into long emergencies.<sup>25</sup> At first, reports often highlighted human interest stories, such as market women adjusting to curfews, students taking correspondence exams, and traditional rulers settling local disputes. But as insecurity worsened, these social stories were replaced by reports that focused mainly on casualty figures, troop movements, and official statements. This meant that more reporting on security issues went hand in hand with less attention to the daily lives of civilians. The impact of this framing went far beyond newsroom choices. As Lai Oso has noted, the strong focus on state and security perspectives in Nigerian media shaped how both the public and policymakers understood emergencies.<sup>26</sup> When newspapers regularly placed bombings on front pages while pushing stories about disrupted markets and collapsing small livelihoods to the inside pages, they strengthened the view that emergencies were mainly security problems rather than wider social crises. This media perspective helps explain why post-emergency recovery efforts often gave more attention to rebuilding physical infrastructure than to restoring social systems such as community conflict resolution or cultural institutions.

The cumulative social impact of these emergency periods reveals a troubling pattern of which several measures designed to protect communities often left them fundamentally

altered. As cultural practices were interrupted, economic networks dismantled, and social bonds strained, the very fabric that held communities together underwent silent but significant rewiring. These social consequences persisted long after emergency declarations were lifted, suggesting that the true duration of Nigeria's states of emergency extended far beyond their official timelines.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the severe economic consequences that resulted from states of emergency in Nigeria. It documents the widespread collapse of jobs and businesses, the forced displacement of communities, the dramatic rise in the cost of living, and concludes with an examination of how the media covered this economic crisis.

#### Loss of Livelihoods and Job Displacement

Alongside these reports, interviews with affected residents confirmed the devastating collapse of livelihoods. Mrs. Juliet Oghenefegor a trader in Maiduguri explained,

“Before the emergency, I sold tomatoes every day at the market. When the curfew started, I could not even reach my stall. In two weeks, everything I stored got spoiled, and I had no money to start again.”<sup>1</sup>

Alhazeez Musa, a former okada rider similarly stated,

“they said we could not move during certain hours. I lost all my customers. Finally, I had to sell my bike just to feed my family.”<sup>2</sup>

These testimonies give human depth to the data on job losses and show the immediate household-level consequences of economic paralysis. The declaration of emergency rule led to a sudden breakdown of employment structures in the affected regions, resulting in what the International Labour Organization later described as one of Africa's most serious local labor crises in the post-colonial era.<sup>3</sup> The economic shock spread through both formal and informal sectors, hitting hardest those groups who had no form of social or institutional support. In Borno State, where earlier surveys showed that 60% of the working-age population depended

on daily informal jobs, the strict movement restrictions caused immediate economic standstill.<sup>4</sup> According to the World Bank's 2014 Rapid Employment Assessment Survey, over 400,000 direct jobs were lost within the first eight weeks of emergency rule, comparable to wiping out the entire workforce of a mid-sized Nigerian city.<sup>5</sup> The crisis was most visible in the collapse of the informal economy. Small-scale traders, especially table-top sellers of food and household goods, saw 89% of their businesses close in Maiduguri. The once-thriving Borno leatherworks industry, which employed more than 28,000 craftsmen, also collapsed when curfews blocked access to raw materials.<sup>6</sup> Transport workers faced equally severe losses, with Okada and KEKE NAPEP drivers reporting a 94% drop in income during peak restriction periods, forcing many to sell their vehicles at very low prices. The agricultural sector, which supported 80% of Borno's rural population, also suffered greatly. Planting seasons were missed and traditional grazing routes were disrupted. More than 60% of Fulani pastoralists surveyed said they lost nearly all their herds during the emergency declarations, many animals starved, while others were sold off quickly at only 20–30% of their usual value.<sup>7</sup>

Formal employment systems were equally hard hit by the emergency rule. The Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria documented 132 factory closures across Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states between 2013 and 2015, displacing about 35,000 registered workers.<sup>8</sup> These included 47 agro-processing plants, 29 textile factories, and 18 construction-material producers. The collapse of these industries was not simply a loss of individual companies, but a chain reaction that spread into related sectors. For example, the closure of agro-processing plants reduced demand for farm produce, which in turn forced many farmers to abandon cultivation altogether. Similarly, textile factory shutdowns affected tailors, market traders, and transporters who depended on the textile value chain for survival. Maiduguri provides the clearest picture of this ripple effect. Within six months, 93% of surveyed transport companies

had laid off more than half of their staff. The city's once vibrant cross-border trucking industry which was previously a lifeline for trade with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, collapsed entirely under curfew restrictions and rising insecurity. This meant not only the loss of transport jobs, but also the destruction of an entire regional trade network that had historically tied Borno to wider West African markets.

The labor market impacts also revealed striking gender disparities. UN Women reported that female-headed households faced income declines that were 22% greater than those of male-headed households.<sup>9</sup> Several factors explain this difference, women were overrepresented in the informal retail trade that was first to collapse, and many had weaker access to savings, credit, or community support systems. As household incomes shrank, coping strategies turned increasingly desperate. UN Women found a 300% rise in cases of survival sex work in Maiduguri between 2013 and 2015, a development directly linked to economic desperation and the lack of alternative livelihoods. Perhaps the most alarming dimension of the crisis was its persistence. The job losses proved structural rather than temporary. Unlike in natural disasters, where economies often rebound once conditions stabilize, the emergency left deep scars that slowed recovery. Five years after the declaration, formal employment rates in Borno remained 37% below pre-2013 levels. This prolonged stagnation produced what scholars have termed a “lost generation” of workers, whose skills and professional networks withered during years of enforced idleness. The social consequences of this economic breakdown were severe. The inability of families to sustain education costs contributed to a 22% drop in school enrollment rates across emergency-affected LGAs. At the same time, economic stress pushed many households to withdraw girls from school and marry them off early, producing a 41% rise in reported cases of child marriage.<sup>10</sup> Such outcomes illustrate that the economic trauma of emergency rule did not end with lost income, it went on to reshape family structures, gender relations, and the long-term

human capital of the region. In effect, what began as a short-term security measure created a cycle of poverty and social dislocation that is still being felt years later.

### **Effects on Local and Regional Businesses**

In an interview with a cross-border trader, Kingsley Seun, he lamented,

“For many years, I carried beans from Maiduguri to Cameroon. When the emergency came, the borders were closed. My trucks stayed idle for months. Most of us had to sell our goods at giveaway prices. Some of my friends left the business completely.”<sup>11</sup>

This aligns with Central Bank records showing a collapse in trade activity along the Maiduguri–Douala corridor. The economic shockwaves of emergency rule went far beyond individual jobs, breaking down the network of trade and commerce that had supported regional economies for generations. The clearest collapse was in cross-border trade, especially along the historic Maiduguri–Douala corridor, which had moved an estimated 400 million worth of farm products every month before the crisis. Central Bank of Nigeria records show that this key trading route which had linked Nigerian grain producers to Cameroonian markets through centuries-old trade paths saw activity drop by 88% after emergency restrictions. The number of commercial trucks using the route fell from 1,200 a week to only 143 by 2015.<sup>12</sup> This commercial implosion transformed once-bustling regional markets into ghost towns. In Gamboru, Borno's strategic border market that had operated continuously since the Kanem-Bornu Empire's heyday, only 12% of pre-emergency traders remained operational by 2015, their stalls emptied by both security restrictions and the evaporation of customer traffic. Similarly, Mubi's famous Monday Market in Adamawa which had traditionally attracted about 15,000 weekly traders from across the Lake Chad Basin was reduced to a shadow of its former self. Records from the Adamawa State Chamber of Commerce show a 91% drop in transactions between 2013 and 2015. The collapse of such

commercial hubs had serious ripple effects on the wider economy. A UN Development Programme report of 2016 noted that every direct job lost in the markets led to an additional 2.3 indirect job losses among suppliers, transporters, and service providers.

Formal sector businesses faced equally severe challenges under emergency rule. The retreat of the banking sector was especially significant. Data from the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation shows that 62% of bank branches in local government areas under emergency rule closed between 2013 and 2015, while those that remained open operated with only 30% of their normal staff. This financial gap forced many businesses to depend on risky informal lending systems, where interest rates jumped to between 25–35% per month, according to surveys by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency. Telecommunications infrastructure also suffered huge losses. MTN Nigeria alone reported \$140 million in damages from destroyed cell towers and service disruptions, leaving 42% of Borno State without reliable network coverage at the height of the emergency. Industry was not spared either. Dangote Group’s \$500 million Maiduguri cement plant which has the largest industrial investment in northeast Nigeria at the time operated at only 15% capacity for 22 straight months due to security restrictions and broken supply chains.

### **Migration and Economic Displacement**

Personal testimonies also highlight the strains of migration. A displaced woman, Mrs Aisha Akaeze, now residing in Kano explained,

“We left Borno with nothing but the clothes on our backs. In Kano, we lived with three other families in one small room. I used to farm groundnuts, but here I became a housemaid. The pay is small, and my children could not continue school.”<sup>13</sup>

Her words reflect broader survey findings that displaced women often moved into precarious and poorly paid work. The emergency period triggered unprecedented population movements

that fundamentally reshaped the economic geography of northern Nigeria, creating demographic shocks with lasting developmental consequences.<sup>14</sup> The most visible transformation occurred through massive rural-urban migration flows, as displaced populations sought safety in major cities beyond the emergency zones. Kano, the region's commercial hub, absorbed an estimated 1.2 million new residents during 2013-2015 period, it gained 17% population increase that overwhelmed municipal services and transformed urban landscapes. The city's informal settlements expanded by 43% during this period, with the Kano Urban Planning Department reporting that 78% of new arrivals lived in unauthorized structures lacking basic sanitation. This rapid urbanization created severe strains on labor markets, with the National Bureau of Statistics documenting a 400% increase in applications for menial jobs that previously attracted only local workers.

The human capital losses proved even more damaging to long-term recovery prospects. A 2017 longitudinal study by the National Bureau of Statistics revealed that 48% of displaced professionals including teachers, nurses, and skilled technicians - never returned to their places of origin, creating critical shortages in already underserved regions. Borno State's education sector was particularly devastated, losing 56% of its secondary school teachers and 38% of primary healthcare workers according to state government records. This skills drain created what development economists termed "human capital deserts" in emergency zones, with the UNDP estimating affected areas would require 12-15 years to regain pre-emergency professional staffing levels even with aggressive recruitment programs. Gender disparities in economic displacement revealed particularly troubling patterns. The International Organization for Migration's 2016 assessment found that 73% of displaced women experienced forced occupational transitions, typically moving from relatively autonomous farming and trading activities to precarious domestic work in urban centers.<sup>15</sup>

## **Rise in Cost of Living and Economic Insecurity**

Interviews also shows how rapidly household budgets collapsed. Chukwugozie Chibuzor, a civil servant recalled that,

“My salary was the same, but food became three times higher. I could not buy rice for my children anymore. Sometimes we ate only once a day.”<sup>16</sup>

These voices match statistical evidence that food inflation in Borno far exceeded national averages. The emergency period precipitated a dramatic erosion of household purchasing power across affected states, creating inflationary spirals that far exceeded national trends and pushed vulnerable populations into severe economic insecurity.<sup>17</sup> Price data from the National Bureau of Statistics reveals a stark divergence between emergency zones and the rest of Nigeria, with Borno State experiencing food inflation reaching 38.7% in 2014 compared to a national average of just 9.2%. This disparity was even more pronounced in essential services, where transport costs surged by 400% in emergency areas against a 25% national increase, and urban rents skyrocketed by 550% compared to 15% elsewhere. These inflationary pressures created a catastrophic cost-of-living crisis that fundamentally altered household expenditure patterns. World Food Programme surveys documented that the urban poor in emergency states were spending 89% of their dwindling incomes on food alone by 2015, up from 56% pre-emergency, leaving virtually no margin for other necessities like healthcare or education. The calorie affordability index, which measures how many daily meals a minimum wage could buy, fell sharply from 3.2 in 2012 to just 0.8 in Borno State by 2014, showing the serious risk of widespread malnutrition.<sup>18</sup>

## **Food Systems Collapse**

Shocks in farm production, combined with blocked distribution routes, created a crisis in staple food markets. The price of millet, the main food for 60% of households in the

northeast, rose from ₦120 per kilogram to ₦450 per kilogram in Maiduguri between 2013 and 2015. The cost of a standard 50kg bag of rice jumped from ₦8,000 to ₦28,000.<sup>19</sup> Traditional coping strategies, such as gathering wild food, became impossible because of movement restrictions near conflict areas.

### **Transportation Market Failures**

With fuel supplies unstable and vehicle movement restricted, transport costs became extremely high. The fare for the 135km Maiduguri to Damaturu route rose from ₦800 to ₦4,500, while motorcycle taxi rates inside the city increased more than ten times.<sup>20</sup> This steep rise in transport costs trapped low-income populations in their local areas, cutting them off from markets, schools, and health services.

### **Housing Market Distortions**

The large inflow of displaced people into towns caused severe housing shortages. In Maiduguri's Pompomari district, researchers recorded 28 families sharing single-room houses, while rent for basic mud houses rose from ₦15,000 to ₦85,000 per year.<sup>21</sup> The crisis also created new exploitative practices such as "sleep shifts," where several workers rented the same room but used it at different times of the day. These overlapping price increases created what economists call consumption poverty traps, a condition where families spend nearly all their income on basic survival, leaving nothing for savings, investments, or education. The World Bank's 2016 vulnerability report showed that by 2015, 72% of households in emergency zones had already spent all their savings, while 68% had sold assets just to buy food. This economic insecurity continued long after military gains restored some security. Even by 2021, surveys showed that households in emergency states were still spending 65% of their income on food almost twice the national average demonstrating the long-lasting scars of the crisis.

## Newspaper Analysis of Economic Effects

While the media often framed the crisis in abstract terms, interviewees consistently emphasized its everyday toll. Dedan Clifford, a youth leader in Adamawa remarked,

“Newspapers talk about inflation, but they don’t write about how young boys in my town had to abandon school to hawk on the streets. That is the real cost we saw daily.”<sup>22</sup>

The Nigerian press coverage of emergency rule's economic impacts followed a distinct evolutionary pattern that both reflected and shaped public understanding of the crisis. Our longitudinal content analysis of 1,200 economic reports in Daily Trust and The Punch between 2013-2017 reveals three distinct phases of media framing that corresponded with the duration and severity of emergency conditions.<sup>23</sup> During the early phase (0-6 months), 72% of economic coverage focused on immediate business closures and supply chain disruptions, often framed as temporary inconveniences rather than systemic threats. Articles like "Maiduguri Markets Empty as Curfew Bites" (Daily Trust, July 2013) typified this pattern, emphasizing visible symptoms rather than underlying economic vulnerabilities.<sup>24</sup> This reporting mirrored official government assurances that disruptions would be short-lived, with only 18% of early-phase articles questioning official timelines for economic recovery.

The middle phase (6-18 months) saw a significant narrative shift as journalists grappled with the crisis's protraction. Coverage of inflation surged to 41% of economic articles while unemployment accounted for 33%, reflecting dawning awareness of structural damage. Notably, this period produced more investigative pieces like "The Hidden Hunger: How Food Prices Are Killing Northeast's Poor" (The Punch, March 2014), which connected market dynamics to household suffering.<sup>25</sup> However, the analysis remained largely descriptive, 83% of articles in this phase documented symptoms rather than examining root causes or policy failures.

By the late phase (18+ months), a more analytical approach emerged in 9% of coverage, including rare systemic examinations like "How Emergency Rule Created a Lost Generation of Traders" (Daily Trust, November 2015).<sup>26</sup> These exceptions notwithstanding, most late-phase coverage (61%) had shifted to security-focused narratives, inadvertently marginalizing ongoing economic crises as "normalized" background conditions. The most striking gap in coverage involved gender dimensions. Only 3% of articles analyzed women's disproportionate economic burdens, despite overwhelming evidence that female-headed households faced 22% steeper income declines than male-headed households, 300% increases in survival sex work participation and over 68% reduction in access to microcredit facilities.<sup>27</sup> This reporting blind spot reflected a broader media tendencies to privilege macro-level economic indicators over intersectional impacts. As media scholar Adeleke notes, "The Nigerian press consistently framed the emergency's economic costs in gender-neutral terms, rendering invisible the specific vulnerabilities of women traders, displaced farmers, and female entrepreneurs".<sup>28</sup> The media's narrative evolution ultimately created what researchers term a discursive paradox while reportage quantitatively increased during the emergency, qualitative understanding of the economic crisis's depth and complexity actually diminished over time as fatigue set in. This has important implications for how economic emergencies are remembered and studied, with media archives offering an incomplete picture of the human costs.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a brief summary of the major findings of the study and draws conclusions based on the analysis presented in the previous chapters. It highlights the key issues that emerged, reflects on their implications, and offers closing thoughts on the overall impact of the state of emergency declarations on the socio-economic life of Nigerians.

#### Summary

This study has systematically documented the multifaceted economic devastation wrought by emergency rule across northern Nigeria, revealing patterns of disruption that transcended immediate security concerns to reshape regional economies at structural levels. Four key findings emerge from the analysis which include;

First, the collapse of livelihoods was both rapid and severe, with Borno State alone losing over 400,000 jobs within eight weeks of emergency declarations.<sup>1</sup> The agricultural sector employing 80% of the rural population suffered catastrophic income declines of 70-90%, while formal industries like manufacturing saw 132 factory closures across three states.<sup>2</sup> These losses were compounded by a skills drain, as 48% of displaced professionals never returned to their regions of origin.<sup>3</sup> Second, commercial networks that had sustained regional economies for generations were dismantled. The Maiduguri-Douala trade corridor experienced an 88% reduction in activity, while key markets like Gamboru and Mubi became ghost towns, retaining just 12% of pre-emergency traders.<sup>4</sup> Banking, telecommunications, and industrial operations faced existential threats, with Dangote's Maiduguri cement plant operating at just 15% capacity for nearly two years.<sup>5</sup> Third, hyperinflation crippled household purchasing power, with emergency zones experiencing food price increases of 38.7% (versus

9.2% nationally) and rent hikes of 550%.<sup>6</sup> The urban poor were forced to spend 89% of their incomes on food alone, pushing 72% of households into asset liquidation just to survive.<sup>7</sup> Finally, media coverage of the crisis evolved from documenting immediate business closures (72% of early articles) to sporadic analysis of systemic collapse (just 9% of late-phase coverage).<sup>8</sup> Critical gaps persisted, particularly in reporting gender disparities, with only 3% of articles examining women's disproportionate economic burdens despite overwhelming evidence of their vulnerability.<sup>9</sup>

## **Conclusion**

From my perspective, this study has shown that emergency rule in Nigeria caused damages that went far beyond security matters. It destroyed the economic life of the region by wiping out jobs, breaking trade networks, causing inflation, and changing how the crisis was reported in the media. These problems were not short-term but had lasting effects, making recovery difficult even after restrictions were lifted. The findings of this study highlight that emergency declarations in Nigeria do not only disrupt security but also weaken livelihoods, rural markets, small businesses, and women's economic participation. Therefore, addressing these impacts is essential for promoting financial inclusion, strengthening Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), supporting rural development, and reducing poverty in affected communities. By drawing attention to these socio-economic dimensions, this research provides practical insights that can guide policies and interventions aimed at rebuilding not just physical infrastructure but also the economic and social systems that sustain everyday life in Nigeria. Three main lessons can be drawn. First, economic shocks during emergencies are not just temporary but can create long-term decline if not properly addressed. Second, the neglect of vulnerable groups, especially women, made the impact worse and limited chances for fair recovery. Third, the shift in media reporting toward only security matters left out the everyday struggles of ordinary people and influenced government

responses, which focused more on rebuilding physical structures than on supporting people's social needs.

In conclusion, any future response to emergencies in Nigeria should go beyond security concerns. A broader approach is needed, one that protects livelihoods, supports community systems, and ensures fair media coverage. Only then can recovery be both lasting and fair for all groups in society.

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Kingsley Seun	40	Cross-Border Trader	Maiduguri	19/08/2025
Mrs. Aisha Akaeze	39	Displaced Woman	Maiduguri	19/08/2025
Chukwugozie Chibuzor	40	Civil Servant	Kano	22/08/2025
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APPENDIX



Fig. 1: An Image of Guardian Newspaper (Source: John Harris Library)



Fig. 2: An Image of Punch Newspaper (Source: John Harris Library)



Fig. 3: An Image of Punch Newspaper (Source: Punch Newspaper online site, 2001)

News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle

The Guardian

World Europe US news Americas Asia Australia Middle East Africa Inequality Global development

**Boko Haram** This article is more than 10 years old

## Boko Haram hit Nigeria's Baga town in fresh assault

Dozens of civilians killed in Islamist insurgency's second shooting spree since they seized control over the weekend



Soldiers walk through Baga after Boko Haram launched attacks around the region in 2013. Photograph: Pius Utomi Ekpei/AFP/Getty Images

Boko Haram militants have killed dozens of people and burned down homes in the north-east Nigerian town of Baga in the past two days, in a second killing spree since seizing control there at the weekend, witnesses said.

Two locals said the Islamist insurgents began shooting indiscriminately and burning buildings on Tuesday evening in raids on the civilian population that carried on into Wednesday.

"I escaped with my family in the car after seeing how Boko Haram was killing people ... I saw bodies in the street. Children and women, some were crying

Reuters  
10 8 Jan 2015 22:33 GMT  
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- Ukraine war briefing: Putin warns of 'new level of escalation' if Tomahawk missiles supplied to Kyiv
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- US archivist ousted after refusing to let Trump give Eisenhower's sword to King Charles - reports
- A critique of pure stupidity: understanding Trump 2.0

**Fig. 4: An Image of the Guardian Newspaper (Source: The Guardian Newspaper online site, 2015).**