

## **Re-thinking the essence of governance in Nigeria within the context of increasing and pervasive national insecurity**

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### **Abstract**

The issue of the essence of governance in a state has for long been a controversial subject of debate. Though people find it hard and sometimes absurd to ask that question; “to what extent is the government necessary or relevant in a state?” such question tries to assess the level of performance of the government in a state and the basis upon which government derives its acceptance or legitimacy. In this study we have tried to attempt this question and to adduce plausible answers to it as it concerns the Nigerian state in the contemporary times where the perverseness of poverty and its product insecurity has reached an alarming dimension. The paper equally tried to establish the nexus between poverty condition, insecurity and bad governance. It started by first conceptualizing the term government and national security/insecurity and as well tried to establish if the government is actually necessary in a state. It equally took a look at James Madison’s view as a theoretical perception of the nature and composition of government before it then examined the contemporary situations of Nigerians as it concerns the scourge of pervasive poverty and insecurity, and an assessment of the essence of governance in such state. In the end, it was established that though it is easier for the government to make itself relevant by providing services to the people to alleviate the scourge of poverty among them rather than regulating their conduct, the Nigerian government, except in recent times, falls short of all the above and hence is as incapable of providing the services to the people as it is incapable of regulating their conducts and activities. The paper found out that it is this incapability of the government to effectively address the challenging poverty conditions in the country that has been seen as the source of the pervasive insecurity in the country today. The essence of governance is for the people’s need to be provided through efficiently harnessing the abundant human and natural resources in the state rather than for the leaders to be only concerned with their own affairs and that of their cronies. Hence we came to the conclusion that based on the above; since the Nigerian government is highly incompetent, and grossly incapable of addressing

the real essence of governance, government is therefore of no essence in a failing state like Nigeria of today.

KEY WORDS: Pervasive poverty, national insecurity and essence of governance

### **Introduction**

The essence of something is what makes that thing what it is. Surprisingly, little study of government has been done by ontologists (those who study the first principles of a thing) and epistemologists (those who study the nature of human knowledge). These studies have concerned themselves with whether government should be but more seriously with how and what it should be. The existence of government is by that accepted without question.

Government, simply defined, is an organization with a monopoly, albeit with some fringe competitions, on the use of force within a given territory. As Mao Zedong rightly pointed out, the power of government comes out of the barrel of a gun. The implication of this is that there is no voluntarism about obeying the state laws despite the undisputed fact that the consent of a majority of the governed may help a government put a nice face on things. Yet, it is essential but is sometimes, in fact given without any enthusiasm bearing in mind what they have in exchange. As a corollary, the security of the citizens being one of the things they hold in exchange is a primary duty of any government. National security is an important plinth of democracy and good governance as well as the values they present for the people. As such, there is no factor that provides meaning and legitimacy to any democratic governance than security which forms the protective shield of all other sectors of the state system.

This leaves it as the pillar of political order and the pedestal of stability and development in all segments of societal values and aspirations. In strategic context, good governance and unqualified security in a state are correlates. This is because, both are people-centered. The essence of every good, responsive and responsible democratic government in the purview of the people is to provide an assured welfare and immeasurable security to its people. Therefore, the basis upon which to assess any government as having performed satisfactorily well rests among other things, on the dynamics of national security. It is therefore expedient to assert that the synergy between national security and good democratic governance is inseparable to the extent that if democratic governance loses its security essence, it has lost its core value. Buzan (2003) had posited that the concept of national security and state governance binds together individual, states and the international system so closely that they demand to be treated in a holistic perspective.

The above assertion stems from the fact that the citizens' attitude about their government offers an excellent insight into their character. Political beliefs reflect how a people think they should relate to one another; they offer a practical insight into how they view humanity at large and themselves in particular. This is often affected by some social conditions such as poverty and inadequacies. In Nigeria today poverty is at its

internationally pithiest state. The Harmonized Nigeria Living Standard Survey (HNLSS) 2009/2010 with an enlarged scope of previous National Consumer Surveys and a follow-up to the Nigeria Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2003/2004 examined the demography; health; and fertility behavior, education and skills/training; employment and time-use; housing and housing conditions; social capital, agriculture; household income and consumption, and expenditure and came up with two statistical reports (Nigeria Living Standard Survey Report 2010 and the Poverty Profile of 2010) which showed that while “in 2004, Nigeria’s relative poverty measurement stood at 54.4%, by 2010, it has increased to 69% (amounting to 112,518,507 Nigerians). The North-West and North-East geo-political zones recorded the highest poverty rates in the country with 77.7% and 76.3% respectively in 2010, while the South-West geo-political zone recorded the lowest at 59.1%. Among States, Sokoto had the highest poverty rate at 86.4% while Niger had the lowest at 43.6% in the year under review (Nairaland Forum, 2013). The Nigeria democratic government seems not to be worried about this. In the main, this has bred several unhealthy situations today in the country such as insubordinations, pipe-line vandalization as well as vandalization of other government property, different dimensions of criminal activities, violent demonstrations, kidnapping, terrorism, internet frauds, armed robbery, human and drug trafficking, etc, culminating in various degrees of national insecurity, all in a bid to beat the scourge of poverty.

Under this situation, there are only two ways people can relate in and with the state; voluntarily and coercively. Almost everyone except the overt sociopaths pays at least lip service to the idea of voluntarism, but government is viewed as somehow exempt. It is widely believed that a group has prerogatives and rights of actions unavailable to individuals no matter the kind of situation they are. Hence, in the face of treatment of rights the government which is the collective group has the task of ensuring the collective security of all citizens against the interest of individual members who may be affected in any form; and which is by that the essence of a government as a legal formal authority.

Without doubt, apart from common law concepts, legality which is often attached to a government is arbitrary. But once we leave the ken of common law, the only distinction between the ‘laws’ of government and the ad-hoc proceedings of an informal assemblage such as a mob, the MEND, MASSOB, Boko Haram, etc, or of a more formal group, boils down to the force the group can muster to impose its will on others. Force is the essence of government but the possession of a monopoly of force almost inevitably requires a territory, and maintaining control of territory is considered the test of a ‘successful’ government. The question as to whether any terrorist organization would become legitimate if it has its own territory of operation and control leaves much to question as is the present security situation in Nigeria.

By and large, in the kleptocracies as in some African and Third-World countries like Nigeria, governments can be much more dangerous than the mob that gave birth to it leaving the people in the despicable and deplorable despondency they are today. Significantly, if we see national security and good governance as social constructs which is as relative as what is considerable, then, bad governance or national security threats as may be obtainable in one society may be a norm in another society. Their

conceptualization and etiology can be influenced by ideas of morality (in relation to responsibility) and by religious faith (the sinful nature of bad governance and national insecurity) as well as competing scientific claims as to their origin in such state, (Marshall, 2008). Equally of importance is that what constitutes bad governance is relative to time, space and people as there are tendencies for new trends and patterns of governance and state control activities/strategies to be established as the state or society evolves and becomes more complex.

This therefore calls for this investigation into the essence of governance in the face of a pervasive state of insecurity in a country blessed with abundant human and natural resources like Nigeria. This is with a view to establishing whether the government in Nigerian situation is living up to the expectations of an ideal institution established by the people themselves to take care of their welfare and needs, especially their social security needs in the country. Equally is whether the pervasive state of insecurity in the country could be attributed to the failures of the democratic government to deliver the dividends of democracy to the masses of the country. The paper is divided into subheadings. First is the introduction while the second examines the key concepts in this paper. The third looked at the question as to if government is necessary in a state. This led into the fourth which is an examination of James Madison's view on the essence of government. The fifth section examined the Nigerian context and the question of the essence of her governance and finally, the conclusion.

### **Conceptual clarifications**

#### ***The Concept "Government"***

This concept has been perceived by different people in different ways. While some perceive it from the practical point of view others have viewed it from the theoretical and institutional point of view. When people use the term 'the Nigerian government', the use here simply suggests the sum total of peoples and institutions that make and enforce laws within the sovereign state, Nigeria. It is here equally used to imply the existence of a central authority in the country Nigeria with the power and resources, the administrative machinery and accepted procedures for regulating and coordinating the activities of groups and individuals there in the country. Often times, when we see the policemen, army or men of the civil defense corps on uniform, or a revenue collector, or a Chairman of Local Government, Governor of a State or President of the country, the signals they send to us simply are reminders visibly of the reality of Nigerian Government. The same goes when we see men from the Law Courts, Ministries of Education, Local Government or Youths and Social Development, etc, giving instructions on what the people should do. In reality therefore, governmental institutions serve as machinery through which laws and rules are made and enforced upon a given population by the use or threat of use of physical force.

It was in line with the foregoing therefore that Olisa, Okoli and Nwabufo (1990:2) conceived Government as "a body of people and institutions that make and enforce or execute the laws of a state, make and implement its policies, conduct its public affairs and maintain law and order within its territory." It was in the same vein equally that Ofoegbu (1976:11) affirms that "Government is machinery established by a state to

organize the state, manage its affairs and administer its functions and duties.” It is therefore to be seen as an agency of the state and its people; a committee of the people who comprise the state. This committee gives the state an organization, a form, and a structure - and performs clear functions for it. But on the contrary as Nnoli (1986:8) interjected, “a government is an agency of a ruling class. Its character and functions change with changes within the ruling class and they change in a very fundamental way from what they were under the previous ruling class”. From a functional point of view, Nweze (1997:1) had seen Government as “a system where the core administration of the state are specifically stipulated and this comprises the maintenance of rules and regulation which would guarantee national security through the established patterns of administrative machinery performance in such a state or country”. This goes a long way to rest the task of protecting the citizen in that given country on the elected body that are to carry out the activities of the state as stipulated in the constitution of the country. As observed by Mba and Odo (2003), the concept Government can be seen from three different approaches; as an institution, as a process or a product and finally as a discipline of study. Here, it is the process and product perceptions of the institution of government that we are really concerned with since that is what will aptly x-ray the essence of government. The process perspective of government refers to the activities that goes on or is carried out by the different individuals who constitute or serve as the machinery through which the institution of government operates. Hence, their characteristics, dispositions, and idiosyncrasies, all put together are brought to bear on their activities and actions as functionaries within the sphere of government. The product perspective relates to the observable outcomes of what happens or transpires in the institution and process of government. Therefore, since the individuals who are the governed make sacrifices, inputs, etc, with a view to having their expectations from the government met, the government is then to be regarded or appreciated from the point of view of the extent to which these expectations could be met or not. The danger therefore is that if these demands or expectations are not met in the form the people expect, the government might be discredited and stands the chance of having its legitimacy eroded leading to actions capable of bringing about breakdown of law and order and constituting security threat in the nation. Implicitly, this must have led H.L. Mencken to foresee and warn contentiously that;

the most dangerous man to any government is the man who is able to think things out for himself without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitable he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is insensitive, irresponsible, dishonest, insane, incapable and intolerable, and so, if he is romantic, he tries to change it. And even if he is not romantic personally he is apt to spread discontent among those who are (Casey, 2001:17).

In the light of the above romantic view, to secure therefore the public good and private rights against the danger of such a discontent faction, and at the same time, to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries on the essence of government will be directed, hence the question, is the

government necessary in a state? Before we answer this question let us briefly look at the concept of national security/insecurity.

### ***National Security/Insecurity***

The concept of security of a nation goes back to the cradle of nation-states themselves. Armies for domestic peace-keeping and maintaining national sovereignty have existed since the dawn of recorded history. Civil and national police forces have also existed for millennia. While the general concepts of keeping a nation secure are not new, the specific modern English term 'national security and its converse insecurity' came into common parlance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and as practices have been consistently developed over the modern period to this day. However, the concept of national security and/or insecurity is very difficult to define because the root term, security, has remained a contested concept. In other words, it has no universally accepted definition due to its many-sidedness arising from ideology and time frame being addressed, as well as the locus of analysis.

More so, the issue of national security is so critical to nations and national leaders that they are prepared always to stake anything in defence of the nation, or to maintain its security. Hence Akpuru-Aja, (2008) observed that a nation is secured to the extent that it is not in a position to lose core values – life, property and liberty. National security also refers to the requirement to maintain the survival of the nation-state through the use of economic, military and political power and the exercise of diplomacy (Nnoli, 2006). President Obasanjo, while presenting his grand strategy declared that the primary objective of national security shall be to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria: to advance her interest and objectives; to contain instability; control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth; improve the welfare and well-being and quality of life of the citizenry, (Obasanjo in Attah, 2006).

In the same light, Gwarzo (1998) had seen national security as freedom from hunger, or from threat to a nation's ability to protect and defend itself, promote its cherished values and interests, and enhance the well-being of its people. From the above definition, it can be observed that national security is not restricted only to weapons and military preparedness but encompasses political, social and economic well-being of the people. As such, any threats to any of these constitute a threat to national security.

Therefore as the converse of a state of security, insecurity refers to the condition of being unsafe or insecure. It equally portrays a state of the mind characterized by self-doubt and vulnerability. We will here in this paper assume that a people or the nation as a whole is therefore in a state of insecurity when they are vulnerable to unsafe situations. This state often leads them to lack of confidence, anxiety, uncertainty, timidity, self doubt and diffidence. To ensure that the political, social and economic well-being of the people are guaranteed in a state through the process and product of governance as well as their security we may now turn to the question as to whether government is really necessary in a state.

### **Is Government Necessary in a State?**

The violent and corrupt nature of most governments in Africa today is widely acknowledged by almost everyone. That has been true since time immemorial, as have political satire and grousing about politicians. Yet almost everyone turns blind eye; most

not only put up with it but actively support the charade. That is because although many may believe government to be an evil, they believe it is a necessary evil, (and is worth discussing perhaps in another forum). By and large what, arguably, makes government necessary is the need for protection from other, even more dangerous 'governments'. I believe a case can be made that modern technology obviates this function.

One of the most perversely misleading myths about government is that it promotes order within its own bail wick, keeps groups from constantly warring with each other and somehow creates togetherness and harmony. In fact, that's the exact opposite of the truth especially in the Nigerian context. There is no cosmic imperative for different people to rise up against one another unless they are organized into political groups. The Middle East and North African countries in the recent past, the world's most fertile breeding ground for hatred, violent demonstrations, civil strife, mass protests and insurrections overpowering the counties' government, provide excellent examples.

In another instance, Muslims, Christians and Jews lived together peaceably in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Northern African countries for centuries, until the situations became politicized after World War I. In the Northern parts of Nigeria before President Goodluck Jonathan took over as the President of Nigeria, relative peace and security had prevailed among the Muslims and Christians and among the different people of different tribal origins until when the Boko Haram sect emerged as an outfit of the Al-kaidar Islamic militants unleashing terror and insecurity on the people. Until then also an individual's background and beliefs were just personal attributes, not a *casus belli*. Government was at its most benign, an ineffectual nuisance that concerned itself mostly with extorting taxes. People were busy with that most harmless of activities making money and living their life peacefully.

As we have long observed, politics does not deal with people as individuals. It scoops them up into parties and nations. And some groups inevitably ends up using the power of the state (however innocently or "justly" at first) to impose its values and wishes on others, with predictably destructive results. What would otherwise be an interesting Kaleidoscope of humanity then sorts itself out according to the lowest common denominator peculiar to the time and place.

Sometimes that means, along religious lines, with the Muslims fundamentalists against the non-fundamentalists in the Northern Nigeria, or the Catholics and Protestants or Christians, Muslims and Traditional religionists in Nigeria generally, or ethnic lines like the Tivs and the Jukuns, the Ifes and the Modakekes or the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba in Nigeria, etc. Throughout history government has served as an instrument of the ruling class, a vehicle for the organization of these hatred and oppressions, benefiting no one except those who are ambitious and ruthless enough to gain control of it, (Nnoli, 1986). This assertion we shall verify later in this discuss but for now to properly guide this discuss, and as a framework of analysis, let us examine the view of one of the political theorists who is often seen and referred to as the father of the federalist and constitutional government – James Madison - as his view will guide us further.

### **James Madison (1751-1836) on the Essence of Government**

Madison's political theory was founded upon a realistic view of human nature. He believes that men in society tend to form factions defined as groups that promoted their own interest at the expense of the rest. Central to Madison's political theory was the idea that people tend to be guided by their "passions" defined as feelings of self-interest. People usually seek to advance their own interest at the expense of others. They then form groups with others who have the same goals. Madison called these groups "factions" and feared that in a democratic society a majority faction would oppress the minority. Hence, he aptly stated:

Factions posed a special problem for democratic societies because a faction composed of the majority of the people could easily oppress the minority. By a faction I understand is a number of citizens whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion or of interest adverse to the rights of other citizens or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community....

He did not stop at that but went further to assert:

As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed .... The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man... the inference to which we are brought is, that the "causes" of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effect. (Madison, 1787:3).

The question that bugs our mind is, "where can relief be sought?" In the light of the above therefore, if a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principles which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular votes. To combat this, as he further argued, in the *Federalist Paper No 51*, "power must be set against power, ambition must be made to counteract ambition".

To this end, Madison therefore favored the separation of powers within the central government and a division of power between the national and state government. This latter concept "*Federalism*" was a radical idea in the late eighteenth century. Few people at the time believed that power in a nation could be divided between two levels of government each supreme in its own spheres. But he classified this in his '*Virginia plan*' when he called for a national government with powers separated among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. To him, the legislature would be split into two houses, a concept called 'bicameralism'. The executive and judicial branches would constitute a council of revision, which could veto acts passed by the legislature. Madison also included in the plan, a provision giving the federal government the power to veto state laws.

Madison believed that it was crucial to separate powers within the central government. The resulting system of *checks and balances*, he believed would prevent any

faction from seizing control of the government. Similarly, the proper division of power between the national and state government, a novel concept of federalism, would preclude, the dangerous concentration of power in any one place. Thinking that he had not given the central government enough powers to check the state, he therefore supported a stronger central government.

In furtherance of his thought on how to achieve the best government that would guarantee the interest of the majority, Madison believed that safety lay in numbers. The more heterogeneous the society, the less chance there would be for any one group to combine with others to form a cabal or a faction of the majority. Though ancient philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato had argued that only small republics could survive for a long period of time, Madison believes the opposite. As he contended, a large republic could encompass many different groups and different interests – economic, religious and social – and thereby provide a safeguard against the tyranny of the majority. Hence:

the smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interest composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to evade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength; and to act in unison with each other .... (Madison, 1787:5).

The implication of the above assertion is that when a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest, both the public good and the rights of other citizens will be guaranteed and this will ensure for the proper governance of the state. Though Madison was at first opposed to a bill of rights as a safeguard and a guarantee of making the government responsive to the people's needs and at the same time responsible to them, he took that stand for several reasons which include; first, he argued that the rights of the people were already implied in the constitution; second, he worried that any such listing of rights would surely omit some rights held by the people; and third, he believed that written lists of rights were not effective in protecting the liberty of the people. Though he had this earlier stand, he later changed realizing the fact that there was need for protecting the individual's rights. To aptly protect the rights and safety of individuals, in the face of eminent visitation of the dictates of human nature which is corrupt and self-centric, the need for the institution of government becomes inevitable. Since all men according to John Locke are born with free consent, to get them to come under a government for their good becomes a Herculean task. Hence as Omoregbe cited, in Locke's assertion:

Man being, as has been said by nature all-free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this state and subjected to the political power

of another without consent. The only way whereby anyone can divest himself of his natural liberty and put on the bonds of civil society is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe and peaceable living, one amongst another in a secure enjoyment of their properties and a great security against any that are not of it. (Omoregbe; 2002:208).

For this reason, in pursuance of the above interest the government is an inevitable instrument and institution in the society. Seen in this light therefore, in its practical form, the question as to the extent the theoretical assumption of the essence of government translate to reality in our situation and in other places becomes imperative. This becomes a question and a task to be addressed, hence the question, “what is the essence of governance in a society or a state like Nigeria in the face of the pervasive insecurity in the nation?

### **Contemporary Nigerian Context and the Question of the Essence of her Governance**

We shall start here by examining the current trends in Nigeria that often lead people to asking the question: what has been the essence of governance in Nigeria so far? What have the government shown for her governance of the people in a land blessed with natural and human resources like Nigeria? It may not be odd to state that what the Nigerian government has offered her citizens so far has been endemic poverty and pervasive insecurity. The Nigerian masses today are living in endemic poverty while their leaders are swimming in affluence. Even though the country is among the topmost producer of crude oil, “it is estimated that 70% of Nigerians live in poverty with a low life expectancy of 54 years, infant mortality of 77 per 1000 and maternal mortality of 704 per 100,000” (IFAD, 2011:1). This deteriorating economic situation in the country is what has led to mass poverty.

Be that as it may, poverty has remained in Nigeria. It is pervasive just as insecurity and has affected almost all sectors of the economy though it appears worse in the rural areas which have always suffered neglect as a result of a colonial carry over mentality that sees the urban areas as the focus of development, (Oguonu, 2012). The rural areas in Nigeria are therefore threatened by abject poverty. Nigeria, like most African nations, is at the bottom of the development pyramid due largely to poverty (UNDP, 2003). Using indicators like per capita income, life expectancy, percentage of population living below the international poverty line of \$1 per day, infant mortality rates, prevalence of malnutrition, adult literacy, access to portable water, availabilities of basic infrastructures, etc, Nigeria ranks below the countries in Asia and Latin America and other countries like South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil and Mexico (CBN, 2011). According to the World Bank (2010), Nigeria’s per capita income stands at \$2,748, falling behind that of Ghana and Cameroon with \$10,748 and \$10,758 respectively. Nigeria is by all standards very poor.

The Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010 report released by the National Bureau of Statistics as presented by the country’s Statistician-General Yemi Kale on February 13, 2012 revealed practically a lot about the state of poverty and the condition of Nigerians in

Nigeria. As revealed in the report absolute poverty defined in terms of the minimal requirements necessary to afford minimal standards of food, clothing, healthcare and shelter shows that 54.7% of Nigerians were living in poverty in 2004 but this increased to 60.9% (or 99,284,512 Nigerians) in 2010. Among the geo-political zones, the North-West and North-East recorded the highest rates at 70% and 69% respectively, while the South-West had the least at 49.8% which is still dismal. At the state level, Sokoto had the highest at 81.2% while Niger had the least at 33.8% during the period under review. Equally, on the-Dollar-per-day measure which refers to the proportion of those living on less than US\$1 per day poverty line, the report showed that 51.6% of Nigerians were living below US\$1 per day in 2004, but this increased to 61.2% in 2010. Although the World Bank standard is now US\$1.25, the old reference of US\$1 was the standard used in Nigeria at the time that the survey was conducted. The North-West geo-political zone recorded the highest percentage at 70.4% while the South-West geo-political zone had the least at 50.1%. Sokoto again had the highest rate among states at 81.9%, while Niger also again had the least at 33.9% (Nairaland, 2013).

As further revealed, regarding subjective poverty which is based on self-assessment and 'sentiments' from Nigerians, the report indicated that 75.5% of Nigerians considered themselves to be poor in 2004, and in 2010 the number went up to 93.9%. FCT recorded the most number of people who considered themselves to be poor at 97.9%. Kaduna recorded the least number of people who considered themselves poor at 90.5%. On Nigerians' Consumption Expenditure Distribution, it was indicated that the top 10% income earners was responsible for about 43% of total consumption expenditure, the top 20% was responsible for about 59% of the total consumption expenditure while the top 40% was responsible for about 80% of total consumption expenditure in the year 2010 (Nairaland, 2013).

Looking at the above, it remained a paradox however that despite the fact that the Nigerian economy is growing, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year, although it declined between 1985 and 1992, and between 1996 and 2004. Accordingly, it is important to take a closer look at poverty trends using this approach Distributing the population into extremely poor, moderately poor and non-poor, the proportion of the extremely poor increased from 6.2% in 1980 to 29.3% in 1996 and then came down to 22.0% in 2004 before reaching 38.7% in 2010. For the moderately poor, the picture was quite different as the proportion rose between 1980 and 1985 from 21.0% to 34.2%. On the other hand, the proportion of the non-poor was higher in the country in 1980 (72.8%) compared to 1992 (57.3%). It dropped significantly in 1996 to 34.4%, falling further in 2010 to 31%, (Kale, 2012).

Despite the fact that successive government and some international governmental and non-governmental agencies and donor institutions have been making some commitments towards poverty reduction, not much can be said to have been achieved. Lamenting the above situation, Oguonu (2012:6) observed; "from being a middle-income country in the past, Nigeria has fallen to be among the 33 poorest nations in the world today. No Nigerian regardless of his/her social location is free from the consequences of poverty". It is in recognition of these that Aluko (1995:6) noted that "the poor Nigerians can no longer sleep because they are hungry, and the rich Nigerians can

no longer sleep because the poor Nigerians are awake". To push this further, a hungry man is an angry man, an angry man is a violent man and a violent man destroys and destruction on its own is a security threat. Arguably, there is therefore a link between poverty and our current security challenges.

In corroboration of the above, Oguonu (2012) had noted that no headway can be made in respect of our economic problem and enhancement of grassroots development without addressing the security problems. As Okoli (2012) once observed, gone are the days when people, especially during festivities or week-ends, escape from hustle and bustle of the urban areas to rural areas to enjoy the peace, tranquility, safety values and cherished culture provided under the nests of village environment and brotherhood. Even the said urbanites from the same localities are no longer their brothers' keepers in the cities as it used to be. They are also no more interested in 'enforcing behavioural' norms that are intended to preserve the integrity of people from the same locality let alone being ready to fish out, deal with, and keep at bay, suspicious characters and criminals to serve as a lasting lesson to others. As Okoli (2012) further observed, with the complexity of the modern society, exacerbated by pervasive poverty, the old method of social insurance and sanction can no longer contain the exponential vices attendant upon wide-spread poverty. In our society today (Oguonu, 2012:7) concluded, "Organized kidnapping, selective armed robberies, sponsored and deadly armed militancy, political cum religion-induced conflicts (Boko Haram), terrorism and other forms of crimes have unleashed mayhem and insecurity on the land". Nobody therefore is safe, the innocent, the sponsors and the sponsored.

In recent times, there has been a growing concern over the increasing trends of violent crimes and terrorist activities especially the use of improvised explosive devices by criminal elements. For instance, murder which is a clear example of violent crime was 1,629 in 1994. This number steadily increased to 2,120 in 2001 and climbed to a record high of 2,136 in 2003 (CLEEN Foundation, 2007). Such a phenomenal increase of 75% between 1994 and 2003 is worrisome. Armed robbery equally a violent crime was 2,044 in 1994. In 2002, it rose to 3,889 amounting to over a 52% increase in less than a decade. In 2007, the Nigeria Police Force recorded 34,738 incidences as crime against persons and this figure escalated in 2008 to 35,108 incidences (Atttoh, 2012). As at 1999, kidnapping has not reached an alarming rate except for reported cases of ritual kidnapping particularly during election periods, or as the myth states, whenever there was a change of currency. Nigerians in the South-west have always talked about how human parts are used for money-making rituals or to acquire spiritual power, or the social menace of child theft and the sale of human parts have been part of the local discourse. By 2003, with increased agitation of the Niger Deltans, militant groups in the area such as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND and its affiliates) had began to kidnap oil company workers in order to press home their demands for a re-negotiation of the Nigerian Project and the Niger Delta stake in it. Gradually, this degenerated into large scale criminal activities involving hostage taking and ransom-collection. What was adopted initially as a tool of ideological struggle has since become a major source of livelihood (Abati, 2009). As the problem grew into a national security crisis, the initial targets and victims were mainly foreigners working in the oil and gas

sectors, today no one is left out as the kidnappers have extended their scope to cover Nigerians: children, even children as young as three years, the relatives of rich men or political figures, particularly their wives or parents, the business elite, and just about anyone who can pay as evidenced by the kidnappings of politicians and family members (Abati,2009).

Recently, Nigeria has begun to feature very high in the global survey of terrorism and hostage-taking due to the botched attempt to blow up an American Airline by a middle class Nigerian youth. The law enforcement agencies are unprepared for the challenge, the fact that they managed to arrest three kidnappers in Kaduna notwithstanding. There is a dearth of knowledge and expertise about the nature and dynamics of the phenomenon (Abati, 2009) especially the challenge posed by intelligence gathering and rivalry amongst the agencies. Nigerians routinely take the laws into their hands knowing that the state and its institutions are inefficient and incapable of protecting them. The kidnappers are so bold that they have no regard for the law as many of them are heavily into drugs and alcohol. They humiliate and assault their victims.

Small arms proliferation and the inability of the state to check Nigeria's gradual transformation from a drug-courier country into a drug-using country highlight the tragic dimensions of this problem. Perhaps more serious is the widespread poverty and unemployment in Nigeria. Not a few persons who have survived the ordeal of kidnapping have reported that the kidnappers are mostly young, educated persons who complain about hunger and unemployment. Relatives of prominent politicians have been abducted, and for such situations, the kidnapping may be politically motivated, but there is almost always a class dimension to the problem: the poor turning against the rich and demanding ransom as punishment. The rich class in Nigeria is limited by its lack of enlightenment. They provoke criminal behavior and turn themselves into sitting targets because they fail to realize that their safety lies in ensuring social security and justice for all Nigerians (Abati, 2009).

In most recent times, bombing and terrorist activities have assumed serious dimensions in Nigeria. Attoh (2012:218) had noted:

In a report published by the United States Bureau of Consular Affairs, in March 2010, five improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were said to have been detonated in the Niger Delta region with one to three reported casualties. In September 2010, over 150 members of the Boko Haram extremist religious sect escaped from prison in North-East Bauchi and Borono States, some of whom are now believed to be participating in Boko Haram attacks in other parts of the country. In October, Boko Haram members attacked various Nigerian government security personnel and facilities, government officials, and authority figures in Bauchi and Borono States. On October1, 2010, two car bombs detonated near Eagle Square in downtown Abuja during Independence Day celebrations, killing 14 and wounding many others.

In addition to those reported above, on the eve of 2011, another car explosion had occurred at the Army barrack, Abuja claiming about four lives and leaving about ten

people seriously injured. As if these were not enough, still expanding in and around the states in the North, again in Borono state, the gubernatorial candidate of the All Nigeria People's Party was assassinated with five other persons by people suspected to be members of the Boko Haram. Again, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2011, just as President Jonathan was being sworn in a twin bomb explosion occurred, one devastating the mammy market in the army barracks in Bauchi State killing dozens of people and wounding others while the other went off in a beer parlour killing three people and severely wounding many others.

As Eburn-Amu (2010) once argued, the new trends of bombing portend danger, even though it was foreseeable, and avoidable. In his view, in the history of terrorism, bombing is a grotesque weapon of resentment. And from the point of view of terrorists, it is an effective strategy for invoking lawlessness and bringing any government to its knees. But quite unlike robbery and kidnapping, which are targeted at individuals and are intended to extort money and materials from the victims, bombing is directed at the state, and it derives from spite, malice, vindictiveness, and is aimed at causing damage and mayhem. Consequently, while the news of robberies and kidnapping often tend to cause local ripples, that of bombings always echo internationally. To this end, when agitators in a national polity resort to settle scores by degenerating from robbery to kidnapping, and from hired assassination to wanton bombing, serious questions then must be asked about the essence of the state and its governance.

Interestingly, Eso (2009) had sought to explain why kidnapping is becoming a lucrative industry in Nigeria by providing reasons for its usual occurrence. These have been, first, due to the immense income derived there from. For those who carry out the act, it obviously yields far more illegitimate income with comparatively minimal risk than armed robbery. Also, there is a near certainty that families of the victims will pay ransom without going to seek the police protection. Second, kidnapping has come to be big business because bad governance, lax legislation and weak law enforcement make such heinous crime possible. For a nation already bedeviled by numerous other governance and insecurity problems, kidnapping is a bizarre crime added on. Its criminality is not in doubt whether as an act by an individual, group or ethnic organizations and regardless of the rationale informing the minds of the perpetrators.

As Adibe (2009) noted, the common tendency has been to blame the pervasive wave of kidnapping going on outside the Niger Delta territory solely on the unacceptable rate of unemployment in the country, an inefficient and corrupt police force that is ill-equipped to fight crime, and collusion between the kidnapers and some influential members of the society. People then tend to see these factors as mere symptoms of a larger malaise, namely that pervasive kidnapping, is one of the major symptoms of both 'failed' and a 'failing' state. A 'failed state' by all standards is often used to designate a state which has become incapable of fulfilling the basic functions of a sovereign government. Such responsibilities include physical control of its territory, provision of security of life and property for the individuals, the monopoly of the use of legitimate physical force and the ability to provide reasonable public (welfare) services or to interact with other states as a full member of the international community. On the other hand, a 'failing state' denotes a state in transition to a failed state. In this kind of state, while the

state remains nominally a sovereign and fulfils a little of the functions of a sovereign government, the central government has become weak and ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory, leading to an upsurge in pervasive insecurity such as kidnapping, organized assassination and robberies. A failing state as might be attributed to the Nigerian situation is also characterized by a weak ability to provide basic public services and widespread corruption even in high quarters as the government officials and other privileged few tend to think of themselves first, following the failure of the state to act its traditional functions.

Deductively, while Nigeria is not yet a 'failed state', it could arguably qualify as a 'failing state'. This in essence implies that while tackling the problems of unemployment, poverty, inefficient and corrupt political leadership could be good palliative measures in combating the pervasive insecurity challenges, any lasting solution to these menace will certainly have to address the key question of the nature of the Nigerian state, including why it has transited from a weak state to a 'failing state' and throttling speedily towards being a failed state (Adibe, 2009).

Nigeria has in the recent past done much to attain national security but the efforts have been misdirected. This is obvious from the super ordination of the military and other security out-fits and consequent subordination of other of the other vital aspects of the economy such as public health, education, agriculture, provision of essential services, etc. When we compare the budget allocation to national security with other vital sectors mentioned above, the difference will justify where government priority lies. However, as Audu (2008) noted, the real security threat in Nigeria is the problem of underdevelopment, poverty, political instability and social injustices. These threats cannot be reasonably confronted by military preparedness. The crudest expression between security and the socio-economic and political structure is expressed by the cliché about the choice between the guns and butter. More butter for the populace rather than guns to defend their peace. Hence Briggs (1990:313) observed, "No matter how much we spend for arms, there is no safety in arms alone. Our security is the total product of our economic, intellectual, moral and military strength". This, the Nigerian government have not come to realize.

It is under this anomalous society and economy that Nigeria operates. The economic situation has given terrible blow on our families. Most Nigerian families contain a substantial number of frustrated individuals who are thrown out of jobs. There is general hardship, and fall in standard of living. The worst crimes in Nigeria today are those planned and executed by family members against their kith and kin. Kidnapping, internet crimes and other fraudulent activities by family members are rampant. Youth now prefer faceless friends through social media network such as "facebook", "to-go", "You tube", "netlog", "wiki-liki", "whats-app", "skype", "Badoo", etc to our close knit African virtues (Oguonu, 2012).

Given the above situation, it is clear that Nigerians face the problems of abject poverty, insecurity, poor standard of living and bad leadership. Despite Nigeria's very robust potentials to be great, financial mismanagement and political corruption have remained at the root of its political and economic problems. Many security experts focus on the extent to which internal problems had constituted a source of conflicts and tension

in Nigeria. Michael and David (2005) had noted that Thomas Homer-Dixon and Robert Kaplan had earlier popularized the idea that more than anything else, poverty in developing countries is the biggest threat to all nations because of the damaging effect it has on the environment. Here, the primacy of the socio-economic factor is seen as fundamental to national security and should rather be what the government should concern itself. National security (Attah, 2006:14) observed, “will be endangered when the economy slumps, when the citizens can no longer maintain their accustomed standard of living, when unemployment opportunities are no longer available, when the country is corrupt and when her leadership is irresponsible and irresponsive to the plight of the masses. The concept of national security must by that then be expanded to include government’s protection against all major threats to human survival and well-being, including threats posed by severe environmental degradation and massive human suffering which the government are not keen to address head-long. This is why Nwaolisa, (2008) ex-raying the role of social, economic and technological forces in combating insecurity had warned that any society that seeks to achieve adequate security against the background of acute food shortages, population explosion, low level of productivity and per capita income, low technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities, and chronic problem of unemployment, has a false sense of security.

A general look at Nigeria’s democratic governance since 1999 reveals that aside of being responsive to the plight of the people, much of what they have been doing is ‘playing to the gallery’ manifest in her approaches to economic, political and social problems of the people. For instance one of the fundamentals of democracy is popular participation and because of the complex and dynamic nature of contacts and interactions between the government and the governed in Nigeria, its tenets of openness and popular participation so far has generated a lot of tension due to the way governance is being conducted. Dunmoye (2009) had noted that there are three important aspects of development which every good government must focus on since they have organic relationship with security. These he mentioned are; raising people’s standard of living, their incomes and consumption of food, medical services, education, shelter, etc, through relevant economic processes; creating conditions that are conducive to the growth of people’s self esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity; and, increasing people’s freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choices – social, economic and political. When placed side by side with the Nigerian governments since 1999, they have been found wanting in meeting basic if not fundamental requirements.

Re-thinking the essence of governance under the present democratic rule has become necessary when we consider the nature, character and manifestation of threat to national security in the contemporary Nigerian state. A general look at the plethora of crises and insecurity situations in the Nigerian state reveals that the real security threats to the Nigerian state is occasioned by the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, political instability and social injustice which the Nigerian government has since 1999 been in one time or the other unleashing on the people. It therefore seems odd but it is only a really conscious person who can think of asking this question: what useful purpose does the Nigerian government then serve? To some people this question might seem foolish but in

the real sense or in reality, this question should not be seen as challenging or provocative. If it were during the tyrannous and dictatorial regimes of General Ibrahim Badamosi Bagangida, or General Sani Abacha of the military era, or during the dying days of Chief Olusagun Obasanjo or Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani, in Enugu state, one dare not ask this question since to ask such would be termed as subversive and directed towards undermining these regimes. Objectively, asking this question is aimed at actually finding out if anyone else can think of a useful purpose the Nigerian government have then served in the face of the existing situations as has been described. The question at first shocks then amuses and then finally perplexes almost everyone because it is both the obvious and outrageous that no one ever thinks of asking it. Most people in the world just as many Nigerians do, accept the institution of government because it has always been there: they have always assumed it was essential. People do not question its existence, much less its right to exist.

From the definitions of government as we have earlier seen and adduced, it implies that the institution of government was made for certain purposes. Hence, Olisa, Nwabufo, and Okoli (1990), Ofoegbu (1976), Nweze (1997), Nnoli (1986) among others, had seen it from the Structural-Functional perspective as an institution of the state that is vested with the powers to make and implement policies in the state, make and enforce laws, rules and regulations as well as regulates the conduct of individuals and groups within the state. Mba and Odo (2003) had equally seen it as the machinery of the state empowered to convert the inputs of demand and support of the people in the environment using the powers vested in them by the people in the state into outputs of policies and programmes for the benefit of the people. By and large, this pre-supposes that there are some expected functions which the state, albeit, the government is expected to perform for the people. That had been the basis of assessment of the relevance of the state and government in the present dispensation.

Governments according to John Locke suppose to be the servant of the people and should be responsible to the people. The extent to which this is true of the Nigerian situation has therefore been questionable as they are the masters of the people rather than their servants. Government should derive its powers from the people to carry out the wishes of the people. This is equally the opposite in Nigeria. If the rulers are not fulfilling the wishes of the people, if they abuse their powers and act contrary to the wishes of the people, then the people reserve the right to remove them from office by rebellion, and elect new rulers who will act in their interest and carry out their wishes and the responsibility of eliminating for them poverty and guaranteeing them security. To make sure that the government as Madison expressed should not constitute itself into an oppressive majority, Locke had advocated for the separation of powers of the government. The extent to which this applies in the Nigerian context has also to a large extent been arguable. As David Hume stated morality is not based on reason. Equally, reason to him is not concerned with morality but with speculative truths such as those of Mathematics and Physics. It therefore presupposes that as a matter of truth and not merely on moral grounds, government should serve the interest of the people or cease to exist. Therefore, deductively for government to keep being in existence, it should serve unquestionably the interest of the people by providing for them such conditions that will

eliminate any form of insecurity around them. The question therefore is “since according to Madison, different people constitute the society in the Nigerian situation and hence have diverse interests, whose interest then should the government serve among this many?”

The answer to this was provided by Madison when he advocated for a resultant *checks and balances* which he believed would prevent any faction from seizing control of the government and using it to oppress the masses. The oppression of the minority by the majority (and in the Nigerian situation, the majority by the minority) negates the liberal ideological concept which insists on equal opportunity for individual self development which is the ultimate source of security in a state. Hence the essence of government is seen here as an essential means of coming ever closer to the ideal of equal opportunity for all. When economic and social disadvantages are passed from one generation of Nigerians to another, with most disadvantaged children locked for life into the abject poverty and underprivileged conditions as suffered by their parents, it would have been the duty of the government “to make more equal the prevailing distribution of opportunity” (Rodee, et al, 1983). The government should therefore provide social welfare and stimulate the economy in order to improve the opportunities for individual self-development. The Nigerian governments since the past thirty years have always fallen short of these responsibilities. They have been always serving their interests rather than the interest of the people and this was explained in the 2012 poverty profile report earlier highlighted where the top 40% was responsible for about 80% of total consumption expenditure (Nairaland, 2013). Hence, what Madison wanted to avert is here being practiced in full where the minority’s interest is being pursued and protected as against those of the majority which often end up instigating tensions and violent protest typified in the pervasive insecurity prevalent in the country today. It is only with the short-lived democratic regime of Yar’Adua (late) and presently Goodluck as President and Sullivan Chime as Governor of Enugu state among other good Governors that light started penetrating through the tunnel in line with what is suppose to be but this is just infinitesimal to make the necessary impact at reducing poverty and by extension insecurity in the country.

Without mincing words, it wouldn’t be unrealistic to state that the previous governments sponsor untold waste, criminality, and inequality in every sphere of life it touches, giving little or nothing good in return. Its contributions to the commonwealth were pervasive insecurity manifested in wars, pogroms, confiscations, persecutions, taxation, regulation, poverty (of knowledge, shelter, food, hope, healthcare, security, etc.) and inflation. And, it is not just some governments between 1999 till date but almost all, of which that is true, although some are clearly much worse than others. It is an interest characteristic of all governments from the second republic through the military era to the present fourth republic democratic rule.

The classical liberal thinkers held the view that where there is government, there inevitably are restraints on individual freedom. The Nigerian government’s intervention in the economy upsets the natural social balance that derives from each individual’s freedom to pursue his or her own self-interest. Nigerian governments certainly had no inherent right to act as the individuals’ social guardian by threatening the property and

wealth that they have acquired through private enterprise which has been the source of their poverty today and the violence being equally seen as threat to national security. In Nigeria today, the Government goes beyond bounds to take from individuals what belongs to them or to destroy in the name of government what people labored for. The extent of demolitions and confiscations during the Babangida, Abacha and Obasanjo's regimes shows that the government actually applies force to subjugate the people and deny them their right. As John Locke argued, the wealth we developed through our own efforts is as much our own as is the labour energy we expended in accumulating our wealth. Whatever we mix our labour in, is ours by virtue of an inalienable and natural right to our own labour power (the labour theory of value). Thus government has no authority to expropriate the fruits of our own labour whether directly or through the internationalization of the means of production or indirectly through taxation. Or, is this part of the essence of government?

In furtherance of the argument on the essence of government from the classical liberal perception, the function of the government should be viewed as minimal because rational men and women pursuing their economic self-interest are only handicapped by government intervention. The "wealth of nations" result from each individual's working for his own economic advantage. "Private vice equals public virtue" and that was why the concepts of the "invisible hand" was meant to reassure liberals everywhere that the general welfare was a function of their own acquisitive instincts. Good government was limited government and the best government was the government that governed least because government was an evil – albeit, a necessary evil. Hence:

The proper and primary role of government was to ensure for each individual the natural right to private property. A government that transgressed against this natural right broke the social contract, which was the government's only source of legitimate power. Individual's freedom and liberty, then, were equivalent to an absence of institutional restraint. (John Locke)

From the neo-liberalists' perspective we can as well comprehend more, the essence of government. Hence, since liberalism has come to mean 'one man one vote', instead of political domination by a property-owning elite, the faction which Madison talked about, it has fallen on Nigerian government to ensure that equal access to policy makers is a working reality as well as a natural right. In this age of globalization with giant business corporations, the free market is no longer a guarantee of economic efficiency or the wealth of nations. Hence, the government's intervention in private affairs may now have little relevance to an economic system in which decisions of a few conglomerates, and of government, affect the income, employment opportunities, and price level of consumer expenditures of virtually every citizen. For this reason:

Pressures inevitably are brought to bear on policy makers to develop and augment the role of government, not only as a regulatory authority but as an agency of social welfare. (Rodee, et al, 1983).

Thus, the Nigerian government should have come to assume more and more of those welfare functions that were earlier preformed by the family, the tribe, the peasant village, and religious institutions. The increasing welfare role expected of the state are especially obvious in the context of the catastrophic social and economic consequences of a prolonged economic deprivation and bad leadership as we are witnessing today. Regrettably, the Nigerian government just as most governments in Africa and other Third-World societies do not live up to this expectation. This occasions the sporadic cases of militia and violent militant insurgencies (the recent Boko Haram terrorism) as well as the continued miserable life of poverty and despondency of the people as we are witnessing today. Hence, the essence of the government is seriously questionable in the face of this pervasive insecurity.

Examining yet the essence of government from the pluralists' point of view, we will still observe a great deal of inadequacies and short-comings on the part of the Nigerian government. The Group theory, which is an aspect of the pluralist thinkers, is of two perspectives. The Arena theory here holds that government is one of the groups in a multi-power centered society, but is *primus inter pares* because of its decision making capacity. For this role government's role is to offer an arena within which the group power struggle takes place. In this context, it should be noted that groups within government are part of the pluralistic conflict theory: bureaus, legislative committees, judicial councils, administrative departments and other government agencies are an integral part of the inter-group activity making up the power struggle. In a free democratic society the role of government is to respond to the group demands (teachers, students, among other civil servants, professional bodies and civil society organizations). On the other hand, the Umpire theory stipulates that the power struggle takes place outside the governmental sphere and the official decision makers of the polity presides over the environmental conflicts as judges.

Whatever role is played by the government, some group coalitions prevails over others and in a democracy a majority is attained and a decision is reached, conflict is abated, and a new allocation of resources is achieved. Regarding the above argument of the pluralists, we can see that the government in Nigeria specially, fails to serve as an umpire or to provide common ground for fair play, rather the government tilts or skews more to the side of the groups within the government as against the majority of the masses. Hence, we can see the personal interest of those in government being satisfied glaringly over and above those of the public. Today, our Senators, National Assembly members, Federal Executive officers, Governors and their officials whom they usually select from among their groups or cronies, are seen living and dying in affluence with their demands and needs satisfied more often than those of the masses living and dying in object penury. If the government's role is here being negated, what is then the essence of government in the society especially in Third-World and African countries like Nigeria?

### **Conclusion**

Basically, government has two functions which obviously determine its essence in the state; rendering services and regulations. Of these, in the natural and normal or ideal circumstance, a regulation is by far the more difficult. It is much easier under moral conditions to render services to people – to provide assistance to them as well as

conveniences - than to regulate, restrict, and sometimes prohibit their conduct especially in the face of insecurity. Governmental regulations limit individual and group actions, restrict use of property, affect incomes and generally induce individual behaviour to conform to the congress' definition of the "public interest", convenience, and necessity. Such regulations are imposed to protect and promote the public interest – a concept difficult to define and even more difficult to translate into action in specific situations. Ideally, it is easier to construct roads, bridges, schools, parks, and play grounds and to provide portable water, clean up streets, and police and fire protection than it is to reconcile the conflicting interests of management and labour, to determine rail road or utility rates or to protect the public against harmful foods and drugs.

This is the obvious in ideal situations but in our own context none of the above is prevalent. It is as difficult for the government to regulate the conduct of people as it is for them to provide these basic essential amenities or services. The reason for the above is obvious and as Madison expressed, "if men were angles, no government would be necessary". It is therefore little avail to the people that the laws are made by men of their own choice if the laws be so voluminous that they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood. In Nigeria, there are more instances of the abridgement of freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments by those in power than by violent and sudden usurpation. In the light of the above therefore, the question as to the essence of government as always asked will elicit the answer that what makes the government relevant anywhere is not what they do which they suppose to do but just the force with which they compel the people to accept their presence without question. Hence, in the real sense of it, the government, since it cannot wield the peoples' legitimacy by persuasion and convictions but only by compulsion and force, is actually of no essence especially in such deplorable society like the Nigeria we are today.

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