The definition of vulnerability shifts across disciplines and research areas. It is used to describe anything from risk, which is the probability of an event occurring, to serving as a proxy for socioeconomic status. It defines which populations or areas are more likely than others to suffer negative consequences of climate-related and other social and environment related phenomena. While considerable research attention has examined components of biophysical vulnerability and the vulnerability of the built environment, current effort examined social and climatic aspects of vulnerability vis-à-vis Nigerian government's ability or inability to prepare for or recover from social problems and natural extremes. This article is produced from archival research, examining notable social and climatic extremes in the country such as ethnic disturbances, terrorism, the Biafran civil war, the Niger Delta Crisis to unearth governmental actions and inactions in the management of crises and disasters in the country. The point of departure is that Nigeria as a corporate entity is not sensitive enough nor possesses adequate willingness to prepare for, cope with and recover from those crises and disasters that have taken place over the years despite the availability of initial indicators and warnings about such events.

Keywords: Political will, social, climatic, vulnerability, crises, disasters

Introduction
Economic growth in developing countries has led to a well documented increase in vulnerability of poor section of the population. Urban based industrialisation brings about collapse of rural agricultural economies while the developing world cities become a magnet for economic migration. Migrants often move into vulnerable areas such as hillsides and flood plains; they live in unsafe conditions, which include shanty towns, near sources of pollution without access to services like sanitation, electricity, and waste collection (CSR, 2000). The common scenario is the existence of shanty settlements in the urban settings existing near elite settlements. Living conditions in those shanty settlements are visible evidence of the trauma underprivileged people are daily experiencing. Rather than bringing about expected succour, economic reforms in most African countries as well as other developing countries are impacting negatively on the citizenry. It has led to an increase in the incidence and depth of poverty in Nigeria, in both the urban and rural areas. There is a sharp deterioration in the living standards of the majority of the people; worsening problems of urban housing and transportation; growing incidence of hunger and starvation; decline in public health service standards with most hospitals, including specialist institutions, short of the most elementary drugs and equipment. Many people are left vulnerable to series of stress and difficult situations as a result of
this. The most interesting aspect of this is that most populations have learnt or understood from local history the frequency and likely consequences of extreme climatic and social occurrences. The reality of such awareness has shaped their livelihood systems to buffer against potential catastrophes. In line with this, they have prepared, within the means at their disposal, for these expected yet unpredictable threats. It is of interest to note that certain events have been re-occurring within the societies that it is not unreasonable to expect that stakeholders, particularly the government, would have used their wealth of experience to curb their reoccurrence or minimize their damages to sustainable livelihood.

This article undertakes an exploration of notorious crises/disasters in the country and the government action and or inaction in making such crises and disasters memorable phenomena. In an effort at interrogating the rationale behind this, the following questions arise: why are some livelihood systems, some populations, some regions and some socio-economic groups less able to prepare for or recover from natural extremes and social and environmental upheavals? What shapes their exposure to and ability to rebound from these expected events? What shapes their vulnerability in the face of climatic variability and social change? And more importantly, what explanations can be offered for governments’ failures to effectively tackle these problems. In view of this, this paper intends to make a theoretical disclosure of these questions.

**Vulnerability: Conceptual Exploration**

The concept of vulnerability has its roots in the social sciences (Adger, 2006, 1999). It has a particularly long history in the risk-hazards and geography literature (Kasperson et al., 2003). Vulnerability refers to exposure to contingencies and stress, and difficulty in coping with them. Vulnerability has two sides: an external side of risks, shocks, and stress to which an individual or household is subject; and an internal side which is defencelessness, meaning a lack of means to cope with loss. As a multi-layered and multi-dimensional social space, vulnerability centres on the determinate political, economic and institutional capabilities of people in specific places at specific times. In this sense, a theory of vulnerability should be capable of mapping the historically and socially specific realms of choice and constraint – the degrees of freedom as it were, which determine exposure, capacity and potentiality. In a narrow sense, this is about individual command over basic necessities; in a broader sense it also speaks to the structural properties of the political economy itself.

Vulnerability exists at all levels of society. In addition, vulnerability of one segment of society influences vulnerability of others. Vulnerable households can render the state vulnerable to a legitimacy crisis, or to a costly set of state emergency interventions. Indeed, a state vulnerable to legitimacy crisis may provide a receptive forum for households to press the state for vulnerability-reducing goods and services. Each institution must be understood in the set of relations in which it is embedded, this includes its relation to the vulnerability and security of other groups within society (Ribot et al., 1996). This relation among institution or regions and the interdependence of their security is another important area for further study.

The vulnerability of some populations is greatly magnified by their location in disaster prone regions, and the poor are usually the first to suffer and the last to recover. This vulnerability theory was classically demonstrated in the 1976 Guatemala earthquake in which the vast majority of deaths and damage occurred in the shanty districts, prompting observers to dub the event a ‘class quake’ (CSR, 2000). So also was the case in Rwanda, in which environmental scarcities, particularly among the rural population, and extreme resource inequalities among various ethnic groups, generally weakened and eroded the legitimacy of the regime. Scarcities limited the opportunities for wealth
creation and for achieving economic and social status within Rwandan society. But there were other significant factors at work: the Civil war, Structural Adjustment Program, the fall in coffee prices, and Rwanda’s position as a landlocked country with little chances for economic diversification also boosted grievances and weakened regime legitimacy. These pressures threatened the preservation of the government. In Nigeria, most ethnic conflicts that occurred (such as Tiv/Jukun, Umuleri/Aguleri) derived from environmental problem, which affected living conditions of the populace.

Globally, occurrence of drought and other climatic disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquake is not unexpected. In countries that are serious about finding solutions to the problems confronting its people, prevention and predictability of these episodes become a primary concern of scientists while government policies focus on how to reduce the adverse effect of such occurrence whenever it happens. This is because when such disaster occurs, some people will be more vulnerable due to their social conditions. In a global era of economic unpredictability where poverty reigns, albeit with more negative manifestations in developing nations, poverty ensures carry-over of the problems which the vulnerable are facing, making them sink further in their miseries.

Social vulnerability is partially the product of social inequalities; this includes those social factors that influence or shape the susceptibility of various groups to harm and which also govern their ability to respond (Cutter et al., 2003). It is, however, important to note that social vulnerability is not registered by exposure to hazards alone, but also resides in the sensitivity and resilience of the system to prepare, cope and recover from such hazards (Turner et al., 2003). However, it is also important to note, that a focus limited to the stresses associated with a particular vulnerability analysis is also insufficient for understanding the impact on and responses of the affected system or its components (Mileti, 1999; Kaperson et al., 2003; White and Haas, 1975). Although considerable research attention has examined components of biophysical vulnerability and the vulnerability of the built environment (Mileti, 1999), little is known about the social aspects of vulnerability (Cutter et al., 2003). Social vulnerability is created through the interaction of social forces and multiple stressors, and resolved through social (as opposed to individual) means. While individuals within a socially vulnerable context may break through the ‘vicious cycle’, social vulnerability itself can persist because of structural influences (that is, social and political) that reinforce vulnerability.

**Understanding the Concept of Vulnerable through Historical antecedents**

Vulnerability to social crisis or material loss results from the dynamics of the social system; vulnerability is shaped by ongoing processes of social differentiation and marginalization, within a specific social history of access to productive resources, formal and informal social security arrangements, state development policies, conflicts, etc. The resulting distribution of material stocks and access to income opportunities, land, and other material resources as well as access to formal and informal social security arrangements spells out the materials and social conditions circumscribing vulnerability for some households and security for others. Understanding of vulnerability is best appreciated through examination of its historical antecedents, which is an essential part of the switch from impact analysis to vulnerability analysis (Downing, 1991). The efforts in this direction will shed light on types of processes and events that cause vulnerability; what to do to reverse deleterious processes and buffer against crisis-triggering events, the reversible processes and those that can be technically and politically modified for effective results. Meanwhile, CRS (2000) asserted that only the use of history, not just retreating into proximate analyses that ignore history or falling into paralysis by insisting on redressing all of the deepest causal relations at once, can engender a better
understanding of causative factors. Identifying vulnerability therefore enhances warnings even years in advance of acute crisis. Understanding vulnerability should thus be used to produce more durable and earlier, proactive responses.

Security, particularly in the area of daily survival, is about having the material resources, entitlements, to buffer against contingencies. It is more basically about the capability to achieve food security and other esteemed performance, such as attainment of sufficient entitlements (Drèze and Sen, 1989). In view of this, enfranchisement and empowerment have to be part of any pathway for ushering vulnerability into the past. This is because capabilities, which Watts and Bohle (1993) defined as approaching the totality of rights by which individuals, groups and classes command endowments and commodity bundles are partly predicated on the rights that allow the pursuit of such wellbeing. In this manner, enfranchisement becomes a means by which material wellbeing can be pursued and maintained through intervention in political-economic relations and processes.

Is there any need for Vulnerability Analysis?
Vulnerability analysis is a good starting place for rethinking development. It is this multi-layered analysis that traces causality outward, through space, through social relations and through history, from which an understanding of the conditions for secure and productive development can grow. It takes care of issues at micro or domestic level; it builds outward from the household or whatever specific institution it focuses on (Schmink 1992, Watts 1987, Blaikie 1985). While not excluding issues at local level, a focus on vulnerability systematically take into cognisance the multiple temporal, spatial and social scales which intrude on the production and reproduction of everyday life. Through this, issues conceptualized at local level takes care of those at global level and the analysis of vulnerability at each level is constantly referenced back to the security and wellbeing of those at risk. The methods for analysis of vulnerability developed from the work of Sen (1981) and laid the groundwork for examining causality in a systematic way. This involves the examination of vulnerability to hunger and famine from household level with what he calls entitlements (Sen: 1987; 1981).

By this, a household’s food entitlement consists of the food that the household can be obtained through production, exchange or extra-legal legitimate conventions, such as reciprocal relations or kinship obligations (Drèze and Sen, 1989). A household’s assets or endowment according to Drèze and Sen (1989) include investments in productive assets; stores of food or cash; and claims on other households, patrons, chiefs, government or on the international community that a household can make (Swift 1989). Assets in this case create a buffer between production, exchange and consumption and form the basis of a household’s entitlements. Assets thus depend on the ability of the household to produce a surplus that they can store, invest in productive capacity and markets, and in the maintenance of social relations (Berry, 1993; Scott, 1976). The implication of this is that the household will be vulnerable and prone to crisis (Downing, 1991). In this case, its entitlements will fail to buffer against hunger, famine, dislocation or other losses. In view of this, it implies that at each instance where a household’s production, investments, stores and claims are insufficient to sustain them, chains of causality can be traced out.

A household perspective of vulnerability affords avenue for understanding climatic and other environmental phenomena socially. Household angle with its advantage of showcasing entitlement failure (Sen, 1981) and environmental change (Balikie, 1985), have replaced Eco-centric models of natural hazards and environmental change with social models in which environmental fluctuations and changes (in climate forests or soils) are located among the other material and social conditions shaping and shaped by household wellbeing (Watts, 1983).
Analysis of climate-related vulnerabilities has potential of enabling the understanding of the chronic tragedy that is taking place all over the world most especially in the semi-arid tropics today and the factors responsible for frequent adverse climatic change that occurs in the developing countries. This is because adverse changes in climatic condition always accompany with subsistence crisis particularly droughts; trigger frequent subsistence crises, sharply increasing crop failures, dislocation, hunger, and famine. Similarly, the cycle of drought through the dislocation process and impoverishment of some and through speculative profits and concentration by others increases stratification and the social inequities that help shape chronic deprivation and vulnerability (Watts 1983). What is expected is that the current populations should be able to learn about the past in order to buffer themselves against today’s climatic variations and ability to cope better with future contingencies. The import of this is that ability to manage climate-related vulnerabilities is a product of previous understanding of related event(s). This thus explains why vulnerabilities in some climes is usually accompanied by hunger, famine, dislocation, and so on while some have did not. For instance, Ribot et al. (1996) noted that no one was starved when drought struck in the temperate semi-arid lands such as the southwest United States. But the same magnitude of drought in some instances and countries may results in hunger or famine and widespread human misery. While adequate preparation is always embarked upon to either forestall or minimise the impact of the damage in countries like USA, it is always lacklustre attitude on the part of country like Nigeria. This is very obvious in the last flood disasters experienced in the country between 2011 and 2012.

The very successful case of development in Machakos district of Kenya where productivity and ecological management have evolved favourably over the past sixty years is another positive side of vulnerability management. This thus becomes handy in the face of declining rainfall. The growing population in this district has evolved a complex farming system, which appears to be sustainable, and even produces enough to export some products. These positive outcomes were attributed to the slow and systematic evolution and development of locally based farming and pastoral systems along with the emergence of farmers’ organizations (Ribot, 1996). The case demonstrates the capacity for some semi-arid lands to support greater populations, increase productivity and contribute to the national economy. It also could support the hypotheses that population pressure can lead to innovation and development, rather than ecological collapse (Boserup, 1988). In this regard, it is interesting to note how macro-level variables were unable to capture the local-level diversity and dynamics that might contain the seeds for success on a broader scale. The inconsistency in this case illustrates how important it is to choose the scale of analysis, as well as intervention, with great care. Relying on overly general indicators alone can mask both problems and potentials.

Going by the words of Downing (1992, 1991), the beauty of vulnerability analysis therefore includes the examination of multiple causes of critical outcomes such as dislocation, hunger, famine and so on. By linking climate-associated ‘impacts’ (or outcomes) to causality, vulnerability analysis can also provide a sound basis for policy, since it is through responding to its causes that vulnerability can be redressed (CSR, 2000). The point here is that understanding of causality in consequence leads toward policies to reduce the vulnerability, which is located at the confluence of these causal chains (Jessop, 1990).

Nigerian Experience of Vulnerability
All countries of the world are differently endowed by nature; utilization of the same for sustainable living is a product of individuals experience, goals and aspiration as well as discretion. Some are more highly
The state creation exercises that started in 1967 reconfigured the terrain for contestation with acquisition of more states in successive state creation exercises by major ethnic groups. It has led to the rise of 'majority minorities' who have increasingly been accused of oppressing the 'minority minorities' with occasional outbreaks of hostilities. Accusation of continued domination (by the majority minorities) of the federation which witnessed greater fiscal centralization since the advent of the military in 1966 further exacerbated the crises (Ukiwo, 2005). This has been traced as the cause of provocation of the dissent from ethnic minorities in the oil producing Niger Delta region who bemoan the continuous reduction of the share of revenue based on the derivation principle since the discovery of oil (Mustapha 2000, Naanen 1995). The Niger Delta was thus metamorphosed into a site of conflicts that range from conflicts between communities and the state to conflicts among communities and oil companies, and conflicts between communities (Ojo 2002). Conflicts in the Niger Delta thus created a state of insecurities for both the dramatis personae operating in the areas; these are the community members and the transnational corporations. Security on the part of transnational corporations translated to unrestricted access to the oil rigs in order to explore and exploit oil while community conceptions of security focus on guarantee of livelihoods (Ibeanu, 2000). The efforts of both parties to enforce their individual security result in violent conflicts. Ake (1996) further noted that some of the communal conflicts in the region are proxy wars engineered and executed by state agents to divide and rule the people of the area. The idea behind this is to facilitate easy access to state resources by holding on to political offices which they see as the veritable means of making easy money with no serious
considerable to policies that can bring about viable development. Ake (2001) further encapsulated this with a pointer that the problem (confronting the developing world) is not so much that development has failed as that it was never really on the agenda in the first place.

By all indications, political conditions in Africa are the greatest impediment to development as it was constituted to prevent the pursuit of development and the emergence of relevant and effective development paradigms and programmes (Ake, 2001). State policies, ranging from spatial and class inequalities in colonial and contemporary development, land-tenure and economic arrangements have played major roles in both security and vulnerability through their effects on resource access and population movements (Ribot et al., 1996). State development policies and processes have relegated some regions or classes to higher vulnerability while aiding others. In these cases, vulnerability has been shaped through the allocation of state funds and through the structuring of class-differentiated access to alternative income generating opportunities and access to productive resources such as land, irrigation, credit, fertilizer, and improved seed. This scenario perfectly describes what is applicable in Nigerian political landscape. In Nigeria, there are factional and fractional struggles within the ruling class over access to the resources of the state, including the allocation of petrol-dollars by the government. These factional and fractional struggles were conducted using ethnic, regional, statistic, and religious ideologies and arguments. In this respect, ruling class politics dovetailed with and reinforced ethnic, regional and religious contradiction in the country, contradictions which were intensified by unequal access to the state resources (Fadahunsi, et al., 1996). In most cases access to resources is tied to political patronage. In the words of Ake (2001):

The fear of insecurity always ginger the government in power to look for all means to save its neck at all cost. It on this basis that what supposed to be done to prevent escalation of emergence of crisis is always left undone.

The Biafra Civil War

The factors that fast tracked the Nigerian civil took root from the rigging and irregularities in the western regional Election (1965) that were alleged to be more brazen and more shameful. As result of this, law and order broke down completely leading to complete state of anarchy. This provided excuse for the coup of 15 January 1966, which aimed to establish a strong, unified and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife. Meanwhile, the method, style and results of the coup fell short of objectives of the coup planners. The coup consequently hastened Nigeria’s collapse. The succeeding Government of Maj-Gen J.T.U Aguiyi-Ironsi ‘plans’ for better Nigeria led to resentment, culminating in the May 1966 riots throughout the North.
after Ironsi's unification Decree No. 34. The counter-coup of July 29, 1966, which followed the riots, was to revenge upon the East by the North and a break-up of the country. Yakubu Gowon emerged on 1st August 1966 (three anxious days of fear, doubts and non-government) as the new Nigerian Political leader. The coup planners were unwilling to hand over to Brigadier Ogundipe, who was then the Chief of staff, supreme Headquarters, the observed lack of planning and the revengeful intention of the second coup manifested itself in the chaos, confusion and the scale of unnecessary killings which spread throughout the country. It was indeed imaginable the senseless looting and killing which spread through the North like wildfire on 29 September, 1966.

Effort at stopping unnecessary killings and preserve the nation brought about an ad-hoc conference of the representatives of the regions was called on 9 August 1966 in Lagos with unequivocal call for nullification of the unification decree. The enlarged ad-hoc conference on the constitution of the country in Lagos in September broke up inconclusively in November. The country moved into the year (1967) with the announcement of a supreme military council meeting at Aburi, Ghana. Here all members of the council were either two trusting, or too ill-prepared for the meeting. Different versions of what transpired at Aburi were released by Ojukwu in the East and by the Federal Military Government in Lagos where each of the main actors accused one another. After several meetings, Decree No. 8 was promulgated on 17 March 1967 in a desperate effort to implement the Aburi decisions and to avoid further stalemate and possible civil war. Believing that the decree fall short of full implementation of Aburi decisions, Ojukwu seized federal government property and funds in the East while Lt. Col. Gowon imposed a total blockade in the East; created more states out of Eastern Region via decree; consequently twelve states were created throughout the country on 27 May 1967 by the Federal Military Government. On 30 May 1967 Eastern Region of Nigeria was declared as an independent sovereign state of ‘Biafra’. The month of June was used by both sides to ‘prepare for war’ and a war ensued between the federal government (to prevent secession) and Biafra (to assert its independence). Thus, the war, which began at the dawn of 6 July 1967, ended on 12 January 1970 with the defeat of Biafra (Nwankwo, 1980).

Environmental Challenges and Niger Delta Problem

Oil spillage and gas flaring has been a constant source of concern in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. This has devastating effects on the environment particularly the issue of degradation of the air. For instance, in 1991 Nigeria’s gross gas production was 31,500,000 standard cubic feet (scf), and 24,240,000 cf of it which was 76% of the gross production of gas was flared. In consonance with what obtained in countries like USA (0.6%), Holland (0.0%), Britain (4.3%), former USSR (1.5%), Mexico (5.0%), Libya (21.0%), Saudi Arabia (20.0%) and Algeria (19.0%) during the same period, according to Omotola (2009) was unnecessarily too high. By 1995, 76.75% of the gross gas production in Nigeria was flared into the air thereby emitting into the air, about 30 to 35 million tons of carbon dioxide and an estimated 12 million tons per year of methane which is very dangerous to the environment. The implication of this includes increasing ambient air degradation and attendant health hazards in the oil producing areas. While this is making the people vulnerable to destruction of environmental resources, damages of farmlands, rivers and aquatic resources, people were also frustrated out of their means of livelihood. This further translated to high rate of unemployment, rising poverty level and negative health manifestations like headaches, heart problems, irritation, oedema, dizziness and gene or neuron problem. Utter disregard for the welfare of the people of Niger Delta was met with subtle reaction and later snowballed into violent with the formation of militant
youth gangs against the agencies of the state. The conflicts in Niger Delta manifested the total failure of Nigeria state in the course of discharging its duties of ensuring the welfare of its people, provision of security through protection of lives and properties. It equally showcased its lacklustre approach to moderation of conflicts emerging from societal differences, breakdown of law and order, corruption and conversion of public funds for private use.

Rather than addressing the needs of the people, Nigerian government continues to collaborate with the oil companies in the process of applying violence as a means of pacifying the protecting communities (Pegg, 1999). Typical in such instances, is the aggression against Ijaw ethnic minority in Bayelsa State between 1998 and 1999 through the Egbesu wars and Odi massacre. This led to the Nigerian Army invasion of Odi in 1999 where the once thriving town was practically razed down and hundreds of the people were killed in the process. An aerial bombardment on Perezonweikoregbere, an ijaw community near Okkererekoko, Delta State by the Joint Task Force (JTF) on 15 February 2006 ignited further assault of the militants on hapless expatriate oil workers. Though JTF claimed the operation was not an attack on the community but an onslaught on oil bunkerers who were said to have barges of siphoned oil in the area; the argument was that never before had there been such level of massive extra-judicial state security operations in response to bunkering anywhere in Nigeria.

Akinwale (2009) noted that state aggression against the Niger Delta communities took four main forms, namely: constant harassment of the leaders of popular movements and organizations; instigating inter-communal conflicts especially along ethnic, religious and clan lines; instigating internal division of popular organizations, and direct repression using the army and police. As such, national security and security of oil companies take precedence over the needed concerns for local inhabitants and environment in the politics of oil.

State response against these popular pressures assumed the forms of arrest, detention and trial of activists on trump charges and their execution, aimed at silencing opposition voices; and deployment of military forces that operate more like an army of occupation to demoralize the people. What would have been used to develop the people and further enhance the institutional capacity of the state in ensuring sustainable growth of the country was diverted into personal enrichment of individuals and for the maintenance of military apparatus set up to silence the oppressed. Consequently nothing substantial could be done to safeguard the populace, resulting in expected and unexpected environmental and social hazards.

Terrorism and socio-political instability
Boko Haram insurgency started as an indigenous Salafist group which metamorphosed into a Salafist Jihadist group in 2009. It propagates the belief that not only is interaction with the Western World forbidden, but also condemned activities of the Muslim establishment and the Nigerian government. The group was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in the city of Maiduguri with the aim of establishing a Shari 'a government in Borno State under former Governor Ali Modu Sheriff. He established a religious community that included a mosque and a school where many poor
families from across Nigeria and from neighbouring countries enrolled their children. The centre had ulterior political goals and soon it was also working as a recruiting ground for future jihadists to fight the state. The group included members who come from neighbouring Chad and Niger and speak only Arabic. In 2004 the complex was relocated to Yusuf's home state of Yobe in the village Kanamma near the Niger Republic border.

Scholars have attributed the violent uprisings in Nigeria (Boko Haram case inclusive) as ultimately the fallout of frustration with corruption and the attendant social malaise of poverty and unemployment (Cook, 2011). Similarly, Ale (2009), Enwerem (1999), and Usman (1987) noted that people became repulsed of the government and what it stood for due to persisting mass poverty; inequality in educational, political and employment opportunities; ignorance due to limited educational opportunities; growing unemployment; and governmental corruption, including the misuse of resources. In the words of Carson (2012), Nigerians are hungry for progress and an improvement in their lives, but northern Nigerians felt this need most acutely. Life in Nigeria for many is tough, but across the North, life is grim. A United Nations study shows that poverty level in the 12 most northern states is nearly twice that of the rest of the country. The health indicators reflect this. Children in the far north are almost four times as likely to be undernourished. Child mortality is over 100 deaths per 1000 live births, leading to lower life expectancy. Educational standards are just as bad. Literacy in the far north is 35 percent as opposed to 77 percent in the rest of the country. Seventy-seven percent of women in the far north have no formal education, compared to only 17 percent in the rest of the country. In northern Nigeria, primary school attendance is only 41 percent, while youth unemployment is extremely high. All this contributes to joblessness and a deepening cycle of poverty. Public opinion polls and news reports suggest that there is a strong sentiment throughout the country, but especially in the North, that government is not on the side of the people; and that their poverty is a result of government neglect, corruption, and abuse. This is the type of popular narrative that is ripe for an insurgent group to hijack for its own purpose (Campbell and Bunche, 2011).

These problems thus accounted for the swelling of the army of vulnerable people whose disillusionment and impoverishment easily turned them into prey in the hands of the individual who are violence-inclined. It is therefore not a surprise that Yusuf successfully attracted followers from unemployed youth by speaking out against police and political corruption (Farouk, 2012). This multitude of socio-economically excluded citizenry therefore becomes willing tools for experimentation of the so-called social and religious crusaders. As years of neglect and economic mismanagement turned the North into the poorest part of the geographical enclave called Nigeria, it thus becomes a theatre of the most fanatical uprisings in the history of the country (Ibelema 2009). Typical in this case are the Maitatsine uprisings of 1980 in Kano, 1982 in Kaduna and Bulumkutu, 1984 in Yola and 1985 in Bauchi., the Kano metropolitan riot of October 1982, the Kafanchan/Kaduna/Zaria/Funtua religious riots of March 1987, the Kaduna Polytechnic riot of March 1988, the Bauchi/Katsina riots of March/April 1991, the Kano riot of October 1991, the Zangon-Kataf riot of May 1992, the Kano civil disturbance of December 1991 and the Jos crisis of April 1994, the recurrent Jos crises of 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008, January, 2010 (Abimbola, 2010, Omipidan, 2009; Akaeze, 2009). In the words of Abimbola (2010), the socio-economic conditions that sustained the Maitatsine uprisings in 1980 are relevant to the Boko Haram situation.

Although the common denominator among all members was their desire to overthrow the secular government and to propagate Islamic law, the oratory prowess of Yusuf arguably contributed to their mobilization and participation (Isola and Bwala 2009; Omipidan 2009; Olu 2009). The members of the group
challenges in their own rights, requiring special protective measures.

Women bear the brunt of vulnerability more than their male counterparts. The developmental opportunities are circumscribed by gender discrimination, compounding the constraints of poverty and low levels of education. Nigerian women continue to suffer the disadvantages of an unequal household division of labour.

Women bear a disproportionate burden of the workload in the household and related farm activities especially in the rural areas of Nigeria. Not only do women and girls do all the fetching and carrying of water and firewood as well as cooking, house-cleaning, washing and caring for young children, but in the rural areas they also do much of the agricultural work (Chinsman, 1998). Despite their important contribution in the agricultural sector, women are mainly involved in arduous manual tasks in farming and food processing, using low levels of technology, with low yields and productivity and high wastage rates. They lack title to land and have limited access to agricultural inputs such as improved seedlings and agricultural extension services. Furthermore, rural women tend to be disadvantaged, compared with men, because they have less capital to invest, cannot easily obtain credit and so are seldom engaged in the production and marketing of lucrative cash crops such as cocoa, which tend to be a male preserve.

As a result of their poor empowerment they have been coerced into accepting an inferior status. Women’s inferior status to men puts them in a vulnerable position. Not only are they unable to persuade their partner to use a condom in order to ensure good health status, they cannot even ask about his other relationships. This puts women at higher risk of being exposed to sexually transmitted infections (Matsinhe, 2001). Despite Nigeria’s ratification of the Convention on the Eradication of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Nigerian women continue to suffer the disadvantages of an unequal household division of labour, unequal access to managerial, professional and technical jobs, discriminatory salary practices, etc.

Women and children are more exposed to vicious cycles of poverty. The mechanisms associated with this vicious cycle are experienced from the moments of gestation, when the mother reaps the consequences of early childhood malnutrition, inadequate education (or none at all) and years of overwork and repeated illness (UNICEF, 2001). Stunted growth may have pre-disposed her to cephalic-pelvic disproportion and obstructed labour. She is likely to have had little if any access to family planning services. She is also unlikely to make use of antenatal services or to deliver her baby in a health facility, greatly increasing the chances of maternal, peri-natal and neo-natal mortality.

The Impact of political clientelism on Nigeria’s development
Whatever the historical justifications, the root causes of conflicts are not cultural or religious, they are economic. Conflict is always and everywhere about access to scarce resources. This might be farmland, or employment, or access to political power. It could even be jealousy over the provision of water or electricity to one village but not to its neighbor. All said and done it is worthy of note that most of the problems besetting the corporate existence and sustainable living among the citizenry are not as devastating as what some countries experience and tackled effectively. Why then is Nigeria less able to prepare for or recover from natural extremes? What is the country lacking in ability to rebound from these expected events? What shapes her vulnerability in the face of climatic variability and change? The answers to these questions are as summarised.

The tragedy of Nigeria is that over the past few decades its population has grown rapidly, but despite the country’s vast oil wealth, the economy has failed to grow enough to keep pace. Nigerians have been getting poorer by the year. Along with this is the failure
of the state to provide adequate education for the vast majority of the population thus leading to production of frustrated and angry underclass of largely urban, unemployed youths. It is to this disempowered group that ambitious politicians and religious leaders look for support. Many observers in Nigeria believe that the roots of the violence across much of the country are not religious or cultural; the conflicts are created and fuelled by opportunists, at both local and national levels, who seek to gain advantage from social division. Means being used to distribute the country’s vast oil wealth from the federal government in the centre down to the local level is part of evidence to support this view. Wealth travels down this path in the form of contracts handed out to political favourites; contracts for building roads, schools, and hospitals; for supplying electricity, water and medicines. Almost all economic activities in the country works on this principle thereby making those with access to the source of power rich, and those who do not have power want it all the more. The concern of this group of people is nothing but personal enrichment, nothing concern them on development of their locale. For instance, over the last year Boko Haram has created widespread insecurity across northern Nigeria, increased tensions between various ethnic communities, interrupted development activities, frightened off investors, and generated concerns among Nigeria’s northern neighbors. They have been responsible for near daily attacks in Borno and Yobe states. The sustained attack by this religious sect is a manifestation of continued supports by the political elites in the country.

Prior to this period there existed no concise development blueprint to foster sustainable development, now that the crises are becoming full-blown, resources that would have been used for real development are being diverted for the prevention. In terms of climate related crises, there is no iota of seriousness on the part of the country, unlike what is obtained in other clime like China. For example, China’s semi-arid regions (which were noted as having enormous potential for development) have been a target for development since the central government regards them as a population pressure value for the overpopulated south and southeast (quite contrary of the role of Brazil’s semi-arid Northeast). As such, government policies have encouraged migration into this region (Wang’ati, 1996). It is not limited to this; equally available are solar, wind, hydro and mineral resources as well as enormous expanses of uncultivated lands for farming activities. Along with this are also great expanses of grazing lands, which were noted as needing appropriate measure in order to use them sustainably without making them vulnerable to natural hazards.

Here is a clear example of the critical nature of state political economy, through policy decisions, in shaping vulnerability or security in these lands.

**Efforts towards reducing vulnerability**

Several methods have successfully been adopted to reduce social and climatic vulnerability. Some of them are articulated below.

**Economic Reforms (Social Policy Directions):** As a mean of addressing the ugly trends, various efforts were made since the 1970s to tackle the steadily worsening crisis of development in Africa. Of these, the non-liberal structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have been the most widely adopted (Fadahunsi et al., 1996) in spite of the opposition to its adoption in Africa. The adjustment programmes spread and evolved into an alternative approach, and more African countries continue to adopt and implement it (Ake, 1995).

In this context, development becomes alienating on all sides as decline economies, which this programme was intended to curtail degenerated seriously during the 1980s and 1990s. In the words of
Fadahunsi et al. (1996), in many important respects, structural adjustment became part and parcel of the dynamics of the African crisis, complicating existing problems and creating new difficulties. The negative impact of the adjustment equally affected the political terrain. The programmes therefore contributed to the worsening of the anti-democratic political culture which many of African ruling classes attempted to foster in the face of diminishing governmental legitimacy and growing popular democratic opposition.

Still the World Bank and IMF are not relenting in their efforts at encouraging the developing nations (of which Nigeria is inclusive) to gear up in their belt tightening program in the name of economic development. World Bank Report (2005) reveals that developing regions (of the world) grew faster in 2004 than their average over the last decade. The report further reveals that the economic performance in developing countries in 2004 coincides with sound policies in those countries, namely openness to trade and investment, prudent fiscal stances, and exchange rate flexibility, all of which have improved the countries’ credit quality. The bank asserts further that, the policies towards this achievement worth sustaining. The fact here is that the standard of living of the populace of these developing countries is nothing to write home about particularly in Nigeria where people are dying under the nightmare of harsh effects of economic restructuring.

It is therefore worth noting that in Nigeria, our pattern of development entailed the enthronement of the interests of a minority class at the expense of the public purpose and the interests of the majority of the people. What need to be done to make life better for the people according to Fadahunsi et al. (1996) is an alternative development framework which aspires to promote popular participation in the economic, political and social processes which will work towards the creation of a new basis for accumulation, one that is at once supportive of a just and democratic system of development. This new basis will seek simultaneously to promote welfare and economic rationality, entail the encouragement of small holder peasant agricultural production with competitive producers’ prices and other incentives. It will promote domestic industrial production with a view to achieving a significant recovery in capacity utilization as well as accelerating the rate of investment in intermediate and capital goods production.

**Poverty Alleviation:** The depth and extent of poverty in Nigeria have two implications for the design of strategies for improved survival outcomes. The first quite obviously is that the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty must be at the heart of development policies. This is the basic premise of the Government’s National Poverty Eradication Programme. The second implication, however, is that much greater attention needs to be given than in the past to ways of ensuring equity in access to services, particularly with respect to the modalities of cost recovery, which was introduced in the health service in a piece-meal manner without any clear guidelines. A range of options, including exemption mechanisms, credit arrangements and cross-subsidies, could be considered, both in the health and water sectors, to ensure access to the core poor.

**Political Commitment:** Nigeria needs political commitment in order to achieve most of her objectives. It is a fact that Nigeria as an entity is highly endowed with human and material resources with which it can turn her fortune around to be a capable leader in the comity of nations. This explains why many Nigerians usually excel whenever they found themselves outside the country. But it is saddening that successive governments rendered only lip services to most policies and programmes due to lack of commitment.

**Empowerment:** Empowerment denotes enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence, and hold
accountable the institutions that affect them. It is also the capacity to aspire (Siddiqi et al., 2004, Appadurai, 2001), envision, and achieve positive change. Voice is a key step towards enabling the poor and the excluded to become agents of change, a critical factor for empowerment. Voice is indeed critical to the change agenda for Nigeria, as reflected in the statements of the community groups that took part in the assessment and who understand empowerment as having control over issues that affect your life; having a say in setting the direction of your life, politically, socially, economically, spiritually; having the capacity to access facilities and other items to enable you to achieve your goals; uplifting one's social and welfare status through economic and political influence; exercising power and influence; the sources of empowerment are good education, wealth, integrity, religion, political power, and employment. However, voice is seen as not sufficient to bring about change in society. It needs to be accompanied and enhanced by collective action. Empowerment is thus seen as country-led and task-driven (Siddiqi et al. 2004). This approach promotes result-oriented action and builds on a shared vision among key constituency groups and existing capacity to close gaps, which enable a given task team or stakeholder group to act collectively for achieving their common objectives. It is an emphasis on performance and coordinated action to bring about positive change.

**The role of NGOs:** In the contemporary developing nations, the current manageable quality of life being experienced by the populace mostly results from the efforts of the NGOs. For instance, in preventing HIV/AIDS in Morocco, Moussaoui (2001) reveals that the civil society were mobilized rapidly to join the fight against AIDS, the associations (NGOs) have played a significant role in both advocacy and in behavioural change. He stressed further that Morocco is considered a low prevalence country hence not a priority for donors. In view of this, he opined that NGOs will take on an increasingly important role in developing effective interventions as they develop their know-how. Properly motivated, encouraged and empowered, Nigerian NGOs can become very effective agents in reducing social and environmental vulnerabilities.

**Conclusion**

Vulnerability is produced through forces pushing and pulling people of particular classes down. Population growth in the absence of alternative employment opportunities in addition to population movements equally contribute to vulnerability. This implies that on one hand, some disasters would not have been as devastating were it not for where they occurred. On the other hand, the effects of natural disasters have been greatly aggravated by the underhanded dealings of fraudulent individuals or by the fact that masses of people have been forced to live in hazardous area as a result of the inherent economic or social inequalities. State intervention is thus necessary for the reduction of vulnerability. This will assist in harnessing the potential inherent in every citizenry for the overall benefits of the populace and equally help bring out the best in all. This can be achieved by providing people with favourable atmosphere that will not only enhance their performance but also inspire great deeds. In view of the foregoing it is obvious that absence of political will is responsible for vulnerability of the populace to crises. The successive administrations in Nigeria have not been showing their commitment to the wellbeing of the populace hence the passing on of legacy of chronic public mismanagement, the decay of public institutions and lost development opportunities resulting in widening and deepening poverty, both in terms of household income and access to basic social services. The manifestation of this according to UNICEF (2001) is that ignorance begets poverty and poverty begets ignorance in a vicious cycle that results in and is further reinforced by ill-health and social and environmental vulnerability.
References


O.O. Omololu: Social and Climatic Vulnerabilities in Nigeria


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