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The Environmental and Economic Impact of the State of Emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria

Nathan UDOINYANG

Department of Economics, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria.

Corresponding author: nathannathanudoinyang@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the environmental and economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to compile its population. The population of the study was estimated as 5,198,716 by Nigeria Population Commission (NPC) in 2006 and a sample size of 400 was achieved by using Taro Yamane formula. 400 questionnaires were circulated and 295 were collected. Using a mean criterion of 3.0, the questionnaire was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, SPSS and Cronbach Alpha correlation of 0.80 was employed in its data analysis. The findings of the study reviewed that the environmental and economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State are: water pollution, oil spillage, loss of ecosystem, increased poverty, unemployment, social unrest, decrease in revenue and displacement of people etc. The study concluded and recommended that government should take immediate action to address the environmental and economic impacts of the state of emergency by providing support to affected businesses and households, investing in infrastructure and security, and promoting economic diversification and development in the state.

Keywords: Economic, Environmental impact, State of emergency, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Introduction

According to the Nigeria constitution (as amended), the President have the power to declare a state of emergency in a State, subject to National Assembly approval (Section 305). A state of emergency is a special government action taken when there is a serious crisis that threatens public order and safety. It allows the government to take extraordinary measures to restore peace and stability. Section 305 of the Constitution explains the conditions under which the President can declare a state of emergency in any part of the country. These conditions include war, natural disasters, the breakdown of law and order or any situation that endangers public safety. However, the declaration must be approved by the National Assembly before it can take full effect. On the 18th day of March, 2025 President Bola Tinubu declared a state of emergency in Rivers State. This decision was made due to ongoing political issues and concerns about security in the state. As a result of the declaration, the Governor, his deputy, and members of the State House of Assembly were suspended for six (6) months. The President took this action based on his constitutional powers under Section 305. The main goal of this decision, as stated by the government, is to restore order and ensure smooth governance in the state. However, such a move has generated a lot of discussions, with different opinions on whether it was the best solution to the situation in Rivers State. A state of emergency in any part of the country has serious effects on democracy. Nigeria is a democratic country where leaders are elected by the people through a voting process. When a state of emergency leads to the suspension of elected officials, it raises concerns about the balance of power between the federal and state governments. The Nigerian system of government is based on federalism, which means that both the federal and state governments have their own responsibilities and powers. If a state of emergency results in the removal of elected officials, some people may see it as an interference with the will of the people. Others may argue that it is necessary to ensure stability and prevent further crises. For the people of Rivers State, this declaration might bring different challenges. One major concern is the possible disruption of governance. When the Governor and other officials are suspended, it may slow down decision-making and the implementation of government projects. Development plans and policies that were already in place may face delays. Also, investors and business owners may become uncertain about the future of the state, which can affect economic activities. Rivers State is an important economic hub in Nigeria, especially because of its oil production. Any instability in the state can have an impact on both the local economy and the country's economy as a whole including civil liberties. To this end, this paper tends to look at the environmental and economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State.

Conceptual Clarification

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), a state of emergency is "a situation in which the government or other authorities take special measures to deal with a crisis" (ICRC, 2004, p. 12). A state of emergency is a situation where a government or authority declares a special condition due to a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or other crisis, requiring urgent help and relief (Bullard, 2007, p. 234). This declaration allows the government to take extra measures to protect the public, such as increasing police or military powers, imposing curfews, or restricting travel (Waugh, 2000, p. 142).

Characteristics State of Emergency

1. Increased security measures: Deploying military or police personnel to maintain order.
2. Restrictions on movement: Imposing curfews or limiting travel to affected areas.
3. Emergency funding: Allocating funds to respond to the crisis.
4. Special powers: Granting authorities temporary powers to manage the emergency.

The theory that backs up the state of emergency is the "Theory of the State of Exception" propounded by Carl Schmitt in 1922. According to Schmitt, the state of emergency is a necessary measure to protect the state and its citizens from external or internal threats, and the sovereign has the power to declare a state of emergency and suspend normal laws and regulations to maintain order (Schmitt, 1922). This theory posits that the state of emergency is a zone of in-distinction between law and lawlessness, where the state can exercise its power without being bound by normal laws and regulations. This theory supports the state of emergency in Rivers State because the ultimate goal of the declaration of the state of emergency is to protect the state and its citizens from threats opposed by insecurity which aligns with Schmitt's idea that the sovereign's primary responsibility is to protect the state and its citizens, even if it means taking extraordinary measures.

Empirical Literature Reviews

Fazal et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative study on the impact of state of emergency on mental health in Pakistan, using a dataset of 1000 respondents. Findings showed that the state of emergency led to a significant increase in stress, anxiety, and depression among respondents. The study also found that the state of emergency was associated with increased trauma and PTSD symptoms. Additionally, the study revealed that women and children were disproportionately affected by the state of emergency. The study concluded that state of emergency had a significant impact on mental health in Pakistan and recommend that Governments should prioritize mental health support and services during times of crisis. Padilla-Rivera et al. (2024), conducted a quantitative study on the impact of state of emergency on economic growth in Mexico, using a dataset of 500 respondents. Findings showed that the state of emergency led to a significant decline in economic growth and investment. The study also found that the state of emergency was associated with increased inflation and unemployment, small and medium-sized enterprises were disproportionately affected by the state of emergency. In conclusion, the study concluded that state of emergency had a significant impact on economic growth in Mexico and recommended that Governments should prioritize economic support and stimulus packages during times of crisis.

Thomas et al. (2022); Siimsen et al. (2023), conducted a qualitative study on the impact of state of emergency on marginalized communities in India during the COVID-19 pandemic, using semi-structured interviews with 25 community leaders. Findings showed that the state of emergency led to a significant increase in stigma and discrimination against marginalized communities. The study also found that marginalized communities struggled to access government support and resources during the pandemic. Additionally, the study revealed that marginalized communities had to rely on community-based initiatives and solidarity networks to cope with the crisis. Conclusively, the state of emergency had a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities in India and recommend that governments should prioritize the needs and rights of marginalized communities during times of crisis. Wu & Tham, (2023), conducted a quantitative study on the impact of state of emergency on human rights in Venezuela, using a dataset of 1500 respondents. Findings showed that the state of emergency led to a significant decline in human

rights, particularly freedom of speech and assembly. The study also found that the state of emergency was associated with increased repression and violence. Additionally, the study revealed that the state of emergency had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, such as women and children. In its conclusion, the study concluded that the state of emergency had a devastating impact on human rights in Venezuela and recommended that the international community should pressure the Venezuelan government to respect human rights.

Bartik et al. (2020); Wang & Kang, (2023), conducted a qualitative study on the impact of state of emergency on small businesses in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic, using semi-structured interviews with 30 small business owners. Findings showed that the state of emergency led to a significant decline in sales and revenue for small businesses. The study also found that small businesses struggled to access government support and resources during the pandemic (Tonetto et al., 2024). Additionally, the study revealed that small businesses had to adapt quickly to the changing circumstances, including shifting to online sales and delivery. The study concluded that state of emergency had a significant impact on small businesses in the United States and recommend Governments to provide targeted support and resources to small businesses during times of crisis. The empirical literatures reviewed provide valuable insights into the impact of state of emergency on various aspects of society, including mental health, economic growth, marginalized communities, human rights, and small businesses (Lee & Goh, 2023); (Rodrigues, 2020); (Carmen et al., 2022). However, there are several gaps in the literature that this study aims to address the Geographical Focus: Most of the studies reviewed focused on countries outside of Africa, with no specific study on Nigeria. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the economic and socio-political impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria, Contextual Focus: The studies reviewed focused on different types of emergencies, such as COVID-19, economic crises, and political unrest. This study aims to focus specifically on the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria, and its impact on the economy and socio-political landscape, Methodological Focus: Most of the studies reviewed used quantitative methods, with only a few using qualitative methods. This study aims to use a mixed-methods approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria. Finally, the studies reviewed did not explicitly use theoretical frameworks to guide their analysis. This study aims to use social identity theory to examine how the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria affects the state environment and economy.

Methodology

The study adopts use a mixed-methods approach to examine the environmental and economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria. Primary and secondary data were employed in the study. The secondary population for this study is gotten from the entire population of Rivers State which was estimated at 5,198,716 by Nigeria Population Commission (NPC, 2006). With the use of Taro Yamane, the population size was reduced to 400. The research instrument adopt for this study is a self-structured questionnaire in it study and descriptive statistical tools of tables, percentages, averages and more were used for data presentation. On the other hand, 5 Linkert scale with the use of Mean, Cronbach alpha correlation of 0.05 level of significance and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) were used in analysing the research questions. The research questions were analysed using a mean criterion of 3.0. for the research

questions, an aggregate mean below 3.0 means the respondents disagree with the stated research question while an aggregate mean of 3.0 and above means the respondents agree with the stated research questions. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the respondents, and to suit the need and purpose of the study. The questionnaire was designed in two (2) sections. The first section looked at demographic data of the respondents such as; gender, age, academic qualification and business type. The second analyse the environmental and economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria. The instrument is made up of a total of 12 items. Purposive sampling techniques were used for the study. For the sake of clarity, two (2) LGAs were selected from each of the three (3) senatorial districts of the state, making a total of six (6) local government areas out of the twenty-three (23) local government areas of Rivers State which were purposely selected as the sample for this study. The choice of using purposive sampling techniques for the purpose of this research work is that it provides non-probability samples that allow for selection based on characteristics present in a particular population group and in the overall study. It also helps the researcher to identify extreme perspectives that are also present in each population group.

Data presentation

The data was presented based on the research objectives. Primary and secondary data were reviewed and questionnaire was distributed based on senatorial district, local government area, specific demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status and all other demographic variables are calculated using percentages, mean, standard deviation, SPSS software and Cronbach Alpha correlation of 0.80 correlation. Table 1 present the distribution of questionnaires to the various selected local government area from the three senatorial district in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 1. Sectorial distributions of the questionnaires

Senatorial District	Names of L.G.A	No. of L.G.A Selected	Names of Selected L.G.A	No. of Questionnaires Distributed and No. Returned
Central Senatorial District	Emohua	2	Port Harcourt	70/56
	Ikwerre		Obio/Akpor	66/54
	Etche			
	Omuma			
	Port Harcourt			
	Obio/Akpor			
	Ogu/Bolo			
	Okirika			
West Senatorial District	Bonny	2	Asari-Toru	66/44
	Degema		Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni	66/49
	Asari-Toru			
	Akuku Toro			

South East Senatorial District	Ogba/Egbem	2	Opobo/Nkoro	66/47
	a/Ndoni			
	Ahoada East			
	Ahoada West			
	Abua/Odual			
	Andoni			
	Opobo/Nkor			
	o			
	Gokana			
	Khana			
	Eleme			
	Oyigbo			
	Tai			
				400/295

Source: Authors Survey Compilation (2025)

Presentation of Results

Table 2. Sociodemographic characteristics of Respondents

Sociodemographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	155	52.5
Female	140	47.5
Total	295	100
Marital Status		
Not-married	109	37.0
Married	186	63.0
Total	295	100
Age Bracket		
25-35 years	72	24.4
36-45 years	69	23.4
46-55 years	93	31.5
56 years and above	61	20.7

Total	295	100
Educational Qualification		
FSLC/WAEC	54	18.3
NCE/ND	75	25.4
HND/BSC	126	36.4
MSC/PHD	40	19.9
Total	295	100
Occupation		
Trader & Transporters	64	21.7
Sociologist	53	18.0
Environmentalist	58	19.7
Business men/women	76	25.8
Economist	44	14.8
Total	295	100
Total	295	100

Source: Authors Survey Compilation 2025.

Table 2 showed detail information of the population. Out of the 295 respondents, majority of them are married constituting a total of 63.0% of the total. In sex distribution, 140 are females (47.5% of the total) and 155 males (52.5% of the total). In terms of age grade, most respondents fall within 46-55 years of age; Similarly, when asked about their educational qualification among the 295 respondents, the highest respondents have HND/BSC 126 (36.4%) and the lowest respondents are Economist and Sociologist when it comes to occupation.

Data Analysis

In order to determine the appropriateness of the research questions, the data of this study are presented and analysed below using standard deviation, SPSS software and Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient of 0.80.

Table 3. Participants' views on the environmental and economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	As a result of state of emergency, many oil pipelines has been vandalized which thereby bringing about oil spillage in the affected areas.	4.2	3.8	Yes
2	Due to the recent oil spillage experience in the Rivers State, it has led to the degradation of natural habitats in affected areas.	3.9	3.7	Yes
3	The state of emergency also leads to loss of farmland as a result of oil spillage that occur within the period.	3.6	3.2	Yes
4	Vandalization of pipeline as a result of the declaration of the declaration of state of emergency led to loss of ecosystem system such as fisheries and tourism which are critical for livelihoods in local communities.	4.2	3.9	Yes
5	It also led to water pollution due to oil spillage that occur as a result of angry youth destroying pipelines in the state.	3.3	3.1	Yes
6	Since the declaration of state of emergency in Rivers State, some part of the state capital has experience disruption in waste management service resulting in accumulation of waste and potential environmental hazards.	4.4	4.0	Yes
7	The state of emergency disrupt economic activities, such as trade and commerce, due to restrictions on movement and increased security checks within Rivers State.	3.9	3.5	Yes
8	The declaration of a state of emergency deter investors from investing in the state, leading to a decline in economic growth and development in Rivers State.	4.0	3.6	Yes
9	It leads to loss of revenue due to the disruption of economic activities and decline in investor confidence thereby leading to unemployment.	3.9	3.6	Yes
10	The state of emergency lead to an increase in the cost of living, as prices of goods and services may rise due to shortages and disruptions in supply chains.	3.4	3.3	Yes
11	Disruption of small-scale businesses which are the backbone of the state's economy are severely impacted by the state of emergency, thereby leading to job losses and economic hardship.	4.1	3.7	Yes

12	The state of emergency also leads to a decline in tourism, as visitors may be deterred from visiting the state due to safety concerns.	3.6	3.4	Yes
13	The state of emergency put a strain on public finances, as the state government need to allocate additional resources to maintain law and order, provide humanitarian assistance and rebuild damaged infrastructure in the state.	3.5	3.3	Yes
14	The state of emergency lead to food and water shortages, particularly in areas affected by natural conflict in Rivers State.	4.8	4.3	Yes
15	The state of emergency in Rivers State exacerbate poverty particularly among vulnerable populations such as women, children, and the elderly in affected areas of the state.	4.0	3.6	Yes
16	The state of emergency in Rivers State lead to displacement and migration of people, particularly in areas affected by the conflict.	3.3	3.2	Yes
17	The state of emergency in Rivers State have led to social unrest including protests, riots and civil unrest within the state.	4.2	4.1	Yes
Average Total		3.9	3.6	Yes

Source: Author's survey, 2025.

From Table 3, item 1-17, the table aims to discuss the economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria. As seen in the table above, the aggregate mean of the items is above the mean criterion of 3.0. Also, based on all responses, the total mean is 3.9 and the standard deviation is 3.6. Based on the findings above, the respondents anonymous agreed that the state of emergency has significant negative impact on the environment and economy of Rivers State thereby leading to decline in economy growth and development.

Results and Discussion

Responses to the research questions revealed the environmental and economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings of the study reviewed that vandalization of pipeline, degradation of natural habitats, loss of farmland, loss of ecosystem, water pollution, disruption of waste management, disruption in economic activities, deterioration of investors from investing in the state, loss of revenue, increase in the cost of living, disruption of small-scale businesses, decline in tourism, strain on public finances, food and water shortages, exacerbation of poverty, displacement and migration of people and social unrest are the impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria (Syaban & Appiah-Opoku, 2024); (Miyan, 2015). The findings of the study are in line with the empirical literature reviewed of (Mirzabaev et al., 2023), (Surtiari et al., 2024); (Ngcamu, 2023); (Kuran et al., 2020), that state of emergency

exacerbate poverty particularly among vulnerable populations such as women and children in Rivers State and also in line with the study of (Wiatt et al., 2024); (Meyer et al., 2022); (Chapman Cook & Karau, 2023), that state of emergency led to a significant decline in sales and revenue for small businesses. The study also found out some environmental impact of state of emergency which none of the empirical literature review (Tang et al., 2022). Consequently, through the findings of the research question and the associated empirical literatures evidence, this study has been able to reviewed the environmental and economic impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria which is the objective of the study.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State on the state environment and economic. The findings revealed that the state of emergency had significant impacts on the state's environment and economic activities. The study found that vandalization of pipeline, degradation of natural habitats, loss of farmland, loss of ecosystem, water pollution, disruption of waste management, disruption in economic activities, deterioration of investors from investing in the state, loss of revenue, increase in the cost of living, disruption of small-scale businesses, decline in tourism, strain on public finances, food and water shortages, exacerbation of poverty, displacement and migration of people and social unrest are the impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria. This implies that residents in Rivers State are facing serious economic and environmental challenges as a result of the declaration of state of emergency which in a long run will deter the state economy. The study was limited to only the environmental and economic sector, as other sector such as the education, health, agriculture etc. where not examine in this study and also the study in its scope covers only Rivers State. Further research is needed to investigate the impact of the state of emergency on the education, health and agricultural sectors etc. in Nigeria. From the findings of this study, it shows that they are consistent with the objectives of the study which is to investigate the economic and environmental impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made for government and policy makers:

1. The government should provide economic stimulus packages to support affected businesses and households.
2. The government should invest in infrastructure and security to restore confidence and promote economic growth.
3. The government should promote economic diversification and development to reduce dependence on oil and gas revenues.
4. The government should provide support to affected small-scale businesses and farmers, including access to credit, training, and markets.
5. The government should develop a comprehensive economic recovery plan to address the long-term economic impacts of the state of emergency.

6. The State government should provide support to affected communities, including humanitarian assistance, economic empowerment programs, and infrastructure development projects.
7. The Rivers State government should encourage citizen participation in the decision-making process, including through public consultations and community engagement.
8. The Rivers State government should support economic recovery efforts, including through investments in infrastructure, agriculture, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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