

CHALLENGES OF POST-CRISIS RESETTLEMENT: A STUDY OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs) IN ABUJA AND EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Internal displacement of people has become a global social problem that requires urgent attention in order to prevent or reduce further escalation of the menace. The study examines the challenges of post-crisis resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons in Abuja and Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examines causes of displacement of people, problems of the internally displaced persons, effect of internally displaced persons on the society, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of the internally displaced persons back to the society. The study used qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Specifically, In-depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were used to generate data from the respondents which were content analyzed. The study found that displacement of people is as a result of violent conflict occasioned by the activities of Boko Haram, heders/farmers clashes, flood, famine, draught and other natural disasters. It was also found that displaced persons face the problems of starvation, diseases as well as psychological problems. Another finding of the study is that incompatibility, lack of social cohesion, and unproductiveness on the part of the displaced person are the effects of displacement on the society. Finally, the study found that restoration of peace to the conflict-infested areas before the idea of rehabilitation and reintegration can come in through empowerment programme such as: skill acquisition, apprenticeship scheme, vocational training and other forms of technical education. The study recommended the need to engage warring parties in dialogue in order to find lasting solutions to the problem of violent conflict in Nigeria. Another recommendation is for government to look for a way of solving the varying problems of displaced persons in camps. On the issue of incompatibility and lack of social cohesion, the message of unity in diversity can go a long way in proffering solution to the problem. Finally, empowerment programme can ease the process of rehabilitation and reintegration of the IDPs to the society

Key Words: Internal Displacement, Post-crisis, Rehabilitation, Skill Acquisition, Violence.

Introduction

Displacement has become a global social problem as it cuts across continents in the world. For instance, at the end of 2014, it was estimated there were 38.2 million IDPs worldwide, the highest level since 1989, the first year for which global statistics on IDPs are available. The countries with the largest IDP population were Syria(7.6m), Colombia (6m), Iraq (3.6m), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2.8m), Sudan (2.2m) South Sudan (1.6m), Pakistan (1.4m), Nigeria (1.2m) and Somalia (1.1m) (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019). In Africa, there are approximately 9 to 10 million

people who have fled or been forcibly displaced from their homes for same reasons as refugees: armed conflict, ethnic strife, human rights violations, but who remain in their countries (Cohen, 1999). In Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency has caused over 2 million people to be internally displaced, making Nigeria the home of Africa's largest IDPs (Chegwe, 2016). These people have lost everything and are now dependent on faith-based organization, foundations and well-meaning individuals for their daily bread.

The report of the Internal Displaced Monitoring Centre, IDMC and the Norwegian Refugee Council, NRC, stated that the number of Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs, in Nigeria is approximately a third of the IDPs in Africa and 10 percent of IDPs in the world (Nigerian Pilot, 2016). In Nigeria, particularly, Abuja, Plateau, Gombe, Nassarawa, Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Kaduna, Kano, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara, IDP camps have been set up in over 207 LGAs (Chegwe, 2016). Igenebu (2016) re-echoing the report of the Institute for Peace, identified the causes of internal displacement of people in Nigeria to include ethnic intolerance, religious intolerance, ecological problem, and the activity of Militants. Others include famine and herders/farmers clashes. Igenebu (2016) went further to highlight lack of help from government, financial problem, intolerance, lack of medical supplies, and violence towards IDPs, among others as the problems of IDPs in Nigeria. This is not at variance with the findings of the field survey conducted on IDPs in Area 1 IDPs Camp in Abuja by Akor and Audu (2016), where it was found that IDPs are bedeviled with lack of access to basic needs such as food, clean water, shelter, and health care facilities, among others. In a similar development, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, UNOCHA disclosed that no fewer than 300,000 people in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States-70 percent of them women and children have fled their homes since early 2013. In different parts of the country, communal clashes and related violence have also resulted in many people fleeing their homes and properties (Nigerian Pilot, 2016). Against the backdrop of a recent discovery by the United Nations that there are 7.7 million people benighted by Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, the body has taken more than keen interest in residents' plight (Press Reader, 2018). This study is worthwhile due to the alarming number of IDPs in Nigeria as shown in the aforementioned statistics.

How can life be made meaningful to the IDPs again? This is the crux of this research. Can the root causes be stopped? In solving these issues, there must be challenges such as exclusion (running away), segregation (kept apart) and reintegration (resettlement). According to the secretary of the Campaign for Democracy (CD), Comerade Ifeanyi Odili, there is the need for utmost sincerity in the concerted efforts between the Federal Government and the Borno State Government towards resettlement of the IDPs (Press Reader, 2018). Similarly, Adimula (2019) has presented a 4-phase strategy for the care and rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria. This includes After-shock, Stabilization, Empowerment and Reintegration Phases of IDPs. In another submission, Ikwuyatum (2016), opined that the policy of rehabilitation, resettlement and reintegration of IDPs in the region can only succeed with less politics and more collaboration and synergy of efforts by state and non-state actors in management of forced migrants, in particular, IDPs in the north eastern Nigeria. In the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016, key stakeholders including member states, UN agencies and NGOs, committed to adopt a shift of mindset to bridge the humanitarian-development divide (UNDP and UNHCR, 2017).

The aim of the study is to examine the challenges of post-crisis resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory and Edo State. Specifically, the paper examines the causes of internal displacement, the problems of IDPs, the effects of IDPs and the rehabilitation and the integration of IDPs back to the society.

For the purpose of this study, selected camps in the Federal Capital Territory and Edo State were our focus. The camps the researchers studied in Abuja include New Kuchingoro, Gwoza/Bama Camp Durumi, Abuja Area One IDP Wassa Camp and the IDP camp in Edo State situated in Ohugua near Benin. The need to examine the influence of the host community on the IDPs from different socio-economic background as well as

the influence of the IDPs on the host community deserves a separate study of this nature.

The scope of the study is limited to IDPs in Abuja and Edo State, Nigeria between April, 2018-October, 2019. The scope includes the causes of displacement, problems of IDPs, the effects of IDPs on the society, and their rehabilitation and reintegration back to the society.

Understanding the Plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria

Approximately, over 2 million people are internally displaced in Nigeria. This corroborates the figure estimated by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, IDMC. According to this report, there are almost 2,152,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigeria as at 31 December, 2015. The figure is based on assessment conducted from November to December 2015 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) team in 207 Local Government Areas (LGA) covering 13 states (IDMC, 2015). The states include Abuja (13, 481 IDPs); Adamawa (136,010); Bauchi (70,078); Benue (85, 393); Borno (1,434,149); Gombe (25,332); Kaduna (36, 976); Kano (9,331); Nassarawa (37,553); Plateau (77,317); Taraba (50,227); Yobe (131,203) and Zamfara (44,929).

The living condition of IDPs in Nigeria is so deplorable and mindboggling that you don't even wish your enemy to experience it. This is best explained by Aluko (2017) where it was found that over 108,000 IDPs in Ngala community, Borno State, are grappling with a litany of infections and hunger. They are exposed to cough, malaria, diarrhea and acute respiratory disorders as a result of unhygienic living conditions and harsh weather. The IDPs in Nigeria who were displaced by circumstances outside their immediate control are living like refugees in their own land. Statistics have shown that the bulk of people living in IDP camps are displaced by violence-related issues such as insurgency. For instance, the assessment of IOM and DTM as re-echoed by the International

Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDMC, (2015) shows that while 12.6 percent of the total figure of IDPs were displaced due to communal clashes and 2.4 per cent were displaced by natural disasters, it is scandalous, disheartening and demoralizing to know that 85 percent of the IDPs were displaced as a result of insurgency attacks by Islamist, an indication that terrorism is the bane of peace in Nigeria.

In 2018, 541,000 new displacements were recorded, 200,000 of which took place in the Middle Belt region and the rest as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East. About 2.2 million people remained displaced due to these conflicts as of the end of the year (IDMC 2018).

It is equally important to note here that some IDPs camps have become avenues for exhibition and promotion of moral decadence and laxity. This situation is typical of allegations of sexual escapades in camps in Benue State where condoms, used and unused, stain pants were seen littering in camps and famous individuals come to camps at night to take girls out (*Daily Post Online, 2017*).

Efforts are made by individuals, NGOs, religious organizations and other care-givers to improve or alleviate the ordeals of the IDPs in camps across the country. This is in tandem with Chegwe (2016)'s position where it was found that churches, NGOs and individuals contribute to their daily survival by providing food, clothes and medical supplies to these camps. In the same token, in fulfilling its corporate social responsibility, the Nigeria Mortgage Refinance Company (NMRC) in conjunction with Industrial training Fund (ITF) has commenced a vocational skills acquisition programme in the New Kunchingoro IDP, Kawa District, Abuja (NMRC, 2017).

Methodology

The study made use of primary and secondary sources of data collection. For primary source, interview, focused group discussions were used to collect data from the respondents. Five (5)

trained research assistants were used. For the secondary source of data collection, relevant data were extracted from reports, textbooks, academic journals, magazines, and from other secondary sources such as the internet and library. The In-depth Interview was designed to collect data on the causes of internal displacement, the problems of IDPS, the effects of the IDPs on the society, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs to the society. Participants in the In-depth Interview were camp officials and IDPs themselves. Focused Group Discussion was conducted among some respondents including some members of the host community. In all, 5 sessions of Focus Group Discussions were conducted in this study. The moderator and a note taker were involved in conducting the FGDs in the selected areas. Content analysis was used to analyze data generated from the two qualitative techniques of data collection, in-depth interview and focus group discussions. The researchers used the data generated from the interviews and the group discussions to analyze the challenges of post crisis resettlement in IDP camps in Abuja, by relating the outstanding points of responses to the objectives of the study.

Data Presentation

Data from the interview and group discussion were presented and analyzed on the basis of the study objectives. They include causes of internal displacement of people, problems of the internally displacement persons, effects of internally displaced persons on the society, and rehabilitation and reintegration of internally displaced persons back to the society.

Causes of Internal Displacement of People

Respondents were asked to respond to questions on the causes of their displacement. Most of the respondents attributed their causes of displacement to Boko Haram insurgency in the North East and herders/famers clashes in the North Central Nigeria. A negligible number of the respondents mentioned a combination of factors such as flood, famine, and other forms of natural

disasters. For instance, a respondent from the interview conducted in FCT has this to say:

We ran away for safety after realizing that the neighbouring villages in Borno State were destroyed and lives lost to Boko Haram insurgency in the region. At first, we were running without direction until my family, I and neighbours eventually found ourselves in a safer place. Some of us decided to stay in more habitable places temporarily for a night, or two, before proceeding to where camps exist. That was how we found ourselves here (In-depth Interview, 2019)

In corroboration to the above findings, a particular respondent, a respondent from the focus group discussions in Ohugua camp in Edo State opined thus:

We don't have any place to run to in the neighbourhood, nowhere is safe as every communities in the region is susceptible to attacks from this set of people. The only option left for us is to run out of the state in order to live. We have heard of this camp in the state and decided to come as a temporary measure (Focus Group Discussions, 2019).

Another key informant from the in-depth interview shares her view on the causes of her displacement. She said:

As a single parent for close to twenty years, I and my children left our village at the instance of the serious violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in my community. The major occupation of my people is farming; a situation where every crop in the farm is destroyed, what do you expect? We had to run in company of other villagers in the neighbourhood to the IDP

camp as a temporary arrangement before we can think of exploring other avenues (In-depth Interview, 2019).

The remaining handful of respondents attributed their displacement to a combination of factors such as: famine, flood and other forms of natural disasters.

The Problems of Internally Displaced Persons

In this section, respondents were asked to enumerate the types of problems they encounter in their respective camps. From our findings from both the Focus Group Discussions and In-depth interview, it was discovered that hunger, diseases and psychological trauma are major problems people living IDP camps are facing.

Below are some of the quotations from the in-depth interview and focus group discussion sessions to show the types of problem the IDPs are facing on a daily basis.

A key informant from the in-depth interview in camps in FCT posited that:

We are experiencing a lot of problems living here. These problems include health challenges such as dysentery, diarrhea, malaria and typhoid, as well as skin problems. Other problems we encounter are psychological. They include: not knowing the where-about of other members of the family, memory loss and worries over hopelessness (In-depth Interview, 2019).

The above view is in line with the position of a particular discussant in the focus group discussions held in Edo IDP camp:

We are hungry; we always have shortage in food supply. There is no hope for tomorrow; we are living a life of uncertainty. How the food is distributed is a serious source of worries; one is not sure of the possibility of deciding what

next line of action to take. It is so deplorable to the extent that diseases are spreading like wildfire in camps. (Focus Group Discussions, 2019).

Another key informant from the in-depth interview held in the FCT described their problems thus:

We have problems of isolation as a result of lack of communication with our people at home, how they are faring, are they still alive? If they are alive, where are they? These and other health problems we have here are enough to make life miserable and not worth-living (In-depth Interview, 2019).

The Effects of Internally Displaced Persons on the Society

In this section, respondents were asked to comment on the effect of IDPs on the society. The effects adduced by respondents include non-productiveness, liabilities, incompatibility, absence of social cohesion, over-dependence, lack of maintenance culture and non-commitment to the progress of the host communities, among others.

One of the discussants from the focus group discussions held in FCT opined that:

One of the effects of IDPs on society is that instead of being productive as was the case when they were in their respective places of origin, they have become liabilities to the nation. The working class among them who were catering for the needs of children and the aged has moved into dependent group (Focus Group Discussions, 2019).

This is in tandem with the position of another respondent in the in-depth interview conducted in Edo State who posited that:

Some of them are already used living independent life which is entirely different from what obtains in the camp here. They are fully at the mercies of the camp management team and their decisions; it is not easy to leave one's destiny in the hands of strangers who are from different socio-cultural background (In-depth Interview, 2019).

Another key informant from the in-depth interview conducted in the FCT explained the effect of IDPs on society:

Another effect of IDPs on the society is the problem of incompatibility; a situation where people of diverse social, cultural, religious and ethnic background converge in a place like this by accident and not by choice, there is bound to be problem of how to live together in peace and harmony. There is absolutely no social cohesion that will foster peaceful co-existence as Nigerians (In-depth Interview, 2019).

This is not far from what a particular discussant in the focus group discussions held in Edo State said:

Lack of maintenance culture is one of the effects of IDPs on the society. Since majority of them are from other parts of the country, there are not under any compulsion to be loyal and committed to the progress of the host communities as their stay in the camp is only for a

short while (Focus Group Discussions, 2019).

Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons back to the Society

In this section, respondents were asked to respond to the issues relating to rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs. Most of the respondents suggested the need to restore peace in their places of origin, to organise skill acquisition programme, apprenticeship scheme, vocational training and other forms of technical education.

One of the respondents in the in-depth interview in Edo State has responded that:

Before we can talk about rehabilitation and reintegration, there is the need to first of all work on how to restore normalcy to the affected areas we ran from; our sources of livelihood can be attained in those areas that we are used to. Remaining here is tantamount to continuous liabilities to governments and other stakeholders (In-depth Interview, 2019)

To corroborate the above submission, another respondent in the focus group discussions held in FCT asserted that:

The issue of rehabilitation or reintegration can only be a priority when there is peace in our lands. Do we now go back to where we came from when we here on regular basis, reports of the spate of violence taking place there? The major preoccupation should be on how to restore peace first (Focus Group Discussion, 2019).

Another key informant in FCT has this to say:

Rehabilitation and reintegration can only be achievable when there is skill acquisition programme that one can rely on whenever we get out of the camp.

I think empowerment is the foundation of any laudable form of rehabilitation and reintegration (In-depth Interview, 2019).

Another discussant stated that:

I think for any reasonable rehabilitation and reintegration to take place, there is the need to make victims acquire technical or vocational training inform of apprenticeship scheme that make them self-reliant. With this background, the IDPs can be useful to themselves and to the larger society (Focus Group Discussion, 2019).

This study has focused on the challenges of post-crisis resettlement of IDPs in Abuja and Edo State, Nigeria. This section presents the summary of major findings with respect to the study objectives. Specific recommendations with relevant policy implications were made based on these findings for appropriate understanding of the challenges of post-crisis resettlement of IDPs under study. Furthermore, specific conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study. There were four specific objectives, consequently their findings are summarily presented in the order they were stated. The study objectives were to examine the causes of internal displacement; to ascertain the problems of IDPs; to explore the effects of IDPs on the society; and to examine the process of rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs back to the society.

Summary of Findings

The main findings of the study according to the stated objectives are presented as follows: Objective one examined the causes of displacement. The result of data generated from the field in respect of this, reveals that insurgency and herders/farmers crises were major causes of internal displacement of people in camps under study. Flood, famine and other natural disasters were identified as minor causes of internal

displacement. This finding is in tandem with the position of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN):

In Nigeria, most of the incidences of internal displacement occur because of violent conflicts with ethnic religious and/or political undertones. Some incidences occur between Fulani herdsman and farmers and between government forces and armed groups (FRN, 2012:10).

Objective two examined the problems of IDPs in Abujas and Edo State. The findings revealed hunger, diseases, psychological trauma as major problems facing IDPs in Abuja and Edo State.

This finding corroborates the assertion of the FRN as stated below:

During violent conflicts or natural disasters, which force IDPs to leave houses and properties are destroyed, looted or burnt down. Most IDPs in Nigeria run to neighbouring communities that are safe, usually taking refuge in temporary shelters such as: schools, police stations, military barracks, public buildings, and places of worship, among others; having been deprived of their homes and sometimes their lands and livelihoods. This has made them to lack access to necessities of life such as food, water and shelter (FRN, 2012:11)

Objective three examined the effects of internally displaced persons on the society. After critical examination of the objective, it was discovered that non-productiveness, liabilities, incompatibility, absence of social cohesion, over-dependence, lack of maintenance culture and non-commitment to the progress of the host

communities, among others. This finding does not contradict the assertion of the FRN.

When internally displaced persons are accommodated by host communities, these communities also experience immense pressure. There is overcrowding of internally displaced persons who create informal settlements on communal and private land. There is also overstretching of social basic amenities (FRN, 2012:12).

Objective four examined the process of rehabilitation and reintegration of the internally displaced persons back to the society. The bulk of respondents suggested the needs to restore peace in their places of origin, to established skill acquisition programme, apprenticeship scheme, vocational training and other forms of technical education. This finding is in consonance with series of consultations, under the technical support and guidance of United Nations Development Programme and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2017), which took place in Abuja, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. These discussions initiated based on a request by the Resident Coordinator (RC) during his visit to North-East Nigeria. Solutions encompass voluntary return to places of origin, local integration in areas of displacement or resettlement in another location in the country.

Discussion of Findings

The result of data analysis of objective 1, which examined causes of internal displacement of IDPs, demonstrates with a great measure of conviction that violence conflicts and natural disasters were the causes of displacement in the study areas.

The result of the data generated in respect of objective 2 which examined the problems of IDPs, revealed that IDPs face a lot of problems ranging from hunger, health to psychological issues.

There is sufficient evidence based on findings from objective 3, which examined the effect of IDPs on the society. The study revealed that IDPs are like liabilities to the society as they are found to be unproductive, unpatriotic and incompatible to the norms and values of the host communities, devoid of social cohesion and lots more.

Data generated on objective 4, which examined the process of rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs back to the society, indicated that efforts should be made to restore peace to the areas that were conflict-infested before the issue of rehabilitation and reintegration can take place. On the same issues, skill acquisition, apprenticeship schemes, vocational training and other forms of technical education were recommended by respondents in order to facilitate and fast track the process of rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs back to the society.

Recommendations

This study addresses the challenges of post-crisis resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons in Abuja and Edo State. It examined in specific terms the causes of internal displacement of people, the problems of IDPs, the effects of IDPs on the society and the rehabilitation and integration of the IDPs back to the society.

The causes of internal displacement (violent conflicts and natural disasters), the problems of IDPs (hunger, health and psychological issues), the effects of IDPs on the society (incompatibility, lack of social cohesion, unproductiveness, lack of commitment to the progress of the host communities) and the rehabilitation and reintegration of the IDPs back to the society.

Based on the above findings, the following are recommended:

Violence can be addressed by engaging the insurgents, farmers and herdsmen in dialogue; it is very important to know their grievances are, so as to proffer solution to their problems.

Adequate care can be taken by government and other non-governmental bodies to improve the welfare of IDPs in camps in the study areas.

The need to preach the messages of social cohesion and unity in diversity can go a long way in solving the problem of incompatibility.

The issue of rehabilitation and reintegration can be achieved through skill acquisition programme after restoring peace in the land.

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