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SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATION OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In recent times, Nigeria has been plagued by political, religious, and ethnic crises, including issues like the indigene/settler phenomena, the Boko Haram insurgency, conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, banditry, and kidnapping. These crises have led to the displacement of a significant number of people across the country, particularly in states such as Jos, Yobe, Borno, Benue, and Zamfara. This displacement not only hampers national development but also directly impacts the country's economy. The displaced individuals, who were once active contributors to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), now find themselves separated from their livelihoods and communities. Efforts to rehabilitate these individuals have incurred significant costs, running into billions of naira for essential needs such as food, shelter, and medical care. Unfortunately, these resources, if not diverted towards addressing the consequences of conflicts, could have been directed towards crucial projects like capacity building and infrastructural development. Moreover, the psychological toll on the displaced population, which includes elderly individuals, women, youths, and children, is immense, with lingering traumatic experiences. Of particular concern is the impact on the productive sector of the economy, with many youths—essential for economic growth—being unable to fulfil their potential due to their displacement and the ensuing challenges. This research seeks to delve into the effects of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) on the overall framework of National Development, shedding light on the multifaceted implications arising from these crises.

Keywords: Development, Implication, Internally Displaced Persons, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The internal displacement of individuals within Nigeria is a critical issue influenced by a variety of factors, including inter-communal conflicts, insurgency, and environmental catastrophes such as floods and desertification. These displacements not only disrupt lives and fracture communities but also strain resources, presenting significant socio-economic hurdles to national development (Hamzat, 2013; IDMC, 2013; Ladan, 2012).

Those affected by internal displacement often endure violations of their human rights, loss

of livelihoods, and fragmentation of social structures. The repercussions of these displacements resonate throughout society, affecting education, healthcare, and economic stability. The educational prospects of children are hampered by disrupted schooling, leading to diminished future opportunities (Hamzat, 2013).

From an economic standpoint, host communities experience heightened pressure on resources, encompassing jobs, housing, and services, thereby worsening poverty and inequality (Ladan, 2012). Displacement strains social cohesion, fostering tensions

between communities and displaced populations, which, in turn, impede efforts towards peacebuilding (Hamzat, 2013).

Moreover, displaced populations place additional burdens on already strained local infrastructure, reducing its ability to adequately support the needs of both displaced individuals and existing residents (IDMC, 2013). The socio-economic repercussions of displacement are interwoven, amplifying the challenges faced by the affected individuals and communities.

2. Literature Review

Research on internal displacement within Nigeria has extensively delved into its socio-economic implications, unveiling the multifaceted challenges and repercussions for national development. The existing literature highlights the profound impact of internal displacement on various societal and economic facets.

Numerous studies emphasize that internal displacement disrupts access to education and healthcare, especially impacting children. Disrupted schooling and limited healthcare services result in diminished human capital, leading to decreased future earning potential and productivity among displaced communities (Hamzat, 2013; Idris & Yusuf, 2019).

The influx of displaced populations strains already scarce resources in host communities. Heightened competition for jobs, housing, and services escalates poverty and inequality, further impeding economic progress (Olayiwola & Ogunleye, 2016; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020).

Internal displacement disrupts social cohesion, exacerbating tensions between host communities and displaced populations. Conflicts stemming from resource disputes,

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of these implications, a thorough literature review spanning from 2010 to 2022 has been conducted, drawing insights from academic articles, reports, and policy papers (Hamzat, 2013; IDMC, 2013; Ladan, 2012). By utilizing keywords like "internal displacement," "Nigeria," and "socio-economic implications," this review aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics of internal displacement and its far-reaching effects on national development.

cultural disparities, and ethnic differences impede peacebuilding initiatives and reconciliation efforts, thereby hampering social stability and overall development (Kälin & Schrepfer, 2017; Idris & Yusuf, 2019).

The growing population of displaced individuals burdens local infrastructure, impacting roads, water supply, and healthcare facilities. This strain compromises the ability of host communities to adequately support both displaced and resident populations, further impeding overall developmental endeavors (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020; Olayiwola & Ogunleye, 2016).

Despite the obstacles posed by internal displacement, studies also underscore the resilience of affected communities and the potential for recovery. Effective policies and interventions focusing on addressing root causes, sustaining livelihoods, and fostering social cohesion can bolster the resilience and recovery of displaced populations (Kälin & Schrepfer, 2017; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020).

While current literature offers valuable insights into the socio-economic impact of internal displacement on national development in Nigeria, gaps persist in

understanding the long-term implications and trajectories of displacement. Specifically, there is a paucity of research on the efficacy of policies and interventions aimed at mitigating the adverse consequences of displacement and promoting sustainable development in affected regions.

Furthermore, there is a necessity for more comprehensive studies that scrutinize the roles of governance structures, institutional frameworks, and local capacities in responding to internal displacement and fostering resilience in communities. Therefore, this ongoing research endeavours to fill these gaps through a thorough exploration of the enduring implications of internal displacement on national

development in Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to:

- I. Evaluate the efficacy of current policies and interventions designed to alleviate the negative socio-economic impacts of internal displacement.
- II. Delve into the prolonged socio-economic effects of internal displacement on individuals, households, and communities.
- III. Identify best practices and lessons from prior responses to internal displacement in Nigeria to inform the development of targeted interventions and policy recommendations that advance sustainable development and resilience in affected areas.

3. Study Area

Nigeria, situated on the western coast of Africa, falls between latitudes 4°16' and 13°53' north and longitudes 2°40' and 14°41' east (World Atlas, 2021). Encompassing an expanse of approximately 923,768 square kilometres, Nigeria stretches from the Gulf of Guinea on the southern Atlantic coast to the peripheries of the Sahara Desert in the north (World Bank, 2022). Bordered by the republics of Niger and Chad to the north, the Republic of Cameroon to the east, and the Republic of Benin to the west, Nigeria's territorial boundaries are clearly demarcated (World Atlas, 2021).

As the most densely populated nation in Africa, Nigeria boasted a population of

140,431,790 individuals as per the 2006 Population and Housing Census conducted by the National Population Commission. The populace predominantly comprises three primary ethnic groups: the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Igbo in the southeast, and the Yoruba in the southwest (BBC News). Additionally, the remaining population is fragmented across four hundred other ethnic groups, contributing to the country's rich cultural tapestry (World Bank, 2022).

Nigeria is organized into thirty-six states along with the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja, exhibiting notable disparities in terms of territory, population, and economic development throughout its regions (World Population Review).

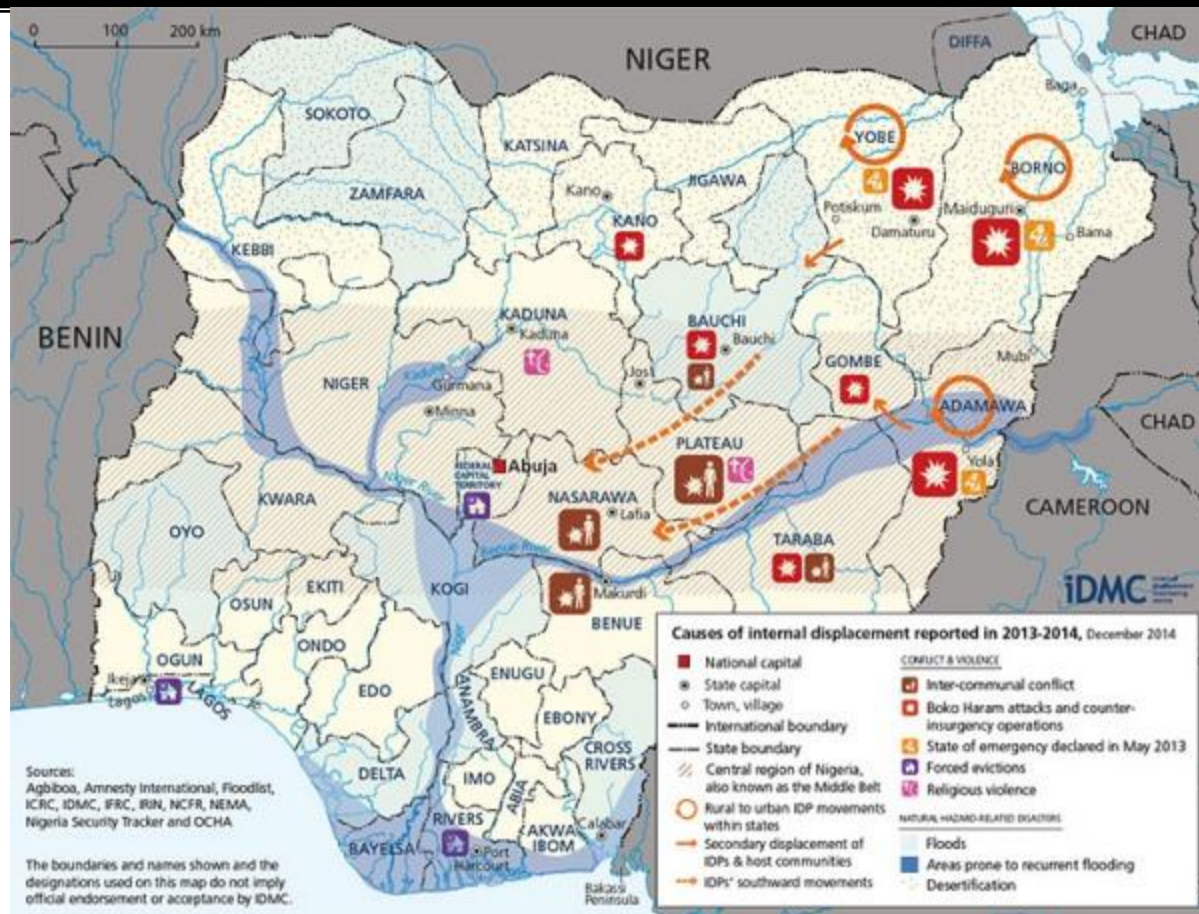


Figure 1: Adopted Map of Nigeria Showing cases of internal displacement

Source: Adapted from the administrative map of Nigeria (2023)

4. The effectiveness of existing policies and interventions aimed at mitigating the negative socio-economic impacts of internal displacement in Nigeria.

An evaluation was conducted to assess the outcomes and impacts of diverse measures implemented by a range of stakeholders, encompassing government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international humanitarian actors.

4.1 Government Policies and Interventions:

Government agencies in Nigeria have implemented various policies and interventions to address internal displacement. These include the establishment of camps or settlements for displaced populations, provision of relief aid

such as food, water, and shelter, and efforts to facilitate the return and reintegration of displaced persons into their communities of origin. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of coordination among government agencies, and corruption have often hindered the effective implementation of these policies (Olayiwola & Ogunleye, 2016).

4.2 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs play a significant role in assisting internally displaced persons in Nigeria. These organizations often fill gaps in government services by providing humanitarian aid, psychosocial support, healthcare services, and livelihood support to affected populations. NGOs also engage in

advocacy and capacity-building initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of displacement and promoting long-term solutions. However, funding constraints, security risks, and bureaucratic hurdles limited the effectiveness of NGO interventions (Idris & Yusuf, 2019).

4.3 International Humanitarian Actors

International organizations such as the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and various bilateral and multilateral donors also play a critical role in responding to internal displacement in Nigeria. These actors provide financial support, technical expertise, and logistical assistance to both government and non-governmental partners. They also advocate for the protection of displaced persons' rights and support efforts to find durable solutions to displacement. However, coordination challenges and limited funding have hampered the effectiveness of international humanitarian efforts (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020).

5. The role of governance structures, institutional frameworks, and local capacities in responding to internal displacement and fostering resilience in affected communities.

This was conducted by analyzing the decision-making processes, resource allocation mechanisms, and coordination mechanisms employed by relevant stakeholders in managing displacement crises. At the national level, specialized ministries, or departments, such as those for internal affairs, social welfare, or disaster management, are typically entrusted with addressing displacement issues. These entities spearhead policy formulation,

1. Individuals:

- i. **Loss of Livelihoods:** Research shows that internal displacement often results in the loss of livelihoods, particularly for those engaged in agriculture, informal labour, or small

coordinate responses, and allocate resources. Similarly, regional or provincial governments often establish their agencies or departments to address displacement, working closely with national authorities to implement tailored strategies.

Local governments, being closest to affected communities, play a pivotal role in frontline response and service delivery. They frequently establish task forces, committees, or resolute units to manage displacement within their jurisdictions. Within this structural framework, various roles and responsibilities emerge. Governmental entities are tasked with policy formulation, coordination of response efforts, resource allocation, and establishment of legal frameworks to safeguard the rights of displaced individuals.

Coordination mechanisms are crucial within this framework to ensure effective response and collaboration. Inter-agency coordination mechanisms facilitate cooperation among different governmental bodies, NGOs, international organizations, and community groups. Public-private partnerships are also fostered, enabling collaboration with the private sector to leverage resources and expertise. Additionally, meaningful engagement with affected communities ensures their participation in decision-making processes and helps incorporate their perspectives into policies and programs.

6. Socio-Economic Implications of Internal Displacement on Individuals, Households, and Communities

Internal displacement can have profound socio-economic implications on individuals, households, and communities.

businesses. Displaced individuals may struggle to find employment opportunities in their new locations, leading to increased economic insecurity.

ii. **Psychological Distress:** Studies indicate a high prevalence of psychological distress among internally displaced persons (IDPs), including symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These mental health challenges can impede individuals' ability to work, further exacerbating economic difficulties.

iii. **Access to Healthcare:** Internal displacement can disrupt access to healthcare services, particularly for those with pre-existing medical conditions or disabilities. Research highlights barriers to healthcare access faced by IDPs, including financial constraints, lack of transportation, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure in displacement areas.

2. Households:

i. **Erosion of Assets:** Studies have found that internal displacement often leads to the erosion of household assets, including land, property, and savings. Displaced households may be forced to sell assets at below-market prices or incur debt to meet immediate needs, compromising their long-term financial stability.

ii. **Education Disruption:** Research indicates that internal displacement can disrupt children's education, with many IDP households reporting school dropout rates due to displacement-related factors such as relocation, loss of documentation, or lack of access to educational facilities in displacement areas. This can have long-term

implications for household income and socio-economic mobility.

iii. **Food Insecurity:** Internal displacement can exacerbate food insecurity among households, particularly in contexts where displacement coincides with agricultural disruptions or limited access to food assistance. Studies have documented higher levels of food insecurity among IDP households compared to non-displaced populations, with implications for nutrition and health outcomes.

3. Communities

i. **Strain on Local Resources:** Internal displacement can strain local resources and infrastructure in host communities, particularly in areas with limited capacity to absorb large influxes of displaced populations. Research suggests that host communities often face challenges in providing adequate shelter, healthcare, education, and other essential services to both displaced and resident populations.

ii. **Social Cohesion:** Studies have explored the impact of internal displacement on social cohesion within communities, with mixed findings. While some research suggests that displacement can foster solidarity and support networks among community members, others highlight tensions and competition over scarce

resources, particularly in contexts of protracted displacement.

- iii. **Economic Opportunities:** Internal displacement can also affect local economies, both positively and negatively. While displacement may stimulate demand for goods and services in host communities, it can also disrupt markets, particularly in sectors reliant on migrant labour or trade with areas of origin.

7. Best practices and lessons learned from past experiences in responding to internal displacement in Nigeria

Identifying the best practices and lessons learned from past experiences in responding to internal displacement in Nigeria is aimed at informing the development of context-specific interventions and policy recommendations for promoting sustainable development and resilience in affected areas:

i. Contextual Understanding and Local Engagement

Effective responses to internal displacement in Nigeria require a comprehensive understanding of the local context, including the socio-economic, cultural, and political factors that drive displacement. To tailor interventions to the specific needs and priorities of affected populations, it is necessary to engage with local communities, traditional leaders, and civil society organizations.

ii. Integrated Approaches and Multi-Sectoral Responses

Successful responses to the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) should integrate multiple sectors such as shelter, food security, health, education, and livelihoods. Fragmented and sector-specific responses may result in inefficiencies and

gaps in service delivery. To maximize impact and promote sustainable development outcomes, coordinated and multi-sectoral responses are crucial.

iii. Protection and Rights-Based Approaches

Prioritizing protection concerns and adopting rights-based approaches are crucial for safeguarding the dignity and well-being of internally displaced persons (IDPs). This includes ensuring their access to legal assistance, psychosocial support, and gender-sensitive services, and addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities. Failure to address protection concerns can worsen their vulnerabilities and hinder the recovery and resilience efforts of displaced populations. Upholding human rights principles and international humanitarian law is vital in all aspects of displacement response and recovery efforts.

iv. Community-led and Participatory Approaches

Involving the communities affected by a decision in the decision-making process and program design can lead to more positive outcomes in terms of ownership, resilience, and sustainability. When we empower local people and build on their existing skills, we can create interventions that are more effective and culturally appropriate. Conversely, top-down approaches that do not consider local knowledge and preferences may lead to resistance, mistrust, and disengagement. Therefore, it is essential to have meaningful participation and collaboration with the affected communities to promote inclusive and sustainable development outcomes.

v. Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding

To effectively tackle the underlying reasons behind internal displacement, it is imperative to adopt conflict-sensitive approaches that encourage peace, reconciliation, and social harmony. Investing in conflict resolution

mechanisms, facilitating dialogue, and inter-communal reconciliation initiatives can aid in reducing tensions and preventing future displacement. It is crucial to comprehend the conflict and understand the conflict dynamics that are context-specific to avoid aggravating existing tensions or creating new sources of conflict while addressing displacement. Integrating peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts into displacement response strategies is imperative for promoting sustainable peace and development.

vi. Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening

5. Conclusion

The aforementioned effect of internally displaced persons which was a result of communal clashes, insurgency, kidnapping/armed banditry, natural disasters and farmers/pastoralist conflicts have led to the destruction of infrastructures, the deplorable standard of living of persons displaced, food insecurity, lower standards in education and so forth in the nation. therefore, an attempt to cushion these effects by the Nigerian government because of funding from both private and public spheres has been unattainable as these crises and displacement seem to continue

However, the most daunting effect of the crisis is the colossal loss of lives (human power) and the dislocation of persons from their means of livelihood that could have impacted the development of the country, because the human force is the fundamental structure in the development of societies. It is therefore in the absence of violence, conflict, natural disasters, or insurgency that meaningful development can be visible with the funds channelled into it to avert displacement. The funding of IDPs has become necessary because of conflicts and natural disasters that have bedevilled the

Strengthening the capacity of local institutions, government agencies, and civil society organizations is important for effectively responding to displacement crises and maintaining sustainable interventions for a long time. Poor institutional capacity and governance structures can reduce the effectiveness and sustainability of displacement responses. Therefore, investing in institutional training, partnership, and strengthening can improve local resilience and promote sustainable development outcomes.

country, this has led to the need to rehabilitate the persons affected and restructure the damaged infrastructures.

6. Recommendations

Based on the effects observed regarding internally displaced persons in Nigeria, several recommendations are proposed to address these challenges effectively:

To prevent future displacement crises, it is essential to proactively implement measures targeting communal conflicts, insurgency, kidnapping, armed banditry, natural disasters, and disputes between farmers and pastoralists. Strengthening early warning systems can help anticipate and mitigate potential crises, while investing in conflict resolution mechanisms and community engagement is crucial for addressing underlying causes.

A primary focus should be placed on the rehabilitation and development of infrastructure in displacement-affected areas to improve living conditions and support recovery. Allocating resources for rebuilding damaged infrastructure and enhancing access to critical services such as water, healthcare,

and education is imperative for sustainable progress.

Supporting livelihoods and aiding economic recovery among displaced individuals is vital. Developing programs that facilitate job opportunities, vocational training, and entrepreneurship can empower them to achieve self-sufficiency and enhance income-generating capabilities.

Ensuring the well-being of displaced populations, adequate food security measures should be in place to address their nutritional needs. Furthermore, providing psychosocial support and mental health services is crucial for addressing the trauma and emotional distress experienced by displaced persons.

Promoting sustainable development and building resilience are integral aspects of long-term planning. Incorporating resilience-building strategies into development plans can help reduce vulnerability to future crises.

Fostering community cohesion and social inclusion is key to fostering long-term stability and peace within affected regions.

Effective response and recovery efforts necessitate enhanced coordination and collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, international entities, and local communities. Prioritizing transparency and accountability in the allocation and utilization of funds for the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons and the rebuilding of infrastructure is paramount.

Developing long-term strategies that tackle the root causes of displacement is essential for sustainable development. Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, identify challenges, and adapt interventions accordingly will be critical in ensuring the effectiveness of implemented measures.

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