

Challenges of Conflict-Induced Displacement among Rural Communities of Kaga LGA, Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

At a global scale, people in their millions are forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence in the last few years, because of armed conflicts, internal strife or systematic violations of human rights. Unlike refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) have not crossed an internationally recognized State border, but rather seek refuge in another part of their country, which renders their situation basically complicated. Typically, this movement is characterized by the occurrence of large-scale violations of human rights, but IDPs benefit from no clearly defined institutional responsibility or protection. This study highlighted the socioeconomic and health challenges of conflict-induced displaced persons. The study focused on two IDP camps in Benisheikh where 200 survey questionnaires were administered for accurate information about the challenges face by the IDPs in their various camps. Twenty household heads were interviewed, ten household heads from each IDP camp. The information obtained from the study was analyzed using descriptive analysis while the results were presented using Microsoft excel. The study found that people flee their homes for fear of death when they could no longer satisfy the demand placed on them by the Boko Haram of paying tributes. The study also discovered that death of love ones, loss of accommodations, food shortage, loss of business and loss of farm land are the major challenges so far faced by IDPs in

the study area. The study also shows that IDPs situations are worse compared to before displacement.

Keywords: Conflict; force displacement; IDPs; rural; socioeconomic; Benisheikh

Introduction

Armed conflict is one of the main problems plaguing the world today, leading to numerous security problems as well as humanitarian catastrophes. Africa is among the regions of the world that it has impacted. There are now armed conflicts in the Sahel region of Africa involving insurgent groups, military, and extremist groups. United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement define internally displaced persons (IDPs) as "Persons or group of persons who have been force or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters". The current ratio of internally displaced persons to refugees is two to one. Reintroducing internal displacement to the global agenda is imperative, according to NRC Secretary General Jan Egeland. Record has it that 6.9 million people were internally displaced due to conflict in 2016, according to the Global Report on Internal Displacement (IDMC/GRIP, 2017).

The insurgency known as Boko Haram originated in northeastern Nigeria and has since extended to

neighboring nations and other states. The Boko Haram insurgency, which has lasted for more than ten years, has caused more than 3.9 million people to be displaced in Nigeria, of whom 2.1 million are internally displaced (UNHCR, 2021; IOM, 2021). Attacks by Boko Haram are widespread in northern Nigeria, where states including Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa are thought to be directly impacted (Dunn et al., 2018). Many of the survivors of these attacks have fled to neighboring states in search of protection and a means of subsistence; as internally displaced persons, they frequently dwell in organized camps (UNHCR, 2021).

In addition to being uprooted from their ancestral lands, internally displaced people (IDPs) may also lose their belongings, their means of subsistence, their loved ones, and their health. This is a problem that internally displaced people, or IDPs, deal with on a daily basis. Living in relief colonies or camps, their circumstances are comparable to those of refugees since they are compelled to flee their homes, severing ties with the community, witnessing the breakdown of families, experiencing unemployment, and having little to no access to food, shelter, land, or education (Adhikari, 2011).

The study aims to examine the socioeconomic and health challenges faced by Displaced persons among rural communities of Kaga LGA, Borno State. The study was based on the following objectives:

- i. To examine the factors influencing the decisions of respondents to flee their homes and
- ii. To identify the socioeconomic and health challenges faced by the displaced persons.

Literature Review

Effect of conflict-induced Displacement

The displaced are impacted when they are uprooted from their homes. The relocation puts their health at risk, leading to major health issues and malnourishment issues. Reduced income can result in an inability to pay for healthcare services, and overcrowding in host areas is likely to increase pollution and infections. Owoaje et al. (2016) asserted that compared to the local community, IDPS had a higher risk of communicable diseases. Among populations affected by violence, internally displaced people have the poorest nutritional results (Martin et al., 2020). The overcrowding in the many IDP camps, particularly in Nigeria, results in a shortage of medical professionals and medications for the efficient treatment of illnesses linked to the overpopulation in the camps. Given the foregoing, it is important to remember that health

interventions for internally displaced people (IDPs), including water treatment, can play a critical role in managing communicable illnesses by lowering the incidence and prevalence of diarrhea by 90% and over 80%, respectively (Ekezie et al., 2020).

According to a study by Delgado et al., (2021) on Food Systems in Conflict and Peacebuilding, violent conflict will have an impact on food systems (Delgado et al., 2021). Violent conflict will specifically have significant impacts on the market, food production, and human capital involved in production through the displacement, injury, maiming, or death of skilled farmers, farmworkers, and roving pastoralists. This will result in a limited availability of food resources because producers, such as farmers and herders, will no longer have access to their fields, livestock, and pastures. As a result, there will be a decrease in the availability of food resources. Additionally, Lusiani and Nisadina's study from 2024 examined how food shortages and the welfare of Burkina Faso's citizens are impacted by the country's military conflict. The analysis's findings demonstrated that Burkina Faso's population was forcibly relocated as a result of armed conflict in the area, which is the primary cause of the country's continued hunger and malnutrition.

Kemmerling et al. (2022) claim that in addition to causing the collapse of agricultural production and the deterioration of infrastructure in the

site of origin, conflict-induced displacement also interrupts and disrupts local and regional supply networks and raises the cost of food in local markets. In addition, those who are displaced must abandon their careers as food producers (farmers and pastoralists). Thus, if they are unable to resume their agricultural endeavors, they run the risk of experiencing food insecurity themselves (Kemmerling et al., 2022).

The impact of internal conflict on primary and secondary school students during displacement in Jalozei camp was examined in a study conducted in 2021 by Ullah et al. The household survey was therefore carried out at the Jalozei IDPs camp. According to the survey results, displacement brought on by conflict has a detrimental effect on primary and secondary education levels. The influence on secondary education is more dangerous, though. Most secondary school dropouts were female due to a combination of socioeconomic and cultural factors. Additionally, the violence had an impact on the socioeconomic standing of the displaced people who were marginalized, which in turn had an impact on the education of the displaced children (Ullah et al., 2021).

Internal Displacement in Nigeria: The North-east tragedy

Nigeria has a history of internal displacement; draught, flood, ethnic warfare, and religious conflict, among the potential causes of all these

internal displacement causes, none has drawn international attention and resulted in a greater number of displaced individuals than the formation of Boko Haram. In the view of the national and international community, Boko Haram is more unique than any other insurgency in Nigeria due to the style of its attacks and the number of people it has displaced (SEM, 2016).

The activities of Boko haram involve incessant killings, bombings, abductions, burning of homes and places of worship which has displaced millions of people especially in the north-eastern region of Nigeria (Brechemacher 2019, US Department of State 2014). The States facing the prevalence of these attacks include Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Kogi, Plateau, Taraba, Yobe (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2020). States like Adamawa, Borno and Yobe recorded about 1.8 million people facing internal displacement with over 7 million across Nigeria in need of urgent aid and assistance, women constituting a large percentage of the displaced population (HRW 2020). What is now termed as the BAY States (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe) currently records the highest and largest number of IDPs. The IDP camps are estimated to host about 1.68 million persons displaced by the Boko Haram violence, with about 528,000 IDPs situated in Maiduguri, Borno State. Current data shows that more and more, the instability and violence

rise especially in the Northeast (DTM, 2020, ICRC 2016).

Therefore, this study seeks to build on these scholarly works by providing information on the actual situation of IDPs in the study area. This research aims to examine the socioeconomic and health challenges faced by conflict-induced displaced people living in Benisheikh, Kaga LGA of Borno State's.

The Study Area

Benisheikh is the headquarters of Kaga Local Government Area of Borno State, Nigeria. It has an area of 2,700 km² and a population of 90,015 at the 2006 census. It is one of the sixteen LGAs that constitute the Borno Emirate, a traditional state located in Borno State, Nigeria (Wikipedia, 2017).

Data and Methods

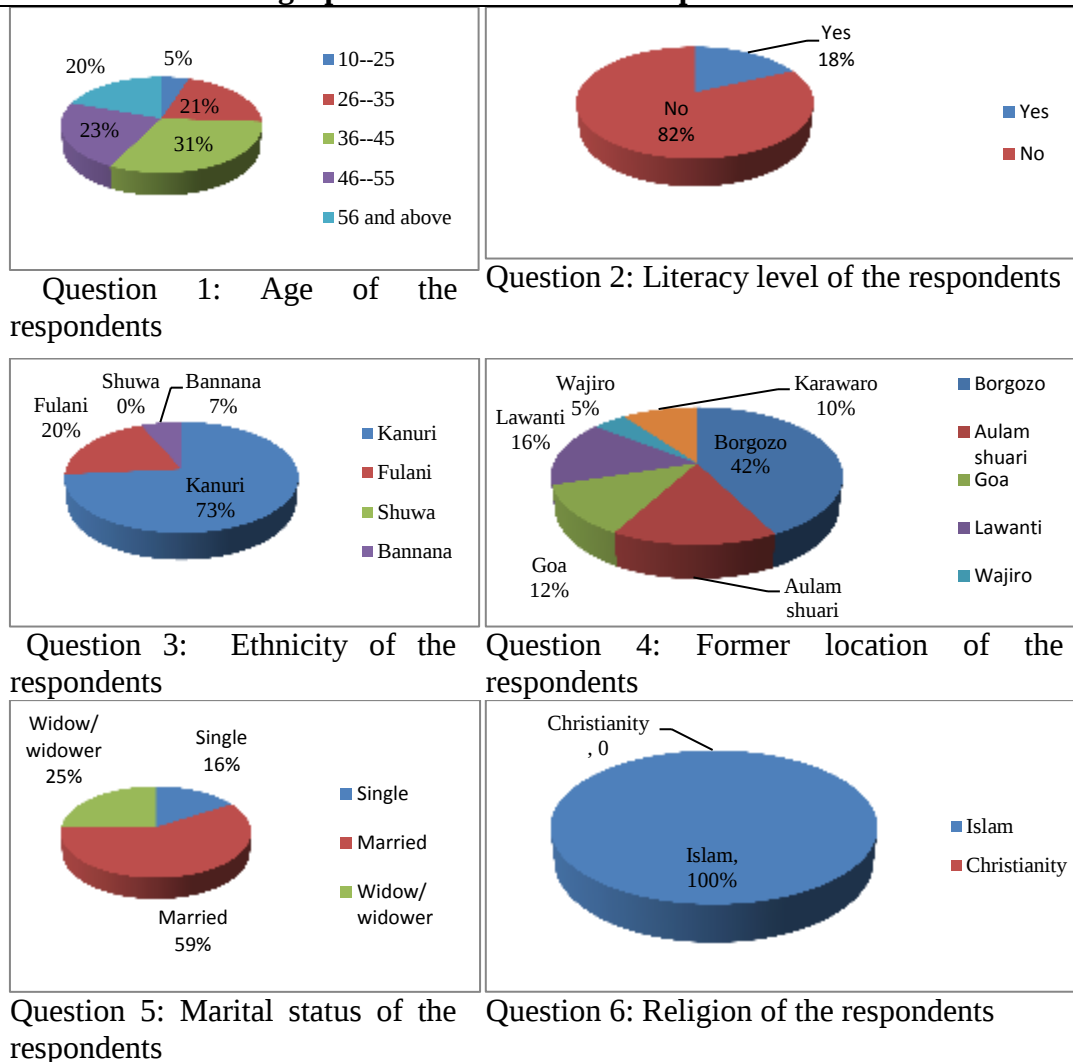
In this study, primary and secondary data were also employed. The primary data were gathered in two Benisheikh IDP camps, the NRC IDP camp and the Police Barack IDP camp, through focus groups, observations, and interviews with the IDPs. The secondary data were gathered from websites of organizations and publications, which are secondary sources, in order to determine what literature already existed regarding the effects of relocation brought on by conflict on the impacted populations. The selection of the study locations was based on the security situation and physical accessibility to the areas. Due

to the fact one of the authors is of Kanuri descent, the language barrier was overcome. In the camp, the researcher provided a place for respondents to stay so they could meet him for the interview rather than conducting door-to-door interviews. This could be due to the respondents' religious beliefs. In addition, only male interviewees were found to respond to questions in the NRC IDP Camp; female interviewees who were sent to the interviewer declined to answer questions, stating that they were ashamed to speak with men. A structured survey questionnaire was used to collect data; 200 in total, 100 per IDP camp; descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data, and Microsoft Excel was used to present the findings.

Results and Discussion

As shown in Table 1, question 1, the participants are chosen from different age groups in order to get an idea of the impact of age on the results. The Table shows that most of the respondents were within the age bracket 36-45 (31%) years. This implies that most of the respondents are mature enough to state the challenges they are facing while in IDPs camps. Question 2, which is on the literacy level of the participants, shows that the majority of the respondents within the study, IDP camps, are illiterate (82%). While those claimed to be literate are 18%, out of which are Arabic study and

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristic of Respondents



Source: Field survey, 2023

primary education (IDMC/GRIP, 2017), this shows how poor the western education is in the northern part of the country, Nigeria. The majority of the respondents are of Kanuri ethnicity (73%). See question 3 in Table 1. The interviewees cut across different settlements within the northern part of Borno State, such as Karawa, Wajiro, Lawanti, Goa, Aulan

Shuari, and Borgozo, which carries the highest percentage (42%) of the respondents interviewed, according to question 4, which reveals the former location of the respondents. Question 5 indicates that 59% of the respondents are married; this indicates that majority of the respondents are responsible with people under their cares. Singles are 16%, while 25% fall under widow/widower. 100 percent of

the respondents are of Islamic faith, which shows that the northern part of Borno State is predominantly Muslim.

Table 2: Factors for Displacement

Reasons for forceful displacement	Yes	No
Asked to join BokoHaram	180	20
Contribute money for BokoHaram	145	55
Contributing food for BokoHaram	160	40
Fear of being killed by BokoHaram	195	5

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 2 presented the factors that influenced the decision of the displaced persons to flee their homes. From table 2, 195 respondents claimed the flee their homes for fear of being killed by Boko haram, 180 respondents agreed that they were asked to join the Boko Haram sect, 160 out of 200 respondents claimed they were

requested to contribute food to the sect soldiers. While 145 were asked to contribute money for the progress of the sect. The study found that the Boko Haram sect is using the armless rural populace as source of reinforcement of their foot soldiers. The respondents flee when all their means to resist the Boko haram demands have failed. This confirmed research (Adhikari, 2011) which says they will flee only when all the means to resist flight have been exhausted.

Beside recruitment of respondents into the Islamic sect, the study also found that, the respondents were forced to pay tributes to the sects either in cash or in kind and those who tried to behave contrary were killed by the sect soldiers. The respondents opted to flee their villages when they could no longer cope with the cruel demands placed on them and they were not ready to join or wait to be killed by the Boko haram sect.

Table 3: Socioeconomic and Health Challenges of Displacement

Item	Frequency	Percentages	Ranking
Loss of farm land	200	100	1
Inadequate food supply	197	99	2
Inadequate accommodation	194	97	3
Loss of love ones	190	95	4
Disconnection from love ones	188	94	5
Loss of animal herds	176	88	6
Hatred from the host community	172	86	7
Inadequate security	150	75	8
Physical torture	90	45	9
Inadequate health facilities	80	40	10
Inadequate of potable water	76	38	11

Physical threat	50	32	12
Sexual harassment	52	26	13
Loss of business	48	24	14

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 3 focused on the challenges that the respondents are facing in the IDP camp. Two hundred (200) respondents, that is 100% of the respondents, agreed that loss of farmlands was the major challenges so far faced by the IDPs, followed by others such as inadequate food supply, inadequate accommodations, loss of love ones, disconnection from love ones, loss of animals, hatred from the host community and inadequate security which were ranked (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th) respectively by the respondents. However, the respondents considered some challenges to be less serious such as physical threats 32%, sexual harassment 26% and loss of business 24%, they are ranked 12th, 13th, and 14th respectively. Research by Christiansen and Harild (2009) states that, apart from security issues and a lack of government will, the most common obstacles to durable solutions faced by IDPs in displaced situations are lack of access to livelihoods and basic services, inadequate housing, and the inability to enjoy their homes and land as economic assets.

The majority of the people in the study area are farmers whose livelihood depends on the cultivation of farmland as their major source of income. Some of them have their farmland either

through inheritance known as family land or bought from another. These people cannot longer have access to farmland at the host community which end up truncating their standard of living. This also created a circle of abject poverty in the lives of respondents in the study area. As land is often central to economic activities such as agriculture, livestock rearing, and trade, forceful displacement of people can lead to instability, which disrupts local economies and social structures.

Regarding food scarcity, the respondents ran and left their farm produced in their various villages during the conflict. At the host community, they have no access to farmlands to produce what they can feed their families and sale to cater for the family needs which resulted to limited food production, low income, high commodity prices, making it harder for respondents to obtain both qualitative and quantitative amounts of food. The study found also that some NGOs were supplying the IDPs with food and relief materials. However, respondents were complaining about the distribution approaches employed by the NGOs staff. According to the respondents, most of the NGOs staff were indigenes of Benisheikh the host community, whenever relief materials were brought for them, the NGOs staff

will always start sharing from their people, and before getting to the IDP camps, the relief materials may have finished or remained little, so it can't go round the IDPs. The respondents also accused the NGO Staff of selling some part of relief materials for their selfish interests.

All the respondents claimed to have lost at least one family member as a result of Boko haram attacks. This rendered many orphans, widows and widowers. The killings of their love ones by the Islamic set is one of the major factors that triggered their movement out of their communities to a safer heaven. In addition to that, those that were into small scale business loss their business to conflict during displacement and they couldn't continue at the host community due to lack of fund and favorable environment for business. This increase the rate of poverty among the displaced persons in the study area.

The accommodation challenge was very glaring when we visited the IDPs camps in the study area. Most respondents claimed to owned better residential houses at their villages before the conflict-induced displacement, few claimed to owned zinc roofed houses. They are now living in tents in the camps. Those using NGO tents are better of compare to those using local tents. We sighted some displaced persons inside local tents that were not well covered and are leaking during raining season, in facts, those tents were not habitable humanly but they are without choice

than to manage the available despite exposure to cold and dust. This finding is in consonant with study by Joel (2023) on the socioeconomic impact of displacement in Nigeria. The author found that IDPs faces challenges of inadequate shelter, sanitation and access to safe water.

As for herding business has gone to total comatose, as the animals were no more and fund to acquire others animals is also not available. This implies that they have lost their source of food and income. These people are poor peasant farmers who are armless, with low economic capacity, and can't adopt defensive measures, were the same people terrorized by Boko haram Islamic sects who claimed to be fighting the government for not treating the masses well, what an irony. This agrees with research findings conducted in Colombia by Ibanez and Velez (2008) which states that landowners, young individuals, and households with fewer economic privileges and therefore with a lower capacity to adopt defensive measures are more likely to be terrorized.

As regard health care challenge, the IDPs in the study area claimed they have no problem because NGOs are taking care of that aspect. During the camp visit, some clinics, such as the NRC clinic, Medecins Sansfrontiers, and Benisheikh Primary Health Care were sighted and were operational. According to the respondents, they faced health challenges and recorded death cases

only at the initial stage when they ran to Benisheikh the host community, but after a while, when the health facilities, both for government and NGOs, started operating, it brought them succor and reduced the health challenges they have been facing. Boreholes were also sighted in both IDP camps visited. This is why the issue of water was also not considered as severe problem by the IDPs. Though sexual abuse and rape of women are said to be common in most IDP camps, according to most literature, this study found the opposite. It may be that the respondents are afraid to speak out and face the consequences of their oppressor or were ashamed to voice out such vices against their children. No arm personnel or youth volunteers were sighted in any of the camps visited, but they were located in the strategy areas within the study area. During the interview with the household heads, they were asked where they prefer to stay. The majority of the interviewees were of the opinion that their villages were the best option for them to go back to. Their reasons were that anywhere they go to, they will be considered second class citizens, while in their home towns or villages, they are first class citizens. Secondly, they have more economic opportunity at home than anywhere. This may be connected to their educational and skill level; they are primarily farmers, and staying where there wouldn't be a piece of land for farming would definitely not be

favorable to them. Furthermore, they can't mingle freely with people as people consider them to be Boko haram members, and if they are caught where they are not known, it will take the grace of God for them to survive. For these reasons, they preferred their villages to any other place. Despite the above reasons, 35 respondents preferred Benisheikh, where they are camping now, to the villages where they came from. While five interviewees go to other places than their villages and Benisheikh, where they are presently staying,

Conclusion

People around the world have been forced to flee throughout human history, and leaving one's home is an extremely difficult decision to make. It was discovered that respondents flee when they found that their lives are in danger. the lack of adequate monitoring of relief materials from the store to the point of distribution has contributed to the plight of the IDPs. Some of the distribution staff are not honest in discharging their duties; therefore, the items are not reaching the targeted people. Also, giving relief materials to IDPs by philanthropists through the government is and most of the time, not helping matters in curtailing the challenges of the IDPs. People are not ready to leave where they are established because of their investment, if not for conflict. When people are forcefully displaced, they loss most of their possessions and rights (land, accommodations,

business, families, and peace). Large welfare losses justify policy intervention. Moreover, poorer families experience larger welfare losses. However, police and military protection can mitigate displacement. While a police presence prevents direct threats, a military and police presence are instrumental in protecting the population once displacement is imminent.

Recommendations

From the above findings, the followings are recommended for betterment of the conflict induced displaced persons in the study area.

1. Government should reinforce security outfits across the study area to ends Boko haram cruel activities and curtail forceful displacement of ruralites.
2. Government and NGOs should monitor their distribution of relief materials from point A to point B to avoid diversion and ensure that the target populace get what is theirs.
3. The displaced persons should engage in unskilled jobs available in their host community to curb financial challenges. They should also learn new skill where necessary.
4. Government and NGOs should improve on their health facilities in the study area.
5. Government and NGOs should provide befitting accommodations for the

conflict-induced displaced persons.

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