

# The Impact Of Internal Displacement On Women And Children In Nigeria

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*Abstract: Thousands of Nigerians have fled their homes and places of habitual residence to avoid the harmful effects of insurgency, inter-ethnic conflicts, herdsmen/farmers clashes, and natural disasters. Some of the displaced people live in IDPs camps while others fled to other communities and regions within the country. This forced/involuntary migration subjects the displaced people to untold hardship and bitter experiences. The vulnerability of displaced women and children subjects them to further deprivation, abuse and psychological trauma. This paper examines the economic, sexual and psychological dimensions of the negative impacts of displacement on women and children. The focus is on: the plight of displaced women, most of whom had hitherto been economically "inactive" by virtue of traditional feminine gender roles which has not prepared them to fend for themselves and others; the danger of sexual abuse and its consequences which displaced women and girls are predisposed to; the plight of children who suffer deprivations and poor socialization by virtue of displacement; and the psychological trauma occasioned by displacement. The paper concludes with recommendations on how the problems identified in this paper could be addressed.*

*Keywords: displacement; deprivation; vulnerability; abuse; feminine role; Nigeria.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The forced displacement of civilians from their homes has been on the increase in the recent past. By virtue of lost social and economic ties, displaced persons suffer undesirable physical and psychological hardship. Over the years, thousands of people worldwide have fled their homes and abandoned their means of livelihood by virtue of eruption of violence or other forms of threats. The internally displaced people are people who have fled their homes because of violent conflict and persecution arising from insurgency, communal clashes, natural disasters, inter-ethnic conflict etc. There are two categories of such people: those who flee to foreign countries to seek refuge (the refugees) and those who remain within their national borders (the internally displaced persons). This paper focuses on the plight of internally displaced women and children in Nigeria. They are internally displaced in the sense that they remain within Nigerian borders. According to IDMC's estimate there are almost 2,152,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigeria as of

31 December 2015 (IDMC 2016). IDMC reports that the figure is based on an assessment conducted from November to December 2015 by the International Organization for Migrations (IOM) and Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) team in 207 Local Government Areas (LGA) covering 13 States of Northern Nigeria: 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); Nasarawa (37,553); Plateau (77,317); Taraba (50,227); Yobe (131,203); and Zamfara (IDMC 2015). The worrisome situation is further exacerbated by the poor condition of living and hardship that they are exposed to. Over 1.5 million displaced persons are kept in overcrowded school, empty government buildings used as camps across northern regions while others run to other communities/towns to seek refuge. These camps are characterized by inadequate basic amenities and are supervised by the National Emergency Management Agency (Ventures Africa, 2015). Majority of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria are women and children with over 50% of the total IDPs. According to IDMC

(Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre) 2015 report, there are almost 2,152,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigeria composed of 53 % women and 47% men. More than 56% of the total IDP populations are children of which more than half are about the age of 5 years, while 42% are adults. 92% of IDPs were displaced by the insurgency (Biola 2016). These vulnerable categories (women and children) suffer from different problems such as poverty, psychological trauma, malnutrition, sickness, insecurity in the camps, and lack of access to education etc.

## II. INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AND FORCED MIGRATION

Internally displaced persons refer to people who flee their homes or places of residence for safety by virtue of circumstances beyond their control. The United Nations Guiding Principles on IDP's defines the IDP's as *persons or group of persons who have been forced 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 effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human – made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border* (UNHCR, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 2005).

The above definition connotes the involuntary movement of people who flee from places of violence but remain within their national borders. A number of factors account for the involuntary movement of people to other locations for safety purposes. These include armed conflict, insurgency, inter-communal clashes, violations of human rights, and natural or human-made disasters etc. The description of internally displaced persons given above does not apply to people who willingly migrated to other regions of their country in search of better means of livelihood as a result of unfavourable economic condition.

According to Wikipedia (2016), forced migration refers to *the coerced movement of a person or persons away from their home or home region*. It often connotes violent coercion, and is used interchangeably with the terms "displacement" or forced displacement. Forced migration is a situation whereby people are uprooted from their homes by virtue of violent conflict resulting from political, social, economic, religious, cultural and ethnic differences. Whatever the cause may be, forced migration subjects the victims to untold hardship. Forced migration is not a new phenomenon as people across the globe have been forced to flee their homes for various reasons. According to Idra (1999) many generations have been displaced as a result of armed conflict worldwide and a significant number of people have been displaced more than once

Forced migration connotes coerced movement of a person or persons away from their home or home region. Someone who has experienced forced migration is a "forced migrant" or "displaced person" (Wikipedia, 2016). According to the International Organization for Migration, a forced migrant is any person who migrates to "escape persecution, conflict, repression, natural and human-made disasters, ecological

degradation, or other situations that endanger their lives, freedom or livelihood."

The term forced migration includes not only refugees and asylum seekers, but anyone forced to leave their homes by violence, persecution, development projects, natural disasters or man-made catastrophes. Stephen (2005) maintained *that majority of the forced migrants flee for reasons not explicitly recognized by international refugee law, and many of them are displaced within their own country of origin.*

## III. REFUGEES VERSUS INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)

The United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951 defines a refugee as a person residing outside his or her country of nationality, who is unable or unwilling to return because of a 'well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion'. To ensure the implementation of the 1951 convention, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was given the mandate to ensure that the provisions of the convention are carried out. By this definition, most forced migrants who have not crossed an international border, are not regarded as refugees and are therefore not protected by this convention. The 1969 *Refugee Convention of the Organisation of African Unity* (OAU) broadened the refugee definition to include people fleeing war. Many African states follow this practice, but most Northern states do not. Instead, in the 1990s, the notion of *temporary protection* for war refugees was introduced, especially for those fleeing the violence in former Yugoslavia. This means giving protection either for a fixed period or for the duration of the conflict. After this, return home is expected and may be enforced Stephen (2005). Stephen further stated thus: *"The 1951 Convention was originally limited to Europe and to persons who became refugees due to events occurring before 1 January 1951. The 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees removed these geographical and temporal limits. As of 2004, 145 of the world's approximately 190 states had signed either the 1951 Convention or the Protocol, while 139 states had signed both. It is worth noting that none of the South Asian countries, which have some of the world's largest refugee populations, have signed the Convention. Member States that are party to the Convention undertake to protect refugees and to respect the principle of non-refoulement (that is not to return refugees to a country where they may be persecuted). This may require a state to allow refugees to enter and to grant them temporary or permanent residence status. Officially recognised refugees are often better off than other forced migrants, as they have a clear legal status and enjoy the protection of UNHCR."*

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) on the other hand refer to "persons who, as a result of persecution, armed conflict or violence, have been forced to abandon their homes and leave their usual places of residence, and who remain within the borders of their own country" (UNHCR 1997, 99). IDPs tend to be poorer and have fewer social connections and are currently far more numerous than refugees, yet are often without any effective protection or assistance. There are no

international legal instruments or institutions specifically designed to protect IDPs, although they are covered by general human rights conventions. The Internal Displacement Division of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (IDD of UN-OCHA) advocates a set of *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, which summarise international law in this area, and are designed to encourage governments to adopt appropriate measures in dealing with internal displacement. In international law, IDPs are the responsibility of their own government, since they have not crossed international borders, yet it is often this very government that has persecuted and displaced them (Stephen 2005).

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

NESRI (2012) summarizes the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as follows: The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement issued by the Secretary General of the United Nations identify internationally recognized rights and guarantees of persons who have been forcibly displaced from their homes due to a number of factors, including natural disaster. As aforementioned, those who have been displaced from their homes but have not crossed international borders are not refugees, but rather “internally displaced persons.” National authorities are primarily responsible for ensuring that the human rights of internally displaced persons are respected; however, the guidelines are relevant to intergovernmental agencies, non-governmental agencies and local authorities as well. The guiding principles are summarized thus:

- ✓ Internally displaced persons shall enjoy equally all the rights and freedoms as other persons in their country.
- ✓ Every human being has the right to dignity and physical, mental and moral integrity.
- ✓ Internally displaced persons have the right to request and to receive protection and humanitarian assistance from national authorities.
- ✓ Certain internally displaced persons, such as children, especially unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, female heads of household, persons with disabilities and elderly persons, shall be entitled to any necessary special protection and assistance.
- ✓ All internally displaced persons have the right to an adequate standard of living. At the minimum, regardless of the circumstances, and without discrimination, competent authorities shall provide internally displaced persons with and ensure safe access to: (a) Essential food and potable water; (b) Basic shelter and housing; (c) Appropriate clothing; and (d) Essential medical services and sanitation. Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of women in the planning and distribution of these basic supplies.
- ✓ All wounded and sick internally displaced persons as well as those with disabilities shall receive to the fullest extent possible and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention they require, without distinction on any grounds other than medical ones. When necessary, internally displaced persons shall have access to psychological and social services. Special attention should be paid to the health needs of women, including

access to female health care providers and services, such as reproductive health care, as well as appropriate counselling for victims of sexual and other abuses. Special attention should also be given to the prevention of contagious and infectious diseases, including AIDS, among internally displaced persons.

- ✓ Every human being has the right to respect of his or her family life. To give effect to this right for internally displaced persons, family members who wish to remain together shall be allowed to do so. Families which are separated by displacement should be reunited as quickly as possible.
- ✓ Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Such authorities shall make efforts to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons.
- ✓ Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration.
- ✓ Every human being has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. To give effect to this right for internally displaced persons, the authorities concerned shall issue to them all documents necessary for the enjoyment and exercise of their legal rights, such as passports, personal identification documents, birth certificates and marriage certificates. In particular, the authorities shall facilitate the issuance of new documents or the replacement of documents lost in the course of displacement, without imposing unreasonable conditions.
- ✓ Authorities have the duty and responsibility to assist returned and/or resettled internally displaced persons to recover, to the extent possible, their property and possessions which they left behind or were dispossessed of upon their displacement. When recovery of such property and possessions is not possible, authorities shall provide or assist these persons in obtaining appropriate compensation.
- ✓ The Guiding Principles shall be applied without discrimination of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, legal or social status, age, disability, property, birth, or on any other similar criteria.

#### IV. CASES OF VIOLENCE-INDUCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN NIGERIA: 1999 TO 2015

Since the advent of democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed many conflicts induced by politics, ethnicity and religion. On the reasons for these protracted conflicts, Ayodele (2004) attributed the occurrence of violence in Nigeria to failure of government in the maintenance of law and order. According to him, conflicts and violence in Nigeria are the products of the weak character of the Nigerian State and the inability of governmental institutions which are equally weak

to ensure law and order. Adeniji (2003) argues that land, space and resource availability, Jurisdictional disputes between Monarchs, disregard for cultural symbols and pollution of cultural practices are major causes of violence and conflicts. . In his contribution, Olu (2008) maintained that conflict and violence are the by-products of poverty, military intervention in politics, citizen's apathy to the State, and elitist greed and manipulation.

The first violent conflict that erupted in democratic Nigeria transpired in the Niger Delta region. The perpetrators of this violence were the Niger Delta militants who adopted it as a means of expressing their grievances over many years of pollution meted out on the region by the government and the oil companies. The emergence of this militia group was occasioned by the need to address long years of neglect and deprivation, coupled with the insensitivity of successive governments and lack of corporate social responsibility from trans-national oil companies operating in the region; and the Nigerian security forces (Omojeje and Adesote, 2011).

IDMC (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2009) reports that consequent upon this violent conflict, about 60,000 people were displaced during Odi crisis in Bayelsa State.

In February 2000, there was a religiously induced violence in Kaduna State in which lives were lost and many were displaced from their homes. IDMC (2014) reports that thousands of people were displaced in Kaduna State as attempts were made to implement sharia law in that state.

Between 2000 and 2002 a lot of people fled their home as a result of inter-ethnic violence that took place in Taraba, Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue States which were caused by land disputes. Dunmoye (2003) reports that *"a major factor of communal conflicts in the zone is land or boundary disputes. This shows that land is becoming a very scare factor of production either due to population pressure, land alienation or concentration of land in a few hands."*

In 2001 thousands of people were displaced following religious clashes that erupted in Jos, the capital of Plateau state (Best, 2011; HRW, 2006). Many settled in temporary camps or permanently in neighbouring Bauchi state (Blench, 2003).

According to the Federal Commissioner for Refugees, about 600, 000 people were uprooted from their homes as a result of communal clashes between 1999 and 2005 (ThisDay, April 17, 2008).

Over 23, 700 people were displaced over series of land disputes that broke out in Gombe and Adamawa states between 2003 and 2007.

Plateau State was again in 2004 bedevilled by violence over the right of ownership/control of land, power and resources (Kunle 2013). As a result of this crisis, lives were lost while several people were displaced from their homes. By virtue of the protracted crisis a state of emergency was declared in 2004 in the state. According to President Obasanjo (2004), the then Nigerian president, the declaration of state of emergency in Plateau State governed by Joshua Dariye in 2004 was as in reaction to the communal conflict over land and boundary which led to the killing and the displacement of many people. He further stated that:

*Violence has reached unprecedented levels and hundreds have been killed with much more wounded or displaced from*

*their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification. Schooling for children has been disrupted and interrupted; businesses have lost billions of naira and property worth much more destroyed.*

In 2008, riot erupted in Jos, Plateau state between Christians and Muslims over the result of a local election on 28 and 29 November 2008. Two days into the rioting, The Nigerian Red Cross Society reported that at least 761 people lost their lives while 10,000 people fled their homes due to the riots and were living in government-provided shelters (Wikipedia 2008). IRIN (2008) account has it that the IDPs of both religious groups reportedly found refuge together in makeshift camps around Jos city, which consists of temporary camps in mosques, churches, army barracks and hospitals. At the beginning of December, the Nigerian Red Cross had registered some 14,000 IDPs in 13 camps (ICRC, 4 December 2008).

In 2009 about 4500 people were displaced as a result of the sectarian violence that broke out in Bauchi State. Many of those who fled the violence ran to schools and two army barracks in the city, afraid to return to their homes, according to Bauchi police commissioner Adanaya Tallman Gaya (IRIN 2009).

Prior to Amnesty declaration for the militants in the Niger Delta region by Alhaji Yar'Adua in August, 2009, thousands of people fled their home following clashes between government forces and Niger Delta militants. The Joint Task Force (JTF), launched land and air strikes in Warri, Delta State, and later extended its offensive to neighbouring Rivers State (Reuters, 24 May 2009). The violence resulted in about 11, 000 civilians uprooted from their homes, while several casualties were recorded (IRIN 2009). Those who fled their homes alive sought safety in schools, hospitals, and forests. Most of the people that were being hosted in the hospital were reportedly women and children, and while the men who were arrested on suspicion that they were militants encouraged other men to remain in hiding in the bush (FoE-Nigeria, 19 June 2009). In 2009 still, displacement of persons was also occasioned by clashes between a terrorist group and the Nigerian army. The crisis which started in Bauchi later spread to neighbouring states of Borno, Yobe and Kano, culminating in displacement of several other people. According to ICRC report (2009), 3,500 to 4,000 people reportedly fled the violence across the four states. The IDPs found refuge in police and army barracks. Due to the activities of the Boko Haram sect, over 90, 000 people fled their homes for safety in late December 2011, and over 100 others killed leading to the declaration of state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, Plateau and Niger by President Jonathan (ICG, 2 Jan. 2012; The Economist, 14 and 23 Jan. 2012; Reuters, 9 April 2012). In the same vein, Refworld (2012) reports that following the post-election violence that erupted in 2011, clashes between the Boko Haram sect and security forces, inter-communal clashes across Nigeria, thousands of people were displaced.

In 2012, over 2 million people were internally displaced in Nigeria by widespread flooding resulting from heavy rainfalls (NEMA, October 2012)

IRIN (March, 2013) estimated 350,000 people were displaced out of which 290,000 people were internally displaced. In May, Internal Displaced Monitoring Centre

(IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), in a report titled "Global Overview 2014: people internally displaced by conflict and violence," stated that the number of internally displaced persons in Nigeria was approximately a third of the IDPs in Africa and 10 per cent of IDPs in the world. By mid- October 2013, Nigeria was reported as the third highest country with IDPs in the world. The report stated that 470,500 persons were displaced in Nigeria while Syria and Colombia had 6.5 million and 5.7 million displacements respectively (IRIN 2013).

According to the 2014 report of the IDMC and the Norwegian Refugee Council, out of the 33 million internally displaced persons all over the world, Nigeria accounts for 3.3 million representing 10 per cent of the total as at May 2014. (IDMC 2014)

According to NEMA, The National Emergency Management Agency the number of Internally Displaced Persons in the country as at Jan. 15, 2015 was 981,416.

In December 2015, Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre estimated that there were almost 2,152,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigeria (IDMC 2016). The report states that the IDP population is composed of 53 % women and 47% men. More than 56% of the total IDP population are children of which more than half are up to 5 years old, while 42% are adults. 92% of IDPs were displaced by the insurgency. The majority of the current IDP population was displaced in 2014 (79%). The IDPs come mainly from Borno (62%), Adamawa (18%) and Yobe (13%). 87% of IDPs live with host families while 13% live in camps (DTM 2015).

#### NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DISPLACEMENT ON WOMEN

Internal displacement causes breakdown of family structure, adversely affects education, nutrition, health, emotions and virtually all spheres of lives of the victims. The impact of displacement is felt more adversely by the most vulnerable categories of society: women, children and the aged. Responding to the plight of displaced women and children, President Muhammadu Buhari, in his visit to Malkohi IDPs camp in Yola was reported to have described the condition of the IDPs as unfortunate, stressing that the children were the worst hit (Ynaija.com 2016). According to Ynaija.com, the Director General of NEMA, Mr Sani Sidi, told the President that: "at present, the camp had 80 pregnant women and 175 unaccompanied children". In the same vein, Marama, Yusuf & Ojeme of Vanguard Newspaper on 18th February, 2015, reported that the IDPs in their respective camps were experiencing "incidents of unwanted pregnancies, rape, child labour/trafficking and sexually transmitted diseases".

#### V. THE IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC GENDER ROLES ON DISPLACED WOMEN

Gender relations are culturally defined in ways that create, reinforce, and maintain male dominance and female subordination. This is reflected in cultural allocation of gender roles whereby the prerogative to participate in certain economic activities, own and control resources, etc. is ascribed

to men. Gender roles are the functions or responsibilities which each society assigns to individuals on the basis of their gender, based on the norms and values of that society. There are traditional gender roles in virtually all societies. Though some societies have experienced changes in traditional gender roles, most African societies, continue to adhere strictly to their cultural prescriptions on what are considered males' or female's roles. Idowu (2011)

Through the socialization process within the family, in educational institutions and other facets of society, males and females are taught to play roles and imbibe behavioural patterns considered culturally appropriate for their gender. Through reward and punishment, they are persuaded to conform to established cultural norms and values. In most cultures, women are forbidden from engaging in certain economic activities. The ownership of land and other resources is arrogated to men while women are only encouraged to play supportive roles and be submissive to their husbands and other male members of the family. This institutionalized stereotyping produces women who are economically dependent on men.

Displacement disrupts the source of income of the victims, and subjects them to severe hardship (Chukwuji, 2009). Forced migration negatively impacts on women more than men. For example, changes in gender roles in situations of conflict arise when women are forced to assume responsibilities hitherto held by men. Women with children in most cases make up the majority of the IDPs population (UN Economic and Social Council 2004).

Traditional Gender roles are largely a function of cultural determinism. They originate from cultural beliefs, institutions, and practices. Ibe (2010) states that through gender socialization, males and females learn the gender roles considered appropriate by their culture. He maintained that through gender role socialization, people observe, imitate, and internalize the culturally prescribed attitudes and behaviours through direct instruction and using other males and females as role models.

In virtually all Nigerian societies, traditional gender roles require that men engage in economic activities as the breadwinners of their families while women should perform domestic chores at home. Consequently, men are exposed to more opportunities to work, learn skills, trade, and occupy positions of authority where decisions are made while women learn about caretaking and nurturance. Regarding the cultural discrimination against women in terms of access to resources and participation in economic activities, Udoka (2011), states that societies impoverish women by arrogating the ownership and control of resources to men, leaving women at the mercy of men. In the same vein, Ike (2009) argues that through patriarchy, the societies tend to justify the unjustifiable discrimination against women in various spheres of life. In his contribution, Ola (2010) opined that:

*Women are culturally made to believe that the home is their sphere of influence and should therefore not compete with men in economic, political and social activities. The fact however remains that women can compete favourably with men if the cultural limit placed on them through gender roles is removed. This is further exacerbated by patriarchy which is used to justify the domination of men over women*

It is worthy of mention that not all displaced persons live in IDPs camps. Some live in camps while others flee to other communities deemed safe within the country. Displacement causes disruption of family structure and change in gender roles. Males who had hitherto provided the financial needs of their families get separated from their families in time of displacement. The consequence of this is that the family members who had depended on them for material provisions, protection, care etc. are left impoverished and vulnerable to various forms of abuse. According to UNICEF (1998), men tend to serve or are suspected to be serving as combatants in time of conflict. As a result, they go missing, are killed or become disabled while in combat. Consequently, their displaced wives become heads of households which had hitherto been occupied by men. As a result, heavy burden is placed on women since their traditional gender roles have limited their economic opportunities and access to resources. The difficulty faced by women in providing for themselves and their households in the camps or places of refuge is because of their cultural norms and values which hold that the place of women is in the home. Insecurity in camps also deters them from engaging in economic activities if there is opportunity to do so. One could imagine the plight of women who had been economically inactive when displacement separates them from their husbands who had been their sources of supplies as 'breadwinners' of their families. In a situation whereby it is culturally unacceptable for women to establish and manage businesses, or go out of the home without being accompanied by male relatives, such women would become helpless and unable to fend for themselves when uprooted from their families as a result of violence or disaster. When the family structure that supports this arrangement that men should work while women should perform domestic chores is destroyed by displacement, women are incapacitated and impoverished, and therefore face serious challenges on how to meet their needs. OCHA (September, 2014) reports that vulnerable IDPs women including children displaced in Yola town, Adamawa state, have been forced to engage in survival sex to meet their basic needs.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that the negative impact of displacement is heavier on women by virtue of the fact that they have been culturally raised to be dependent on men for their material needs. In event of displacement when the male breadwinners are not available to provide for the women, it becomes virtually impracticable for them to fend for themselves. Consequently they remain at the mercy of donors who are rarely available.

#### HEALTH ISSUES

According to OCHA (2014), health was commonly cited among the top three needs of the displaced population. Ynaija.com 2014 reported the case of about 80 pregnant women in malkohi IDPs camp in Yola. One could imagine the reproductive health issues these women would face as a result of deliveries without trained birth attendants. Poor nutrition, poor sanitation, and communicable disease compromise the state of women's health. Lack of reproductive health services, including treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, put

displaced women at higher risk of maternal mortality. In certain cultures, women don't seek health services from a male practitioner. This also poses more health challenges to displaced women who may not have access to female health practitioners. Displaced persons are faced with health challenges as a result of lack of access to health care services and children usually suffer the most from inadequate health care. On the health challenges faced by IDPs in north-east, IDMC (2014) stated thus: *IDPs and host communities in the north-east have only limited access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, leading to a decline in health and hygiene among both IDPs and their host communities. Public latrines in informal camp-like settings such as schools are often non-existent or unusable. Defecation and the disposal of children's waste in the open are common, particularly in urban or densely populated host communities. Open defecation raises health, security and dignity issues, particularly for women and girls, and creates tension with host communities. The contamination of water sources has contributed to cholera outbreaks in a number of displacement sites in Biu, Borno state.*

#### HOMELESSNESS, POVERTY AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Displacement renders the victims homeless and thereby makes them prone to attack and abuse. Many displaced women are forced into prostitution by lack of adequate shelter. By sleeping in open places, market stalls, and under the bridges at night, they easily fall prey to sexual abusers or they are forced to engage in transactional sex as a means of survival. IDMC (2014) states that *majority of IDPs in Nigeria take refuge in host communities. This may involve staying in the homes of family or friends, paying for temporary accommodation or seeking refuge in makeshift camp-like settings such as schools, sports centres, churches, mosques and university campuses. When none of these options are available, IDPs may be forced to shelter in abandoned buildings, on the streets of urban centres or on the outskirts of villages. Makeshift camps are often grossly inadequate, becoming quickly overcrowded and unsustainable (IDMC interview with OCHA, October 2014).* IRIN (2013) reported that some IDPs have resorted to seeking refuge in the bush as a result of lack of access to safe shelter. The situation is further worsened by hunger which makes them to resort to begging. Faced with this predicament many women could eventually turn to prostitution as a means of survival while adolescent girls may be given out in early and forced marriages. Furthermore, displacement and poverty resulting from it could lead to early and forced marriages in order to reduce the burden of providing the financial needs of the family in situations where displaced parents can no longer provide the material needs of the family. One of the consequences of sexual abuse and exploitation on women is rapid spread of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. The situation is made worse by inadequate or lack of health services for the IDPs.

It is culturally considered the duty of women to perform domestic chores. Displaced women in IDPs camps could be sexually abused in the form of rape in the course of searching

for water and firewood, in compliance with this feminine role. The consequence of this is unwanted pregnancy or the victim could contract sexually transmitted diseases. Apart from the physiological and psychological effects of sexual abuse on women, it could also lead to abrupt dissolution of marriages by men who may begin to detest their sexually abused wives.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence refers to violence targeted to a person because of their gender. Frustration-aggression theory states that when people perceive that they are being prevented from achieving a goal, their frustration is likely to turn to aggression. The inability of displaced male heads of households to provide their material needs and that of their families could result to frustration-induced aggression being manifested in the form of domestic violence. The stress, uncertainty, and deprivation that characterize displacement can cause men to vent their anger and frustration on their vulnerable wives and children.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT

Displacement subjects women and children to post traumatic disorder after being frightened by their experiences during violent conflict or war. Goldstein (2001) buttressed the psychological consequences of exposure of victims of violence-induced displacement to abuse and violence. He stated thus: *following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal experience of actual threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity, the common denominator of traumatic experiences is a feeling of intense fear, helplessness, and loss of control and threat of total destruction. He identified stressful traumatic experience to include rape, exposure to the dead and the wounded, which cause significant symptoms throughout their lifetime. He noted that emotional stress which emanates from the break-up of marriages and the family at large is common among the displaced person.*

Ursano (1994) maintained that the dangerous and sudden nature of traumatic events make them to cause fear, anxiety, withdrawal and avoidance. Violent conflict is followed by living in conditions of uncertainty, fear and anxiety which continue to negatively impact the displaced persons. This unpleasant experience is further exacerbated by the unfortunate killing of husbands and children which render the affected women widows and childless.

#### THE PLIGHT OF DISPLACED CHILDREN

Displaced children may have lost their parents, siblings, homes and significant others to violent conflict. Consequently, displaced children become vulnerable, helpless and impoverished. Those who stay with their parents after displacement are not better-off since their parents have lost their means of livelihood, making it difficult or impossible for them to meet the needs of the displaced children. Thus, displacement forces children (who cannot fend for themselves) to suffer from unmet needs. According to IDMC (2014) report,

assistance for those living in IDPs, when provided is inadequate.

#### MALNUTRITION AND DISEASES

The Premium Times News and Guardian Newspaper reported that children were the victims of all the 450 deaths caused by malnutrition recorded in 28 Borno State IDPs camps in 2015. According to Mr Sule Mele (NEMA Executive Director) these children were between age one and five and 209,577 children were screened for various illnesses, including malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and vomiting. He said, about 6,444 severe cases of malnutrition were recorded in the camps, 25,511 have mild to moderate symptoms, while 177,622 among them were not malnourished (Ynaija.com, March 8, 2016).

Many of the displaced children die within a short period after displacement due to various kinds of diseases, malnutrition, and lack of access to basic facilities including healthcare facilities (Ayomide, 2015). Displaced children also suffer stunted growth due to extended poor nutrition.

#### POOR SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is a process of cultural learning whereby members of society or group acquire necessary skills and education to play a regular part in a social system. Socialization is the process of fitting individuals into particular forms of group life, transforming human organism into social being and transmitting established cultural traditions. Socialization takes place at different stages such as primary, secondary and adult. The primary stage involves the socialization of the young child in the family. The secondary stage involves the school and the third stage is adult socialization.

Poor socialization occurs when children are inadequately socialized. Children suffer most when displacement spans over a long period of time. Displacement destroys the family structure which is the agent of primary socialization of the children. Consequently, the avenue for children to properly learn the established cultural traditions of their society is destroyed. Sometimes, children lose their parents to violent conflict thereby making adequate socialization of the victims impossible. The consequence of this is that the victims are rendered prone to deviant behaviours or they find it difficult to fit in properly into their society if eventually they return to their societies.

Displaced children also miss education during their formative years, undergo immeasurable trauma and psychological stress.

#### CHILD LABOUR

Furthermore, Child labour is bound to occur among the IDPs as a by-product of pitiable economic condition of displaced parents who cannot fend for their families. Threatened by hunger and lack, IDPs families may resort to sending their children to work, hawk or beg for arms as a means of survival. Consequently, children who are supposed

to go to school are denied their fundamental right to education as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

#### ORPHANS

Violent conflict results in killing of parents whom their children depend on, for the supply of their basic needs. When this happens, displaced orphans run to communities where they have no relatives and consequently, they tend to suffer most. They suffer from lack of emotional succour which is supposed to be provided by parents, unmet needs, poor or lack of socialization, loss of identity and privileges enjoyed by "legitimate" children of their communities and could be overwhelmed by feeling of alienation etc. Though the national policy on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria, July 2012 provides that such children could be adopted on the condition that:

- ✓ The new parents must ensure that he/she attains full educational development as their biological children;
- ✓ That the child shall not be subjected to child abuse;
- ✓ That the child shall be fully integrated into the family and treated equally like other biological children;
- ✓ That the child shall be entitled to honours such as traditional titles where he/she so merits it, and shall not be discriminated against just because of his/her being an internally displaced child; v. Under no circumstance shall the child be reminded that he/she is adopted from an internal displacement camp; and
- ✓ That the adoption of the child is perpetual, not reversible and non- renounceable.

There is every tendency that these conditions would be violated by the adopting parents since there is no defined ways of ensuring that they (the conditions) are adhered to.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Internal Displacement, which has subjected thousands of Nigerians to pitiable and precarious condition, remains a pressing issue in Nigeria. Consequent upon the unresolved causes of displacement in Nigeria, new situations of internal displacement continues to occur. Undoubtedly, the government of Nigeria has spent huge amount of money to curb insurgency and other forms of violence. However, the persistent occurrences of violent conflicts leading to displacement of thousands in Nigeria shows that government approach to curb violence has to be reviewed. Though displacement negatively impacts on all the victims, women and children tend to suffer more due to their vulnerability and susceptibility to various forms of exploitation, abuse, neglect.

#### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ There is need to redefine gender roles, giving men and women equal opportunities to engage in economic activities that would make them economically independent. A situation whereby women are made to perform only domestic chores without engaging in economic activities renders them impoverished and

helpless in event of displacement which separates them from men they had solely depended on

- ✓ The rights of displaced women and children as contained in the national policy on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria, July 2012 should be strictly enforced.
- ✓ Skill acquisition programmes should be organized for internally displaced women to enable them fend for themselves and their children.
- ✓ Displaced orphans should be first adopted by the government and provided with their basic needs, as well as education and subsequently allow well-meaning Nigerians to adopt them after thorough investigation into the profile and capabilities of the intending adoptees. This is to ensure that they are not subjected to abuse at tender age.

Children don't know what to do when abused by their parents and wards. Therefore, the displaced children for adoption should also be properly educated on the action to take in case they are subjected to any form of abuse by the adopting parents.

Violence is a major cause of displacement in Nigeria. Using military action to quell violence in Nigeria has not yielded positive and lasting results. Therefore, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- ✓ Most of the violent conflicts which have led to internal displacement in Nigeria were religiously and politically motivated. Therefore, political and religious leaders from all the geopolitical zones of Nigeria should organize reorientation programmes to urge the people they represent to sheath their swords at all times and embrace dialogue instead of violence whenever they feel aggrieved.
- ✓ Frustration leads to aggression, which would in turn result in violence which displaces people. The government should therefore find solutions to the sufferings and hardship facing the people in order to avoid violence resulting from frustration and aggression. Enabling environment should be created for the people to meet their needs.

Intelligence gathering and surveillance are powerful keys to successful crime prevention. The security agencies should therefore use more of information gathering to detect impending conflict situations and take preventive measures. Furthermore, since the law enforcement agencies are not omnipresent, they need to build cordial relationship with the civilians in order to get useful information from them that would enable them prevent and curb violence. They need information from the citizens to function effectively.

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