

The Socio-Economic Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria: the Role of Government and NGOs

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Abstract

The quest for sustainable development will remain elusive in the absence of a stable polity. It is more so for societies/countries that are largely developing and agrarian. Thus, internal displacement resulting from whatever factor, poses serious challenge to governance in any nation. This study examines the efforts/measures of various agencies in addressing such challenges. Specifically, it isolates and assesses the roles of government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social works in this regard. Data is sourced from such secondary materials such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, the internet, etc. Its method of analysis is essentially qualitative while running in parts like – introduction/definition of internal displacement, socio-economic challenges, government measures at stemming the challenges of IDPs, and the roles of NGOs, their impact/success/failures. The findings of the study reveal a significant positive impact of the measures adopted by all agencies which has not translated to a hundred percent success. Hence, it recommends increased, sustainable effort back up by a good measure of foreign intervention.

Keywords: *Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Socio-economic challenges, Non-Governmental Organizations, Sustainable development, Government.*

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Background to the Study

Internal displacement is a global phenomenon and nations have varying experiences. Nigeria's worst experience occurred thirty (30) years ago during the Biafran war (1967-1970) as some two million people died while ten million became internally displaced. It is worthy of note that such magnitude of displacement has not been repeated ever since. However, about 500,000 people were forced to flee their homes after ethnic violence rocked the nation in October 2001 with the majority of them returning to their homes by mid-2002. Available statistics suggest that towards July 2002, a total of at least 30,000 people remained internally displaced in Nigeria. This figure is mainly composed of a remnant of the June/July 2001 clashes involving Tivs in Nasarawa and Taraba states as well as people still displaced after the October 2001 violence in Benue state involving Tivs and the Jukun/Military, an experience that is not peculiar to this country. Thus, while the Biafran war is often cited in Nigeria, there are also myriads of instances resulting from intra-state and intra-regional armed conflicts such as the Liberation struggle in Guinea- Bissau (1963-1973), the Casamance Independence Movement in Senegal (1980s till recently); the Mauritanian conflict of 1989, the conflict which tore apart the River Mano countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone (1999-2000), and the Nigerian – Cameroun Bakassi Peninsula conflict. Worthy of mention again include the post electoral crisis in Cote d' Ivoire (2010-2011), the political crisis in Mali and the South Sudan, as well as the current Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria (Global IDP Project Report, 2002).

The pattern of displacement in Nigeria is characterized by unplanned sudden movements of people seeking protection from violence. Oftentimes, the displaced persons head for villages where they are in the majority. Many IDPs are also sheltered in camps especially those who do not have family or ethnic relations in the vicinity. Men prefer to keep watch over their crops and property in the villages for fear of destruction. This accounts for the under-representation of male adults in IDP camps. Some of the major incidents of displacement since June 2001 are as listed below-

- 1 June 2001: ethnic fighting between Tivs and Hausa- speaking Azaras in Nasarawa state which displaced some 50,000. Fighting spread to Taraba state in July 2001, creating a further 25,000 IDPs. Some 1,800 people remained in Benue state as at July 2002.
- 2 September 2001: religious violence between Hausa-Fulani Muslims and indigenous Christians in Plateau state displaced 60,000, most of whom returned later.
- 3 January 2002: revenge attacks on Christians in Plateau state which led to the displacement of more than 3,000 people. All returned later.
- 4 February 2002: ethnic clashes in Lagos between Yorubas and Hausa-speaking northerners displaced over 2000 people who returned by July, 2002.
- 5 October 2000: Tiv-Jukun/ Army violence as stated earlier.

Internal population displacement has become an issue of serious concern to many scholars in recent times following the insecurity and human tragedy associated with it. Besides, one issue that mostly dominates discussions on internal population displacement at global, continental and national levels is conflict- communal conflicts. With the return to civil rule in 1999, Nigeria has been affected by recurrent internal conflicts and generalized violence which have resulted in the displacement of many innocent people across the six geo-political zones in the country. A critical analysis of the displacement of many Nigerians since 1999 till 2011 reveals that internal population displacement is caused by various categories of violence which are inter-ethnic, ethno-religious, communal and political. It is the belief of Okpeh (2008) that "the systematic and overlapping patterns of inequality in the country have been described as "breeding grounds" for conflict.

The Problem

A Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC; 2014) estimate, gave the global internally displaced figure to be 33.3million with half the figure living in Africa. The implication is that "about 15 million people are internally displaced in Africa, and 9 of 24 countries with the highest rate of displacement are in Africa". (Crisp, 2010). In other words, Africa has the largest number of IDPs in the world. The UNHCR (2014), posits that "recent studies reveal that sub-Sahara African countries are the richest in the distribution chart, hosting 10.4 million IDPs with an increase of 7.5% between 2013 and 2014". There were 12.5 million IDPs in Sub-Saharan Africa as of the end of 2013, which is over one-third of the world's total. Nigeria accounts for about 3,300,000 IDPs as of March 2014, topping the list of the three countries with the largest population of IDPs in Africa, followed by Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, respectively, while Cameroon records about 38,215 IDPs. Olagunju (2006) is of the view that "Nigeria has been finding it increasingly difficult and almost failing in its task to manage its plethora of IDPs". To a large extent, governance (democracy) involves a social contract. On the part of the citizenry, there is the civic responsibility of voting the government into power while those voted into power are saddled with the responsibility of protecting the lives and property (security), and the general welfare of such citizenry. This is to say that internal displacement poses a lot of socio-economic challenges to the economy whether in Cameroon, the USA, Sudan, etc. It needs be underscored that Governments are not alone in facing these challenges and the Nigerian case is not alone. There are other stakeholders like NGOs, social works, international agencies, etc. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to assess the role of government, NGOs and social works in addressing the socio-economic challenges of internal displacement in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The major objective of this study is to assess the role of major stakeholders in addressing the socio-economic challenges emanating from internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper will be focusing on examining:

1. The role of government in addressing the socio-economic challenges of internally displaced persons in Nigeria
2. The role of Non-governmental organizations in solving the socio-economic challenges of internally displaced persons in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The questions to be addressed in this study include:

1. What role is the government playing in addressing the socio-economic challenges of internally displaced persons in Nigeria.?
2. How are non-governmental organizations, contributing in tackling the socio-economic challenges of internal displacement in Nigeria?

Conceptual Literature

Internal displacement /internally-displaced persons (IDPs) Landan (2006) reveals that under international law, displaced persons are: persons who have been forced or obligated to flee or have cause to leave their homes or place of habitual residence in particular, as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situation of generalized violations of human rights or natural or human-made disaster and they must have either remained within their own national borders (as internally displaced persons or have crossed an internationally recognized state border (as refugees). They are of two categories- refugees and internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The special rapporteur on IDPs developed a working definition of "Internally Displaced Persons" which views the phenomenon as:

persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee their homes or places of habitual residence suddenly or unexpectedly as a result of armed conflict, internal strife or natural, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disaster, who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (OCHA, 2003).

Against the backdrop provided in the definitions above, the term "internal displacement" refers to fleeing by a people from their natural habitats unexpectedly and forcefully following armed conflicts, internal strife, systematic violation of human rights or natural or man-made disasters. Such displacement does not involve cross border migration across sovereign states. Socio-economic/ socio-economic challenge: Business Dictionary (ND), defines the term as "a term or a field of study that examines social and economic factors to better understand how the combination of both influences something. For instance, "Catherine studied the socio-economic issues facing the community she grew up in. We can talk about socio-economic status, socio-economic areas, socio-economic challenges, etc.

Investopedia defines a socio-economic class as "a group of people with similar characteristics". These characteristics may include social and economic standing, as well as other factors such as level of education, current profession, ethnic background or heritage. Socio-economic therefore, refers to a society. Socio-economic challenges may be deemed as referring to the challenges of a given society or group.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs): precise definitions vary as to what constitute an NGO. Salamon and Anheier (1992) argue that "existing third sector organizational definitions had only limited usefulness because they were not holistic" Vakil (1997:2060) drawing on element of the structural operational definition states that "NGOs are self-governing, private, not--profit organizations are geared to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people." A global shift has taken place among development donors towards new ways of working with developing countries' governments using mechanisms such as "budget support" and "sector-wide approaches" (Lewis 2007). NGOs had been active in international arena since the eighteenth century in western countries.

Theoretical Literature

Chamber's Three Stage Model

Chamber (1970) identified a three-stage general model in the evolution of land settlement schemes in Africa, namely recruitment, transition and development. Nelson (1973) based on his studies of development induced displacement issues in tropical lands confirmed this pattern in a synthesis of many experience with new land settlements in Latin America. The models developed by both Chamber and Nelson generalized the experience of voluntary settlers and conceptualized the institutional/organizational dimensions of managed land settlement programming.

Unbalanced Growth Strategy

Most of the problems connected with displacement, resettlement and rehabilitation can be traced to the "Unbalanced Growth Strategy" currently being followed widely for achieving rapid economic development. Unfortunately, this strategy does not sufficiently take into

account the enormous suffering of the poor. Development, which has entailed many large-scale forced evictions of vulnerable populations without the countervailing presence of policies to assist them to rebuild their lives has only accentuated the negative aspects of displacement, such as lack of information, failure to prepare in advance a comprehensive plan for rehabilitation, the undervaluation of compensation and its payment in cash, failure to restore lost assets or livelihoods, traumatic and delayed relocation, problems at relocation sites, multiple displacement, and neglect of the special vulnerabilities of the most disadvantaged group.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts as its theoretical framework, the social contract theory by John Locke. The theory differs from that of Hobbes. According to him, man lived in a state of nature, but his concept of the state of nature is different as contemplated by Hobbesian theory. Locke's view about the state of nature is not as miserable as that of Hobbes. He considered state of nature as a "Golden Age". It was a state of "peace, goodwill, mutual assistance, and preservation".

John Locke considered property in the state of nature as insecure because of three conditions; they are:-

1. Absence of established law;
2. Absence of impartial Judge; and
3. Absence of natural power to execute natural laws.

Thus, man in the state of nature felt need to protect property and for the purpose of protection of their property, men entered into the "social contract". Under the contract, men did not surrender all their rights to one single individual, but they surrendered only the right to preserve/ maintain order and enforce the law of nature. The individual retained with them other rights, i.e, right to life, liberty and estate because these rights were considered natural and inalienable rights of men.

Having created a political society and government through their consent, men then gained three things which they lacked in the state of nature: laws, judges to adjudicate laws, and the executive power necessary to enforce these laws. Each man therefore, gives over the power to protect himself and punish transgressors of the law of nature to the government that he has created through contract.

According to Locke, the purpose of the government and law is to uphold and protect the natural rights of men. So long as the government fulfills this purpose, the laws given by it are valid and binding but, but when it ceases to fulfill it, then the laws would have no validity and the government can be thrown out of power. In Locke's view, unlimited sovereignty is contrary to natural law. Hence John Locke advocated the principle of "a State of liberty, not of license".

Empirical Review

Eweka and Olusegun (2016), did a study on the management of internally displaced persons in Africa comprising Nigeria and Cameroon. The study adopted the qualitative research design, employed survey method for data collection, simple percentage as well as content analyses techniques for data analysis with much focus on (dis) similarities in managerial stakeholders and their number, challenges and degree of success recorded by both countries, it is summed that one country is more successful than the other in IDPs management, rather both countries have a lot to learn from each other, and there is an urgent need to improve on the management of IDPs in both countries.

Oduwale and Fadeyi (2012), evaluated the state of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. The study heavily relied on secondary data from national dailies (Nigeria Tabloids), journals, articles, etc. The findings revealed neglect on the part of the state apparatus (government) in ensuring better, effective and functional policies. The study concluded that given the magnitude and complexity of crises of internal displacement, these are inimical toward the discourse "development". Very few studies have been conducted in the area of internal displacement in Nigeria. None of these studies meticulously isolated the role of government and other stakeholders in addressing the warfare of the internally displaced persons in Nigeria. This yearns for an urgent attention.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive analysis of the roles of government and NGOs in tackling the socio-economic challenges of internal displacement. Data is obtained from secondary materials including-books, journals, reports, internet and magazines.

Statistical Figures of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

Data on IDPs is scarce, but since the importance of such data cannot be overemphasized, effort is made in this study to put a number of reports together for statistics available to us and make efforts to update same as follows-

Table 1: Statistical Figures of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

S/N	Year of Occurrence	Type of Violence	Location/State	Number of Displaced Persons
1	1999	Violent clashes	Odi, Bayelsa	60,000
2	2000	Ethno-Religious	Kaduna	63,000+
3	2000	Ethno-Religious	Kano	Thousands
4	2001	Ethno-Religious	Kaduna	Thousands
5	2001	Ethno-Religious	Kano	80,000
6	2001	Ethno-Religious	Plateau	60,000
7	2001	Ethno-Religious	Bauchi	22,000
8	2001	Communal	Ebonyi	1000
9	2002	Inter Ethnic	Nasarawa	Hundreds
10	2002	Inter-Ethnic	Lagos	5,000
11	2002	Religious	Kaduna	30,000
12	2002	Indigene/Settler	Plateau	Hundreds
13	2002	Indigene/Settler	Benue	Hundreds
14	2002	Political	Taraba	Thousands
15	2003	Political	Warri	12,000
16	2003	Political	Delta	4,000
17	2003	Communal	Dumne(Adamawa)	20,000
18	2003	Communal	Gombe	3,700
19	2004	Indigene/Religious	Plateau	298,000
20	2004	Ethno-Religious	Kano	10,000
21	2004	Communal	Numan(Adamawa)	2,000
22	2004	Political	Port Harcourt	6,000
23	2004	Political	Rivers	10,000
24	2006	Communal/Political	Onitsha	50,000
25	2007	Ethno-Religious	Bauchi	3,000
26	2007	Inter-Ethnic	Sokoto	Hundreds
27	2007	Political	Port Harcourt	Not mentioned
28	2007	Political	Kano	Not mentioned
29	2007	Pre & Post-election	Kogi	1,250
30	2007	Pre & Post-election	Ukwale L.G (Delta)	2000
31	2007	Pre & Post-election	Asakio.LG(Nasarawa)	1,415
32	2008	Land Dispute	Ebonyi	Thousands
33	2008	Violent clashes	Rivers	20,000
34	2008	Electoral	Jos	7,000
35	2008	Communal clashes	Akwa Ibom	Not mentioned

Sources: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC Report, 2009 Retrieved from www.internal-displacement.org).

Internally displacement monitoring center (IDMC.N.D), estimates that there are almost 2,152,00 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigeria as at 31 December 2015. Global overview (2014) also reported that "Nigeria has 3.3 million persons displaced by conflict". It observes that this figure represents the highest in Africa. It also indicates the burden of internal displacement on the Nigerian society.

Table 2: Interventions by Stakeholders on the Socio-Economic Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

S/N	Challenge	National/ Government Responses	Responses by NGOs. Social Works, International Agencies.
1	Food insecurity	Most poor households in the North depend on farm produce for livelihood. Displacement therefore, imposes difficult times on them. Movement and transportation of food aid from government or NGOs is seriously disrupted. Such food convoys constitute serious targets to insurgents. Distribution of farm inputs (fertilizer, seeds, etc) suffers the same fate. The National Emergency Management Agency is the government organ responsible for overall emergency preparedness and response including coordination, rehabilitation and provision of relief assistance. NEMA is continuing in its efforts to provide relief. However, its response to food insecurity needs to be strengthened.	Ocha (2015), reports continuous increase in number of the internally displaced and government inability to cope. UNICEF also says it has recorded critical levels of malnutrition among the recent arrivals in the newest camp, Dolori in Maiduguri. On food concerns in Yobe, the Catholic Relief Services at the end of 2014, reveals that the majority of IDPs in Yobe are from Gujba, one of the two LGAs captured by Boko-Haram. Number of IDPs increased to over 4000. A local NGO stepped in with support.
2	Education	This sector has remained the target of attacks by Boko-Haram. Many students can only attend school irregularly, while others have missed up to two school years. In Borno state, 77 schools and 533 classrooms offering basic education have been burnt, 9,546 desks destroyed and 5 teachers killed.	The Education in Emergency Working Group (EEWG) led by UNICEF has raised concerns with the Federal Government regarding the drop in school attendance, notably in the northeast where a state of emergency has been declared. Also involved are UNFPA, UNAIDS, NPHCDA, MSF and the Nigerian Red Cross Society. The states have resumed repairs in schools. However, humanitarian partners have noted that more schools are being destroyed even as the rebuilding efforts are on-going. Government needs to re-double its efforts.
3	Security and Protection	Communities vulnerability is further intensified by the perception of Boko-Haram's invincibility. The presence of the military increases the likelihood of attacks by Boko-Haram as part of collateral damage. Severity of incidents has increased with over-increasing death toll and increased targeting of civilians. The protection and security of civilians is a continued source of concern. The military is claiming to be on-top of the situation.	The NGOs and social works have limited role to play in this regard.

4	Wash /Health facilities	Most internally displaced persons (IDPs) live with host families. This affects assessment and response to their needs by government or international actors. Those who leave in camps receive relief, but still suffer from lack of access to sufficient food and health facilities. In many places, lack of adequate emergency sanitation facilities also places individuals particularly women and children at increased rate of protection. Federal and state governments (NEMA and SEMA) are known to have tried so much to provide public latrines and toilets but these were grossly inadequate.	The UN and INGOs co-lead and provides technical support. With the escalating humanitarian situation in Nigeria, international NGOs are progressively activating their humanitarian mandates. Such organizations include- Action Aid, Oxfam and Christian Aids. Others are – save the children, Mercy corps, COOP, ACF, MSF, ICRC, international medical corps etc.
5	Livelihood	An estimated 90% of IDPs are staying with host and dependent on such communities for food. The limited resources of host families are now under serious strain posing a precarious food security and nutrition situation. State and local Government authorities are struggling to meet the needs of both children in their community and needs of displaced children. 17 social welfare officers have been deployed in IDP camps in Borno. These camps expose children to enhanced risk of abuse and the system is inadequately equipped to grapple with the challenge. NEMA estimates that there are over 750 unaccompanied and separated children in these camps.	NGO presence in the affected states is limited. So also is the coordination between NGOs and Government agencies. There is a prevalence of grave violations of children's rights including forced recruitment into armed groups attacks on schools and sexual violence.

National/Government (NEMA and SEMA) and NGOS

African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)

The Kampala Convention came into force in December 2012. It contains provisions which incorporate a gendered approach for the protection and assistance, with most pertaining to the specific obligations of state parties:

SGBV: state parties are obliged to "protect the rights of internally displaced persons regardless of the cause of displacement by refraining from, and preventing" various acts including: "sexual and gender-based violence in all its forms notably rape, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation and harmful practices, slavery, recruitment of children and their use in hostilities, forced labor, human trafficking and smuggling" (Article 9.1 d);

General protection and assistance: state parties shall provide special protection for and assistance to internally displaced persons with special needs, including separated and unaccompanied children, female heads of household expectant mothers with young children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities or with communicable diseases; (Article 9.2. c).

Reproductive and sexual health: state parties shall "take special measures to protect and provide for the reproductive and sexual health of internally displaced women as well as appropriate psycho-social support for victims of sexual and other related abuses" (Article 9.2. d)

Registration and personal documentation: "women and men as well as separated and unaccompanied children shall have equal rights to obtain such necessary identity documents and shall have the right to have such documentation issued in their own names" (Article 13).

A content analytic approach that is predicated on the above Kampala Convention (2009) juxtaposed with our theoretical framework (social contract theory by John Locke), will make bold to analyze the two research questions of this study as follows:-

RQ One (1)

Responses from government as indicated on item one of the study schedule above reveals attacks on food convoys and the distribution of farm inputs (eg fertilizers) through government agencies like NEMA and SEMA in aid of IDPs in various locations. Also, the deployment of 17 social welfare officers by government, construction of public toilets and reconstruction of schools in Borno are all evidences of government efforts in ameliorating the difficulties of IDPs. This answers research question one (1) of our study. Hence, Government plays a significant role in enhancing the status of IDPs in Nigeria.

RQ Two (2)

Our schedule above shows that government alone has not been shouldering the responsibility of responding to the humanitarian needs of the internally displaced in Nigeria. NGOs (local and international) have been readily on ground to contribute their quota. Apart from providing security to the IDPs which is clearly the responsibility of government, NGOs and social workers have identified with government in enhancing the welfare of IDPs. On item 5 on the schedule, many organizations have been listed. They include- Action Aid, Oxfam, Christian Aid, Save the children, Mercy Corps COOII, ACF, MSF, ICRC, International Medical Corps etc. There is also the revelation on item one (1) of the schedule that a local NGO stepped in to help when the number of IDPs increased to 4000 and government was over whelmed by this sudden upsurge. These, among many other instances attest to the contribution of NGOs. This is an indication that the NGOs made significant contribution in Aid of IDPs in Nigeria.

Much evidence abounds to show that while the government, NGOs and various agencies battled to help the IDPs, their efforts were inadequate. This is in agreement with the findings of some empirical studies. For instance, Olajide (2006), Fatile and Bello (2015), on studies on the challenges faced by the Nigerian government and NGOs in addressing the problems of IDPs and Managing Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria: A case study of insurgency in North East Geo political Zone respectively, lamented the inability of the Nigerian government to adequately rise to the challenges. Both studies gave the lack of clear policies/legal framework as main reasons for failure.

It is against the above background that the current study lists its findings as follows:-

1. There is the absence of clear policies /legal framework to make for smooth tackling of the challenges of IDPs in Nigeria.
2. Lack of reliable figures makes it impossible for any effective planning in aid of IDPs.
3. The non-involvement of IDPs in formulating whatever plans concerning them is a strong handicap.

4. The continuous influx of more persons to IDP camps worsens the chances of effective planning.

Conclusion

The Nigerian experience in the management of internally displaced persons underscores the need for effective collaboration among government and other agencies. Due to lack of adequate funding and other logistics which undermine the effective execution of programmes/policies in developing countries, there is always the need for meaningful collaboration with international stakeholders. This is to say that international response to IDPs management in Nigeria is grossly inadequate. However, there cannot be any under-estimation of the efforts of government (Federal, state and local), NGOs, social works and international agencies in combating the challenges (humanitarian and otherwise) from internal displacement. The point to note is that these stakeholders (NEMA, SEMA, etc) have done their best in this direction. Such best however, has not been adequate and good enough. There are rooms for improvement by adhering to a number of recommendations. These include:

1. The Nigerian government should ensure strict and clear-cut policies on IDPs management in order to avoid ambiguities.
2. Serious boost should be given to funding of IDPs management. Assistance by way of donations should be sought from international bodies
3. Government must find a way of ensuring accountability in dispensing funds earmarked for the welfare of IDPs. This is the only way to make sure that the funds are used for the very purposes they are meant for.
4. Reliable statistics should be considered a very important component of any plans to aid IDPs in any country.
5. Government should guarantee the presence of a strong medical presence in and around the camps.

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