

## Humanitarian Action, Non-Governmental Organization and Protection Against Malnutrition and Poor Immunization Among Women and Children in North West Nigeria

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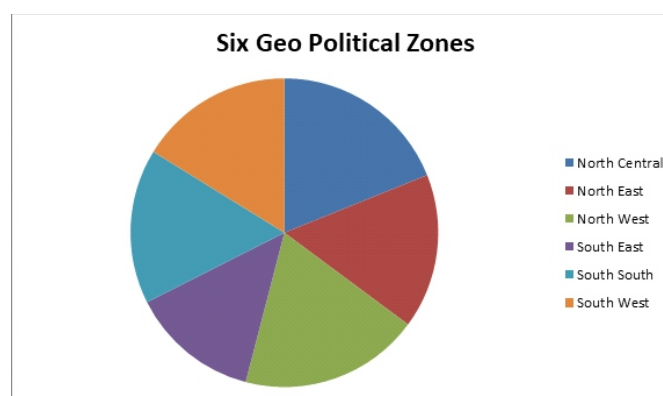
### Abstract

The study examined humanitarian action, non-governmental organization and protection against malnutrition and poor immunization among women and children in North West. Nigeria humanitarian access remains limited and the situation remains critical in both the newly accessible and still inaccessible areas due to the deepening food security, nutrition crisis, polio and measles outbreak. North West Nigeria with high fatality rates are reported from the current pandemic (COVID 19). However, massive nature of security challenges and access constraints into those affected states, Zangara, Sokoto, Katsina, and other closed communities have manufactured a number of immunization problems and malnutrition among children. However, 4.2 million Children in need of humanitarian assistance in North Western Nigeria, the study was basically conceptual approaches, data were triggered, through secondary information's, such information's were, journals from UNICEF, books, internets, newspapers, magazines, and other related non-formal participations of the respondents and many more second hand information's related to the subject matter. The study examined it findings that, revealed. Despite the widespread insecurity and challenging operating conditions, in 2017 the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Nigeria continued to scale-up the delivery of basic social services. UNICEF supported routine immunization, outbreak response and polio eradication efforts, reaching 57,935,232 and 56,202,217 children during two national campaigns and 130,992,829 during five local campaigns in selected high-risk states. In nutrition, half a million children with severe acute malnutrition were treated. Over 343,000 pregnant women, children and young adults were tested for HIV in two priority states with a positivity rate of 1.4 per cent. UNICEF provided 6,082 persons associated with armed forces and survivors of sexual violence with social reintegration assistance. The study identified some of its challenges ranged from cultural, religious, environmental, and traditional and patriarchy ideology remained one of the fundamental challenges that hinder child protections in respect of immunization and malnutrition on children in North West. Nigeria. Finally, the study recommends ensuring adequate strategies and methods that could be employed in transforming the lives of children in Nigeria.

### Background to the Study

In 2018, National Nutrition and Health Survey (NNHS) was conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in collaboration with the National Population Commission (NPC) and the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health, financial support was provided by the Government of Nigeria, United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Department for International Development (DFID), technical support was provided by UNICEF and the Government of Nigeria through NBS, ensuring adequate funding of and improved sustainable social development among children in Nigeria. However, a number of developmental efforts were established by UNICEF in all areas particularly in the area of immunization and malnutrition. The position of the researcher have understood that women in the North West Nigeria have seriously engaged in serious social problems that have led them to develop weak mindsets among men counterpart, however, sexual abuse, human trafficking, women abuse on hawking, cultural domination, religious domination, traditional domination and patriarchy mindset have killed the moral of women and established poor economic and political standards in the society. UNICEF has conducted several empirical researches concerning malnutrition among women and weak guidelines to enable women have access to immunization in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistic, 2018). Virtually, UNICEF in partnership with other non-governmental organization have contributed a lot to the fight for women to have access to immunization and other related social and health benefits. Increasingly, the review has explained why UNICEF had contributed significantly in the fight against malnutrition and immunization in North Western Nigeria. Nigeria as a nation has six geo-political zones South East - Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo and Abia. South South – Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross-River and Akwa-Ibom. South West - Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti. North Central -Kwara, Kogi, Plateau, Nassarawa, Benue, Niger and F.C.T. North East - Taraba, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi and Gombe. North West - Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano and Jigawa.

Fig. 1



Source: Reviewed Work, 2020

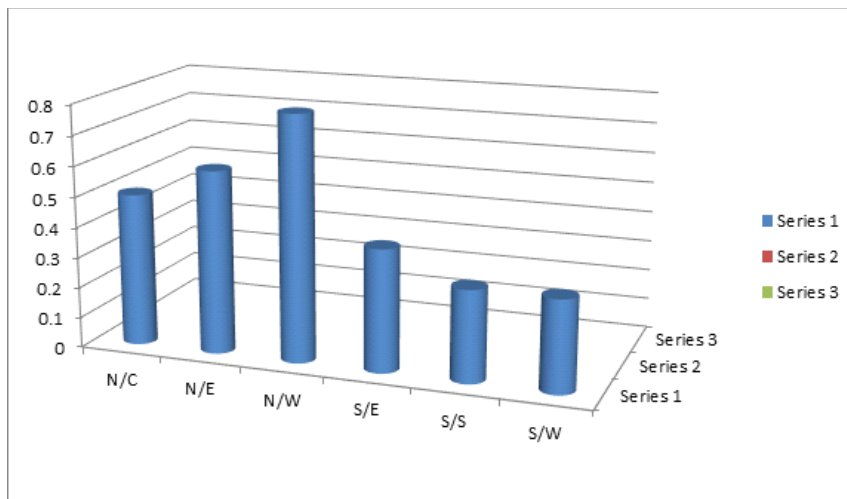
The above chart indicates the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria and the number of state each occupies. South East Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo and Abia South South Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross-River and Akwa-Ibom South West Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti North Central Kwara, Kogi, Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Niger and F.C.T North East Taraba, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi and Gombe North West Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano and Jigawa.

**Statement of the Study Problem**

It is a paradox that Nigeria is a rich country inhabited by the poor and accounts for the highest percentage of children with malnutrition and poor immunization in Africa such has been a result of conflict and generalized violence. The increasing spread of nefarious activities of the Boko Haram sect, armed bandit, kidnapping and the destruction of lives and property is a serious issue that could not be dismissed with instant hand. In the last few years, the security situation in the country has worsened. Bombing, killing, mass murder, abduction, kidnapping and other crimes against humanity are on the increase in Nigeria as a result of communal violence, natural disaster, internal armed conflicts, border conflicts, ethno-religious conflicts and terrorist attacks (Isah, 2015).

However, apart from those natural and manmade disasters a number of issues have resulted in children low turnout for immunization and ineffective nutrition given to children in Nigeria. In order to confront those challenges faced by children particularly in the North West geo-political zone, various humanitarian measures have been introduced by the Federal Government through the establishment of National Emergency Management Agencies (NEMA), (UNICEF) at the federal and state levels with the support of international organizations of development strategies in humanities.

**Fig. 2**



**Source:** Reviewed Work, 2020

The above table shows six geo political zones and their pattern of immunization exposure have indicated that North West has the highest number of children who suffered due to lack of immunization and poor nutrition, it was also demonstrated that, North East has the second largest number of children who seriously suffer due to poor immunization and malnutrition. Similarly, North Central occupied the second phase while South East pulled in to be the fourth, South South and South West respectively, fall within the similar ranged.

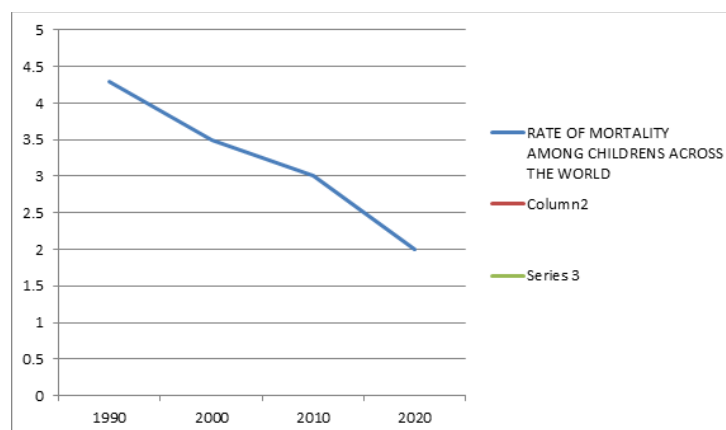
### Objectives of the Study

The study shall identify the role of UNICEF in protecting the lives of women in Nigeria and North West in particular. The study shall examine the fundamental contributions of some agencies in humanitarian assistance to children in North West, Nigeria. The study shall highlight some challenges confronted by UNICEF in the fight against immunization and malnutrition in Nigeria and North West in particular and the study shall recommend ways to re-strategise the agency (UNICEF) in the fight against these myths.

### Literature Review/Global perspectives on Child Protection

More children than ever survive. Mortality in the 1–4 years age group declined by a remarkable 60 per cent from 2000 to 2017. Neonatal mortality declined by 41 per cent, while mortality among children aged 1–11 months, the post-neonatal period, declined by 51 per cent. Among children aged 5–14 years, mortality declined by 37 per cent globally. Many children have been victimized in one way or the other resulted from conflicts and other natural disasters that have engaged the nature of the world phenomenon. From 1990-2015 rate of mortalities among children have triggered number of non-governmental organizations, particularly, UNICEF, in fight against hunger and poor immunization across the world. Example, given below.

**Fig. 3**



**Source:** Reviewed Work, 2020

The above table indicated that the rate of mortality among children and women in the north east from 1990 to 2020 was a movement from bad to good. However, it was a

beautiful transition that showed that non-governmental organizations, particularly UNICEF and WHO have rendered selfless services to humanity, particularly children across the world, it was understood that in 1990 the rates of mortality among women and children was high due to some contained fundamental issues. According to WHO, 2011 children at this period were at risk due to lack of education on the issues of immunization and pregnant women were in danger at the course of pregnancy. United States and other European countries have far developed and restored child right act that could enable all children to have fundamental human rights and access to free healthcare services and other social services that could improve their social and health being in the society. Virtually, in African societies where development is moving very slow, children were more prompt to be at risk in terms of provision of fundamental social services and could harm their lives. Example, in Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Somalia, Burundi, and many more African nations that were exposed to war and instability, children were exposed to several challenges that could result to several dead from lack of immunization and malnutrition. However, in Nigeria several reasons have led children to return to dead zone that resulted from war, kidnapping, armed bandits, rapes, sexual abuse, child abuse and many more social problems.

**Fig. 4:** Nature and Pattern of Minimization and Malnutrition Children in Some Part of Africa and Nigeria



The above picture indicated that the number of children in Democratic Republic of Congo who suffered several wars led many women and children as refugees to other countries searching for food and other means of survival. For this reasons children could not access good healthcare services and other means of livelihood. UNICEF and WHO, 2017, argued that millions of children may lose their life because of war.



**Fig. 5**



**Fig. 6**

The above picture shows immunized children's in RWANDA, 2019



**Fig.7**

The above picture shows displaced children who suffered due to lack of good food and other means of hygiene particularly in the North Western Nigeria until today are suffering series of conflicts ranging from Kidnapping, conflicts between hangmen and farmers, armed bandits, rapes, and other social problems that put the lives of many children on risk. According to UNICEF, 2020. 14.8 million people affected by the crisis in the four North West states of Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano, and others (HRP 2016). However, 7 million people in need in the four North West states (HRP 2019) 3.8 million children in need in the four North West states (HRP 2019) 2.2 million people in areas inaccessible due to insecurity in Zamfara and Kastina. (UNICEF situation analysis) UNICEF Appeal 2018, US\$ 115 million \*Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), does not include inaccessible areas of Zamfara and other states in the North West.



**Fig. 8**

The picture above shows malnourished children in some of the refugee camps in Kastina



**Fig. 9**

The picture above shows immunized children in North Western Nigeria  
The above picture shows that children were been immunized in North Western Nigeria.



**Fig. 10**

**Source:** Global Annual Results Report 2018 | UNICEF

Many children still do not thrive: 250 million children in low- and middle-income countries are at risk of not achieving their developmental potentials. At the same time, government worldwide spends on average less than an estimated 2 per cent of their education budgets on early childhood programmes. <sup>8</sup> In 67 countries with available data, nearly 57 million children aged 36–59 months do not attend an early childhood education programme compared to the number of countries that had adopted ECD packages in 2017 and 2018. The reaction of the researchers in respect of the above examination demonstrated that several children were at risk due to COVID 19 pandemic which has destroyed the socio-economic and political systems in the world. Children are prone to danger due to lack money which is supposed to be saved and utilized for children as fund being utilized in the fight against COVID 19. However, the pandemic has critically affected the affected million lives of children and other parts of African societies.

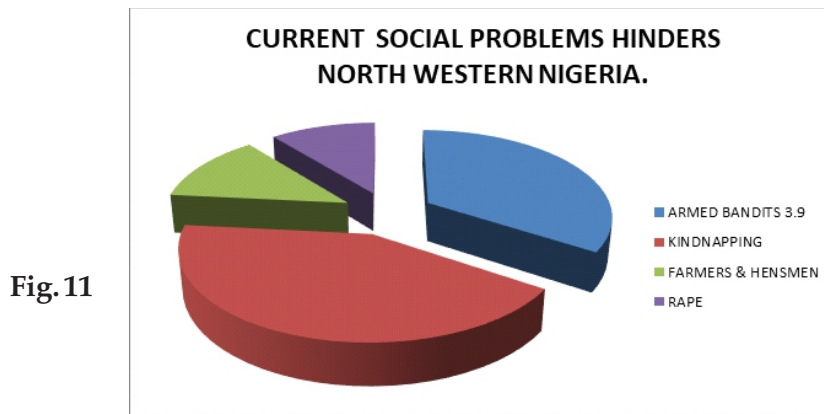
### **Issues in Nigeria**

Although Nigeria has the largest economy in West Africa, over 64 per cent of the population live below the poverty line and three out of four children are affected by multi-dimensional poverty. One in eight young children do not survive to their fifth birthday, and 19.5 million children under five, or over 60 per cent, have no birth registration. One out of three children under five, or 10.5 million, is stunted and 2.5 million children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (90 per cent in the north). Around 10.5 million children are not in school, amounting to one-fifth of the global burden for out-of-school children. With 380,000 children living with HIV, Nigeria has the largest burden globally and the second largest number of HIV-positive pregnant women and adolescents. Girl child marriage is amongst the highest in world (second only to India), a key indicator for gender inequality. Six out of 10 children suffer more than one form of violence – physical, sexual or emotional (UNICEF, 2019). However, Nigerian children face several socio-economic and political challenges that have led many children into orphanage home as a result of poor parental upbringings, poor policy that will enhance the lives of children and other issues. North Western Nigeria is the areas were you fine Almajiri schools. Those are children that come from various places across the region for Islamic education; at the process the Malams could emphasis that giving children polio immunization is un-Islamic and is against the teaching of Islam. That is the reasons many children could not get immunized.

UNICEF, 2019, supported routine immunization, outbreak response and polio eradication efforts, reaching 57,935,232 and 56,202,217 children during two national campaigns and 130,992,829 during five local campaigns in selected high-risk states. In nutrition, half a million children with severe acute malnutrition were treated. Over 343,000 pregnant women, children and young adults were tested for HIV in two priority states with a positivity rate of 1.4 per cent. UNICEF provided 6,082 persons associated with armed forces and survivors of sexual violence with social reintegration assistance. In water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), through strong local partnerships. Basically, UNICEF, fight against polio, immunization and malnutrition could not be successfully achieved because some parts of the world and other parts of Nigeria was still on Turmoil

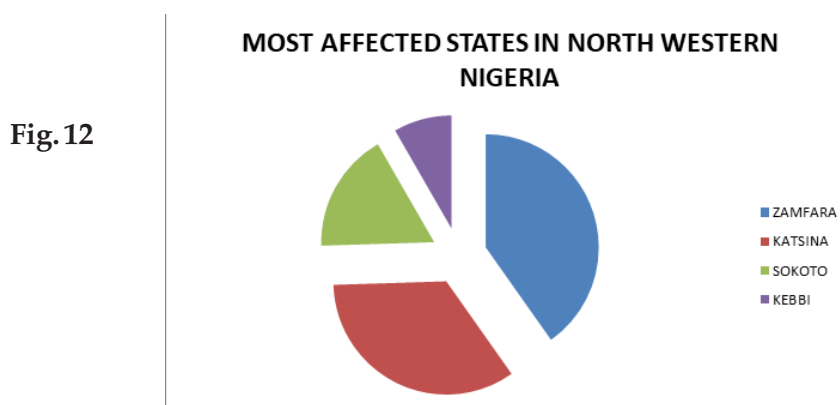


and confusion which resulted from armed bandits, kidnapping and other problems that led to many children losing their parents and many children changed their pattern of parental hood to orphans. War and genocide have displaced many children across the globe looking for better lives, north western Nigeria is one of the example of places where children lost their parent due to armed bandits, farmers and herdsmen conflict, kidnaping and other problems, this put lives of millions of children in the region at risk.



**Source:** Reviewed Work, 2020

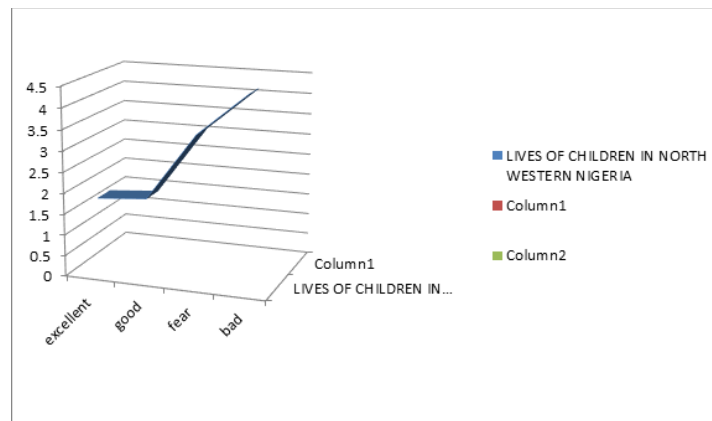
The above diagram indicates that, the current social problems hindering people in north western regions are kidnapping, that has the highest percentage, which manufactures series of burden among children. Armed Bandits, farmers and herdsmen conflict and rape which are the problem, several children particularly women and girls of upcoming age where raped in one way or the other. Cases such as 30 years' man raping a 3 months old baby, a 67 years old man raping a 12 years old girl etc puts everlasting burden in the lives of those girls. The recent lockdown has triggered several cases of rape among middle, and youngest of years from men.



**Source:** Reviewed Work, 2020

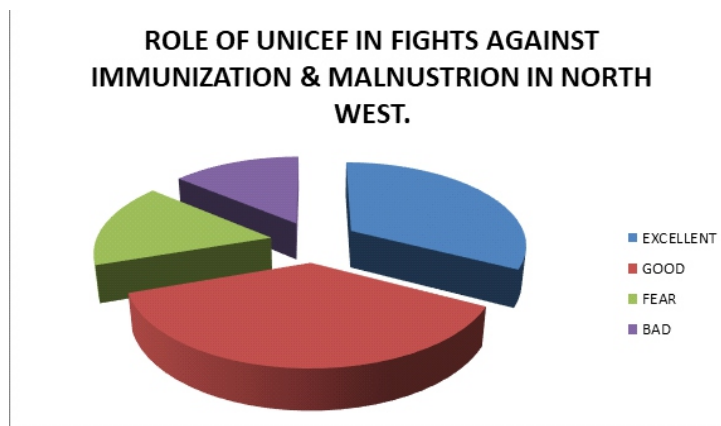
The above table shows that from 2018 to date Zanfara is the most affected state in the issue of kidnapping, armed bandits and others, while Katsina is the second, followed by Sokoto and Kebbi state respectively.

Fig. 13



The above table shows the categorization of reviewed paper on the basis of lives of children in the midst of the social problems. However, the review noted that children were not excellently okay with the nature and pattern of the services provided by the government, due to the fact that many children could not go to school, many children male and females go out for hawking, many children were being exposed to child abuse and human trafficking, many children in the region could not have adequate and sustainable live protection, many children were exposed to danger and other activities, many children may be exposed to rape and other social vases, many children were exposed to begging on the street, many children may be killed through armed bandits attacks and many more.

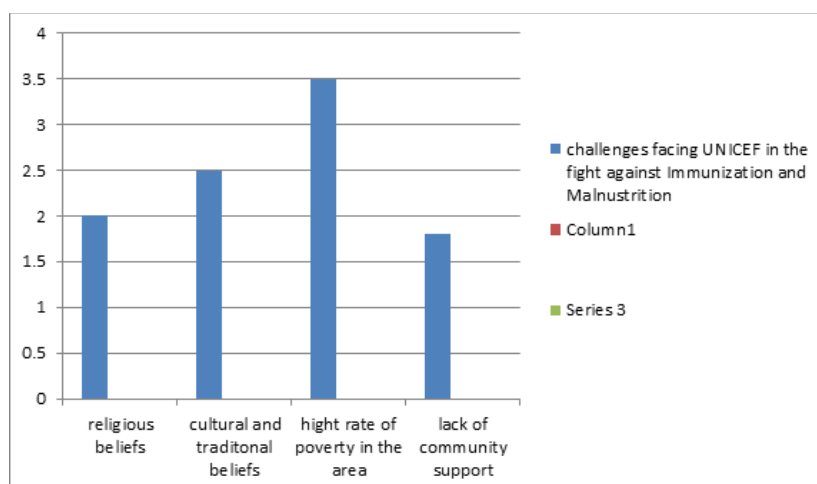
Fig. 14



Source: Reviewed Work, 2020

The above diagram explained that UNICEF has tried in the fight against immunization and malnutrition in North Western Nigeria. Several measures were taken in order to ensure adequate provision of immunization to various communities in the region. However, at this process a number of shortcomings were encountered. Those challenges could be explained using diagram. See below:

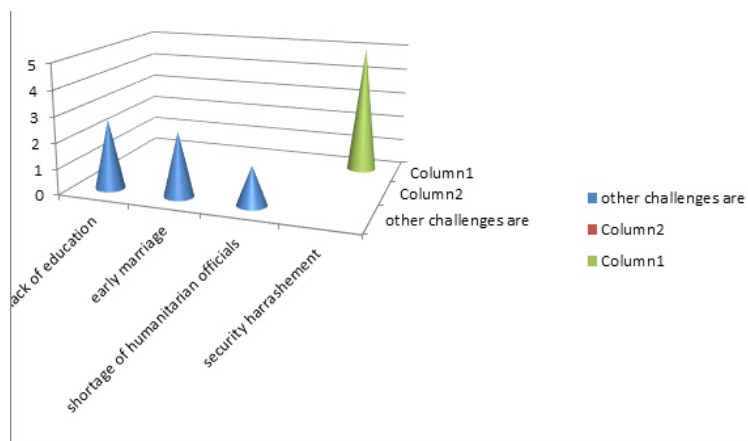
Fig. 15



Sources: Reviewed 2020.

Other Challenges are:

Fig. 16



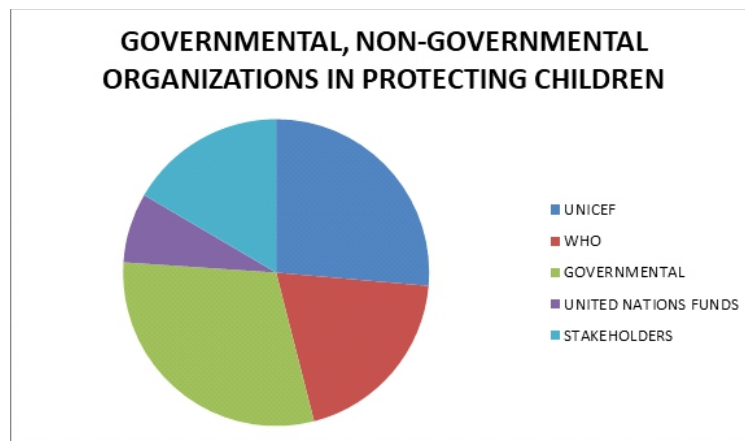
Sources: 2020 Reviewed.

### Interventional National Intervention Strategies on Children

Alongside government, UNICEF increased partnerships with reliable non-governmental organization (NGO) partners, strongly promoted outreach and mobile strategies in nutrition and supported the State Primary Health Care Development Agency to set up 35 in North East and North Western Nigeria in North Eastern example,

outreach sites in Borno and 26 in Yobe. In addition, 10 mobile teams were established in Gwoza, Pulka, Izge, Bama, Banki, Damasak, Kukawa, Gubio, Rann and Dikwa of Borno, providing integrated nutrition services to 50 sites. To improve the quality of response, UNICEF increasingly integrated its approach, especially amongst health/nutrition/WASH. In North West Includes Zamfara, Maru, Shinkafi, MORIKI, and many more affected communities in Zamfara and Katsina states, where possible, multi-sector programme agreements were developed with NGOs.

Fig. 17



Source: Reviewed Work, 2020

The table above indicates that UNICEF has the fundamental responsibility in protecting the lives of children. On the programme side, UNICEF's integrated health outreach services reached 895,294 children in under-served hard-to-reach settlements in Adamawa, Jigawa, Niger and Taraba states. In addition, 2.3 million doses of the oral polio vaccine were administered in 9,858 health camps across 18 high risk states. To improve the equity of the nutrition response to the ongoing emergency in the northeast, UNICEF increased access to nutrition curative and preventive services especially for children in the most remote locations. This involved: - the recruitment and training of 3,529 community nutrition volunteers and existing polio voluntary community mobilizers (VCMs) on screening referral and follow up of cases of severe acute malnutrition; - Monthly mass screening targeting areas with high malnutrition; -The establishment of 49 mobile clinics and 35 outreach sites for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition, and; - Set up and support for 3,058 mother support groups to support counseling on child feeding at community level. Due to these efforts, admission levels sharply increased since June and the programme is close to reaching 100 per cent of the target of 220,000 cases of severe acute malnutrition. Community-led total sanitation (CLTS) response activities were also based on equity analyses. Once a local government area was selected for intervention, a baseline survey was conducted and an investment plan set defining the required number and types of systems. Prioritization plans followed an equity analysis approach, using baseline data on indicators that presented a picture of the degree of

deprivation. Thus, the most marginalized, the aged and people with disabilities were ensured access to WASH facilities in the bid to stop open defecation in the communities.

Through community-based research, UNICEF identified poverty-related issues as the primary barriers keeping girls and boys out of school. A cash transfer programme was thus designed and implemented in selected schools in Niger and Sokoto states. The programme aimed to increase girls' enrolment, attendance, transition from primary school to junior secondary school, and reduce gender inequality through the provision of cash transfers to the female caregiver of girls. This was complemented by a sensitization campaign, educating caregivers about the importance of girls' enrolment. An evaluation study determined that the cash transfer programme had a positive effect on girls' enrolment and school attendance in the two states. It also contributed to a greater value being placed on girls' education, an increase in household income, and women controlling a greater share of this income. Both target states committed funds to scale up the programme in 2017-18 to eventually cover the whole state. Building on lessons, the programme is expanding to two additional states, targeting both girls and boys. In a context of expanding birth registration (almost doubling between 2014 and 2017), several strategies were used to ensure registration for the most marginalized, rural, and hard-to-reach children, especially in northern states despite the insurgency. These strategies included increased use of innovative mobile and online technology, enhanced partnerships between the National Population Commission and the health and education sectors and promoting registration when children are born and when parents bring their children for immunization. Between January and December 2017, the results show under-one birth registration rates increased from two per cent to 82 per cent in Zamfara, from three per cent to 32 per cent in Sokoto, from five per cent to 66 per cent in Katsina, from four per cent to 137 per cent.

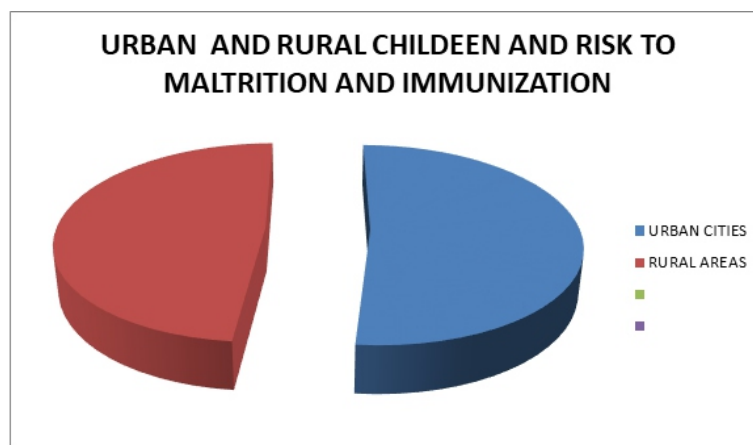


Fig. 18

Source: Reviewed Work, 2020

From the above table it is shown that both children in the urban cities and rural areas are prompt to danger due to some certain indicators, urban and children estimated 85 million Nigerians live in urban settlements. The urbanization level rose from 35 per cent in 2000 to

the current 47 per cent. By 2030, urban population is expected to rise to 71 per cent (278 million). Some 66 per cent of the urban population live in slums. Many children are deprived of access to the most basic services, such as piped water, sewerage, electricity, and lack drainage or flood protection. Example in some parts of north western Nigeria states like Kano, Sokoto and Katsina. While children in the rural areas were prompt to danger resulted from lack of security, poverty, lack of access to good education, hunger, exposed to hawking, Almajiranchi School, and many more

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

In conclusion, humanitarian protection among children was the major challenges facing non-profit organization across the globe. Children in Nigeria due to their level of education and economic background have suffered from malnutrition and lack of good immunization. However, UNICEF fight against these myths has succeeded positively.

### **Recommendations**

Justice and equity among all Nigerians irrespective of their socio-economic and political background is attained by upholding law and justice. Equity in all spheres of human endeavor guarantees that every individual remains better off commensurate to his/her securing strategies.

Religion is a very sensitive issue in Nigeria; hence every government tends to tread with absolute caution when dealing with it. The role of government is to protect and defend the sensory of her citizens irrespective of tribal/religions inclination. However, religious leaders preach hatred; incite followers against others' religion belief.

We are living in a society where people believe that every activity that advances the well-being of the people must be carried out by the government. Every citizen, shareholder and individual should have INAC responsibility to children in assisting them with some vital security amenities. Again, citizens should partner with the government to eradicate anti-security virus, lunch community oriented projects, etc., thereby improving the standard of living. Nigerian government needs to urgently re-strategize and prioritize the pictures of malnourished children. The UNICEF report of million starving is real.

State government from the North West of Nigerian must convene an emergency meeting and mobilize wealthy Nigerians from all parts of Nigeria, but particularly from North West of Nigeria to at least give back part of the stolen wealth to feed the victims of the poverty they created. Particularly, children that lost their parents.

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