



SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF DISPLACEMENT ON CHILDREN IN GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the socio-economic implication of displacement on children in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. It specifically identified the concerns of children in the IDP camps in Guma LGA of Benue state; ascertained the various agencies addressing these concerns and, investigated and prioritized the identified concerns of these children to proffer the needs assessment to address these. This is undertaken given that in the aftermath of farmers' and herders' conflicts, children bore the brunt of the disruptive effects of the upheavals that undermined their survival rights. The study adopted a survey method that sourced primary data through the use of a structured questionnaire and employed descriptive statistics for analysis. The findings indicate that there are unaccompanied children in the camp who are not catered for. There is inadequate medical care for the children, raising concerns about malnutrition, infectious diseases, safe delivery, and infant mortality. School drop-out is also a concern as it leads to the risk of child labour, poor skills development, and vices. The study recommended that a proper record of all internally displaced persons across all indices of demographic and socioeconomic data should be taken for adequate planning and logistics. There should be effective psychological treatment for the children to help their psycho-social integration with the larger society. Access to medical care should be improved for the children and education services should be all-encompassing for the children to eradicate the school drop-out rate.*

KEYWORDS: Socio-economic, Displacement, Children, Internally Displaced Persons.



INTRODUCTION

Displacement has become a serious concern because it affects millions of people and the development of many countries. It continues to challenge the global society as regards international politics, international law, human rights, humanitarian aid, and social and population policies (Zard 2006). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2021), there are about 89.3 million displaced people around the world in 2021, including both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), with 36.5 million of them children (UNICEF, 2021).

Nigeria has for about two decades now seen a dramatic increase in conflicts and violence as all parts of the country, including Benue state and Guma LGA in particular affected by armed clashes between sedentary Farmers and nomadic Herdsmen. The vast geographical area of Guma LGA along the River Benue valley placed the communities in a situation that compelled them to live with the Fulani herdsmen, particularly during the dry season (November to April). This is because the Fulani herdsmen practice the free-range system by moving from one place to another in search of pasture and water. This usually forces them to migrate from the far north to the Benue Valley where both pasture and water resources can be found. The increasing population and climate change conditions over the years increased the competition for arable land between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers resulting in social friction and hostilities among the two user groups in the area. This violence has caused a humanitarian situation and levels of internal displacement comparable to some of the better-known African emergencies. The impact of forced migration varies depending on political, socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental contexts and also factors such as gender, class, age, race, or ethnicity (Cohen & Deng 1998).

The resident farmers who specialize in shifting, and rotation of land for the following reasons and good output see the invasion of the following grounds and other farmlands by herders' cattle as a direct incursion on their livelihood. These interactions in most cases since the year 2002 have resulted in clashes due to uncoordinated and divergent interests of the involved parties. The violent conflict has displaced more than 83, 035 (Benue State Emergency Management Agency statistics, 2023) into camps in Guma LGA alone of Benue state, and many more are staying with relatives or in makeshift camps struggling to rebuild their lives. Most of those who bear the pains of this displacement are women and children, who become vulnerable to many political and socio-economic ills.

This has created a huge crisis of internally displaced persons who are crowded together in makeshift camps with many of the children's needs and concerns not addressed. The arrangement places men, women, children, and the elderly, even the injured and the sick in the same space, not minding the consequences of this on the displaced persons. These poor amenities and improper arrangements expose displaced persons, especially children, to disorderly behaviour like improper hygiene; open defecation and communicable diseases; sexual harassment, and other abuses that could lead to bullying, infections, and unwanted pregnancies. There are also cases of the organizations in the camp being more interested in the feeding, medication, and physical aspects of the internally displaced persons, meanwhile, a whole lot of them are suffering from the trauma of the crisis that brought them to the camps and require treatment which is not provided in the



camp. This keeps alive internal injury and hurt, a burning desire for hate and vengeance that could result in grave adverse consequences for the healing process. In general, the perception is that these agencies have been more willing to direct attention and resources to provide material assistance than to be involved with participation, protection, and the issues of displaced vulnerable children.

The crisis of internal displacement presents an enormous challenge to all, officials estimated the number of people displaced to be 85, 035 (BSEMA, 2023) persons in Guma LGA, including women and children. However, the rights of children, including access to basic services, food, water, shelter, and health care are often ignored. Moreover, displaced children have no voice; their circumstances compel them to accept the little assistance offered while being denied the opportunity to actively participate in programs and activities that directly affect their well-being and fully integrate them into social life. This study seeks to identify the concerns of the internally displaced children in Guma local government area and address them so that they can overcome the trauma of any opportunistic hindrance to their well-being in the camp and into social life thereafter. The study is organized as follows; section one presents the introduction. Section two focuses on a review of relevant literature. Section three is on the methodology of the study. Section four is on data presentation and analysis, while section five presents the conclusion drawn and recommendations made that government and humanitarian agencies could implement to remedy the situation now and in the future.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Displacement

The Guiding Principles of International Displacement define the displaced as “a person compelled to escape or leave their homes or usual places, especially when trying to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, widespread armed robbery or natural disasters e.g. Earthquakes, famine or man-made disasters within the borders of the affected countries, without the displaced, having to cross the borders to other countries (Bannaga, 2001). They are nearly always destitute and acutely in need of protection without legal or institutional bases for receiving protection and assistance from the international community. The impact eventually affects the quality of life of the victims and the community as a whole.

Displacement has different effects on women and children than it has on men and differs during various stages of crises. As terrible as this is, women and children usually suffer the impact more acutely than men do. When displacement occurs, far more damage results than simply the loss and destruction of goods and property; people’s lives and the social fabric are left in tatters. Regardless of the cause, forced displacement is a human rights violation and results in distinct types of disadvantages for women, children, and their well-being as it also implies social exclusion and poverty, which are likely to prolong adverse well-being and armed conflict.



CHILDREN

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as "a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child. The same definition is given in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of a Child (1990). The legal definition of a child generally refers to a minor, otherwise known as a person younger than the age of maturity. Children have fewer rights than adults and are classed as unable to make serious decisions, and legally must always be under the care of a responsible adult or their parents divorced or not. Society relates to the child not as a miniature adult but as a person of a lower level of maturity needing adult protection, love, and nurturing. Emergencies and conflicts pose detrimental risks to the health, safety, and well-being of children. Where violent conflicts are the norm, the lives of young children are significantly disrupted and their families have great difficulty in offering the sensitive and consistent care that young children need for their healthy development resulting in adverse consequences for them and society both in the short and long run.

Socio-economic condition

According to Baker (2014), socioeconomic conditions or status is defined as the measure of an individual's combined economic and social status and tends to be positively associated with better health. It further highlighted the three common measures of socioeconomic status; education, income, and employment. Malone & La Rovere (2004) view socio-economic conditions and prospects as intangibles that cannot be measured directly e.g. GDP per capita. In line with the view of Baker (2014), socioeconomic conditions in this study include stability in psycho-social status, access to and attainment in education, health status, income, and financial security.

Theoretical Literature

This study is anchored on the conflict and the basic needs theories. They are suitable and relevant to explaining the phenomenon leading to the issue of conflicts and the adverse impact of conflicts on displaced persons including children.

The Conflict theory propounded by Karl Marx (1818-1883) argued that in capitalism, there is an inherent conflict of interests between two opposing classes. So did the theory of eco-violence developed by Homer-Dixon (1999), a theoretical construct seeking to explicate the relationship between environmental factors and conflict. Every group tries to protect its interest, thus blocking the progress of the other in accessing that interest (Idowu, 2017). The land resources such as farmlands, crops, grass/pasture, fresh water, etc. are increasingly becoming narrow in Nigeria and these are needed by both the farmers and the herdsmen for the sustenance of their various sources of livelihood. It is in this regard that the conflicts have been driven by the desperation of the affected groups to protect and advance their livelihood interests in the context of an ever-shrinking ecological space, characterized by resource scarcity, livelihood crisis, population explosion, urbanization, climate change, and resource competition.

The Basic needs approach to development/ United Nations child rights approach believes that there are many realities to the impact of the ensuing conflicts descriptive of relevant experiences during displacement. The theory suggests that there is a minimum notion of well-being that must be



upheld for all, including children at all times in all situations. This well-being implies access to education, good, accessible, and affordable health care, social stability, and psycho-social treatment.

Empirical Review

There are divergent views on the causes, impact, and concerns of farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria. Some of these studies are reviewed: Abbass (2012) contends that the major source of tensions/violent conflict between pastoralists and farmers is economic issues. This is the same with the views of (Olabode & Ajibade 2010 and De Haan, 2002). It is competition for natural resources (Blench, 2004), demographic issues (Nyong and Fiki, 2005), and perceived religious issues (Yahaya, 2011).

In terms of impact; Abba and Usman (2008) were concerned about food security. Also, Adebayo and Olaniyi, (2008) noted the impact of the Human Capital Development Index. Nyong and Fiki (2005) pointed out that the humanitarian, economic, and social consequences of conflicts have been manifold and telling. According to Ibrahim, Abdurrahman, Belel, and Umar (2015), it disrupts the sustainability of pastoral production and agriculture in West Africa. These conflicts reinforce circles of extreme poverty and hunger and destroy social status and food security. The consequences are mostly felt by marginalised groups including women and children resulting in their mass displacement and development. When this displacement occurs, children's and women's lives and their social well-being are affected by the terrible disruption of their livelihood (Benjamin 1998).

Some other literature in Nigeria includes (Gyuse & Ajene, 2006; Alubo, 2008; Okolie & Ugwu, 2011; Abbas, 2012; and Nchi, 2013), and in other parts of Africa (Blench, 2004; Adogi, 2013). These works are plausible on their own merits, but none of them assesses the concerns of the plight of displaced children from the farmers-herders conflict in Guma LGA of Benue state. This study brings this perspective into focus by embarking on an analysis that goes beyond just being displaced or being in an IDP camp to the concerns that the conflict and camp inflict on displaced people. It focuses primarily on the concerns of children who are very vulnerable in conflict and camp situations, and who can't exercise their rights or have a voice on issues concerning them.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a survey research method using primary data. The collected data mainly consists of responses obtained using a structured questionnaire designed in line with the study objectives. The study was organized in two phases; during the first phase, the researcher sought permission from the camp commandant (officials) to access the research setting. The researcher was able to identify secured study areas in Abagena and Daudu, which served as a camp for victims of the same "IDP producing area" in Guma LGA of Benue State. This was done with the help of local leaders who also assisted in identifying appropriate respondents who were willing to share information by completing the questionnaire. The researcher employed six research assistants from the study area who administered the questionnaire and also served as interpreters. The second



phase was the conduct of the research in the selected study area by obtaining information from those affected and in camps that accommodated the displaced persons who are victims of the Farmers/Herdsmen conflict in Guma LGA.

Population of the Study

There are many displaced people including women, children, and men in Guma LGA who are currently living in these two camps and surrounding townships, the population of this study is 85,035 IDP internally displaced persons, this represents all displaced persons from Guma LGA in the camps in Daudu and Abagena in Benue State (Benue State Emergency Management Agency, 2023). This comprises 27,454 children, which is 46% of the total internally displaced persons in these two camps. The sample area was purposely selected by the researcher given the condition of peace and security at the time of data collection. They also host the highest number of IDPs from the same conflict in Guma LGA. Guma LGA area is made up of ten (10) council wards out of which Nongov, Saave, Tomater, Tse-Akor, Umenger, and Nzorov experienced the intensity of farmers-herdsmen conflict most. This displaced the members of these communities to different internally displaced person camps, of which Daudu and Abagena were chosen for the study.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study assessed the socioeconomic impact of Displacement on Children in Guma LGA as a result of the conflict between farmers and herdsmen. Persons who are household heads and who experienced these conflicts were selected as respondents using the purposive sampling technique. In determining the sample size, Taro Yamane's (1975) formula was adopted after obtaining the population of the study, the formula is stated as follows:

$n = N / I + N(e)^2$ Where; n = sample size required. N = number of people in the population,

e = allowable error (%).

It was based on the above formula the sample size was determined to be approximately 394. Therefore, the sample size (n) is approximately 394. However, the researcher administered a questionnaire to 400 respondents in anticipation of minimizing/making up for the non-retrieval of some of the questionnaires.

The sample is made up of 200 adult females, 120 adult males, and 80 children who are not less than 15 years old and are secondary school students at the time of the conflict, this makes a total of 400 respondents. These represent fifty percent of the females, thirty percent of males, and twenty percent of children in the internally displaced person camp in Daudu and Abagena in Guma LGA of Benue State. A larger proportion of the sample frame is adult females, this is because most displaced women and children living in camps faced similar problems and the same atrocities have been committed against them in the affected area. This is in line with Omu (2006) who stated that no fixed number is ideal, rather it is the circumstances of the study situation that determine what number or what percentage of the population should be studied.



Source and Kinds of Data Required

A survey methodology was adopted for the study, so it entails the use of primary data which was obtained from responses to questions in a structured questionnaire distributed to displaced persons from the conflict area to obtain information necessary to answer the research questions. The required information was sought concerning the respondent's socioeconomic characteristics and their views concerning the issues of children in the internally displaced person camp in the study area.

Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire titled "Concerns of Children in Internally Displaced Persons Camp" (CCIC); it is a structured questionnaire, developed along the lines of the research objectives stated for the study. The questionnaire contains four sections, A, B, C, and D. Section A of the instrument requested the bio-data of the respondents. Section B requested the major concerns of displaced children in Guma LGA. Section C is concerned with ascertaining the agencies and organizations providing services in the camp and the respondents' perception of these services. To obtain and rank the items, a five-point rating scale was used to identify what constitutes concerns to displaced children in Guma LGA. The ordinal ranking response pattern used was very often (5), often (4), sometimes (3), rarely (2), and never (1) for the cluster responses.

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was face-validated by two experts from the Department of Economics, Benue State University, Makurdi. The experts were requested to assess the suitability of the language; and the relevance of the items in addressing the research questions bearing in mind the objective of the study. Their corrections and advice gave rise to the modification of the drafts and the final draft of the instrument. The instrument was trial tested using 50 internally displaced persons in the Naka road camp which is outside the area of study. Since the five clusters contain non-dichotomously scored items, the internal consistency of the clusters was determined using Cronbach Alpha. The internal consistency reliability estimate yielded 0.83 which indicates that the instrument is reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The direct delivery and retrieval method was employed in the administration of the instruments. Six trained research assistants were employed to assist the researcher in the administration of the instrument. The research assistants were postgraduate students of Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State. They were briefed on the purpose of the exercise and trained on how to guide the respondents in filling out the questionnaire. Direct administration by personal contact and the encouragement of the camp commandant ensured a speedy and high return rate of ninety percent of completed questionnaires.



The Respondents

The respondents comprised women, children, and men. Most of them are leaders in their various capacities, who are direct victims of the crises and are knowledgeable of the happenings in the study areas related to the subject matter. The few men sampled were heads of households whose families were direct victims of the crises and were community leaders. The inclusion of adult men in the sample provided a male opinion on the issues relevant to the study. Although the study is on children, they constitute only 10% of the respondents, as it is obvious that they were neither highly knowledgeable about the issues nor held valid opinions on what had happened and could not adequately comprehend the effect on their future. This analysis was therefore based on the experiences and perceptions of the adults who are their household heads, leaders, and caregivers.

Method of Data Analysis

The primary data for this study were generated through a methodology that enables the researcher to engage respondents by using a structured questionnaire as the research instrument. Data collected was analyzed using tables, charts, percentages, ratios, and frequency counts. A 5- 5-point Likert-type scale was used in measuring the concerns of the displaced children and prioritizing these for the needs assessment. This is an appropriate psychological tool for the analysis of such situations. Descriptive statistics was used for the analysis. The study employed frequencies and attached weights to the scale to compute the mode for the items of the questionnaire.

DATA PRESENTATION, RESULTS, AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire from Respondents

Sample	No. of questionnaire Administered	No. of Questionnaire Retrieved	No. of Questionnaire not Retrieved	Percentage (%) of Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage of Questionnaire not Retrieved
Adult Female	200	184	16	46	4
Adult Male	120	112	8	28	2
Children	80	64	16	16	4
Total	400	360	40	90	10

Source: *Author's Field Survey (2023)*

Table 1 shows that 400 questionnaires were administered to 400 respondents from the study area that has witnessed and experienced the Farmers-Herders conflicts in Guma LGA of Benue State who were in IDP camps in Daudu & Abagena. The table also revealed that of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 360 (90%) of the questionnaires were retrieved; this was due to close



monitoring by the research assistants and the camp leaders mobilized to assist them. 40 (10%) were not retrieved for reasons beyond the control of the researcher.

Demographic Information and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

The research obtained data on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study areas. These include gender, age, and years of residence in the conflict area, education, occupation, marital status, family size, and company in camp. These are presented in Table .2 below.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by their Demographic Information and Socioeconomic Characteristics

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Adult Female	180	50
Adult Male	108	30
Girls	36	10
Boys	36	10
AGE		
12 – 17	64	17
19 – 30	136	38
31 – 50	112	31
51 and above	48	14
YEARS OF RESIDENCE		
1 – 5	32	8
6 – 10	64	18
11 – 20	56	16
20 and above	184	51
Abstain	24	7
EDUCATION		
Non-formal	24	7
Primary	80	22
Secondary	192	53
Tertiary	64	18
OCCUPATION		
Farming	320	89
Cattle rearing	0	0
Trading	16	4

Artisan	8	3
Abstain	16	4
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	96	26
Married	216	60
Widow	24	7
Divorced	24	7
FAMILY SIZE		
1 – 4	88	24
5 – 8	96	27
9 – 12	96	27
Above 12	80	22
COMPANY		
Alone	36	10
Single parent	62	17
Relatives	26	7
Entire family	236	66

Source: Field survey (2023)

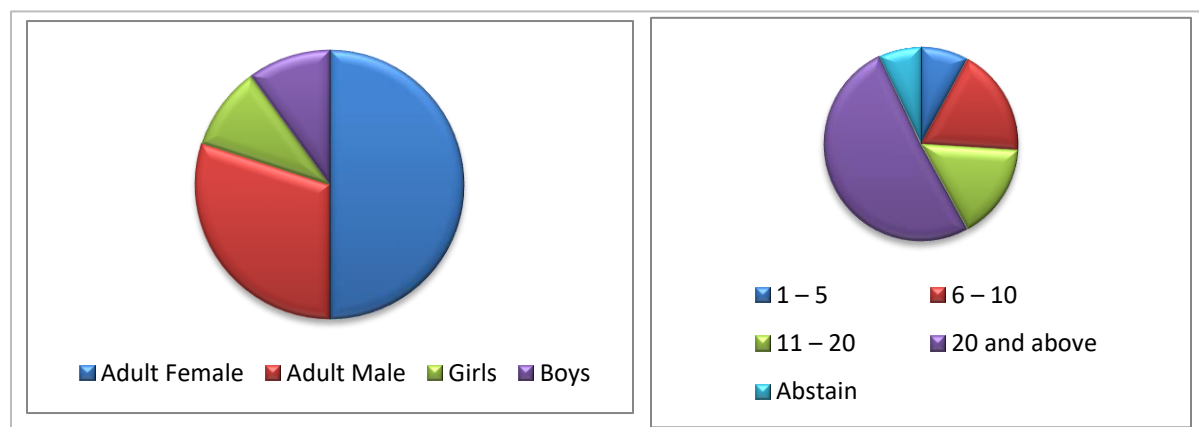


Figure 2: Pie Chart Showing Gender and Years of Residence

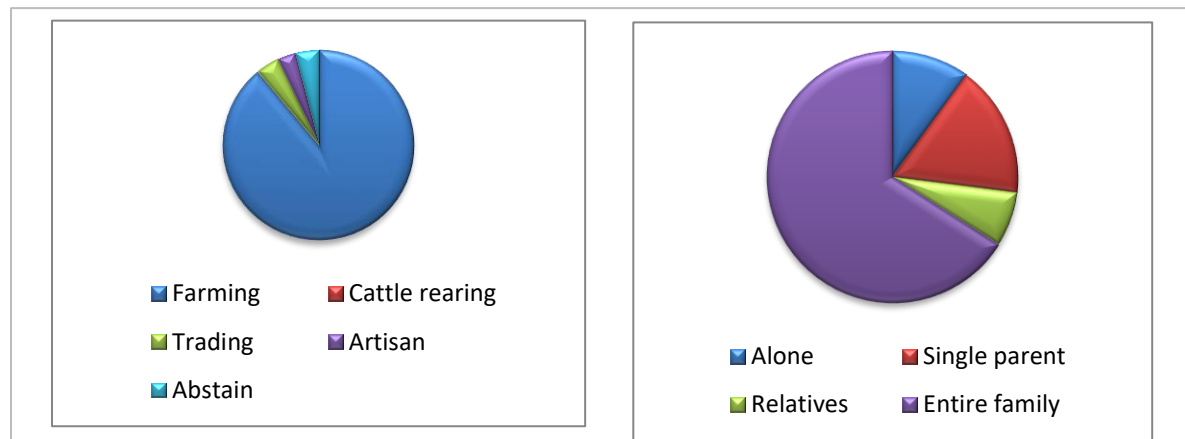


Figure 3: Pie Chart Showing Occupation and Company

Distribution by Gender

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the study area are presented in Table 2. Data were collected from a sample comprising 80% (304) female respondents while 20% (76) were male respondents. The women were more in number because they were closer to the children. A relatively low number of men were included in the research because they are heads of households who witnessed this crisis that affected their families and hold strong opinions to influence the behaviour of the children who are the focus of this study. The children were only 10% of the respondents as they can't comprehend fully the information about the crisis and the implication therein to meaningfully contribute to the achievement of the stated objective of this study. Although the issue concerns them, information was obtained more from the adults who are their guardians and custodians.

Distribution by Age

Concerning the ages of the respondents, a significant proportion of respondents 27.9% (106) are between the ages of 31 and 39 while 28.4% (108) are between the ages of 50 years and above. This implies that a good number of respondents are within the active and economic age bracket. This was also to ensure that the elders who it is believed to have a vast experience of these Farmers-Herders conflicts in Guma LGA of Benue state are adequately represented.

Distribution by Years of Residence in the Conflict Area

This analysis indicates that 14.8% (56) have resided in their communities for 10-14 years, 26% (99) respondents have lived there for 15-19 while 45% (171) have lived in their communities for more than 20 years before the outburst of the conflict. This goes to show that a good number of the respondents have resided in their various communities in Guma LGA long enough to have a reasonable knowledge of these conflicts. And the displacement has a debilitating effect on them and their families.



Distribution by Educational Level

The educational level of respondents was as follows; the respondents with non-formal education constituted 31.5% (120) of the respondents, this is followed by those with tertiary education 25.6% (97). More than a quarter 76 % (20) of the respondents received formal education at various levels. The statistic implies that the respondents were allowed to express their concerns irrespective of educational attainment.

Distribution by Occupation

The analysis of the respondents by their occupation varies sharply in frequency and percentage. Data shows that a majority of the respondents representing 32.4% (123) are farmers while 8.9% (34) rear livestock. This goes to show that there are more farmers in Guma LGA than those who rear livestock. Those who are involved in both farming and cattle rearing are 9.3% (35), and other occupations like trading and artisan are 26.8% (102) and 22.6% (86) respectively. So farming is a major occupation of the respondents in the study area.

Distribution by Marital Status

The data obtained on the marital status of the respondents showed that the majority 35.8% (136) are married, while 31.3% (119) are widowed. This implied that a high proportion of respondents had family responsibilities and would likely use land more intensely. They also suffer great trauma as some of their loved ones are casualties of the crisis. There is also a high level of single-parent respondents 26.9% (102) who were sampled. 2.6% (10) and 3.4% (13) are the respondents that are divorced and separated from their spouses respectively.

Distribution by Family Size

Most of the respondents on average have a family size of between 5 – 8 and 9 - 12, which is 27% (96) in each of these sizes. Those who have households greater than 12 are 22% (80). The minimum family size of 1 – 4 is 24% (88) of the respondents. So, it was likely that most of the respondents suffered casualties in the course of the crisis.

Distribution by Company in Camp

Most of the displaced persons 66% (236) of the respondents have their entire family (comprising both parents and children) with them in the camp. Another 7% (26) are in camp with their relatives. Worrying is the 10% (36) and 17% (62) of the respondents who are in camp alone and as single parents respectively. This is so because children are involved and this situation leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

**Table 3: Distribution of the Responses for the Concerns of Displaced Children**

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY				
	very often (5)	often (4)	Sometime (3)	rarely (2)	never (1)
Safety and Insecurity of lives	128	8	112	16	8
Rehabilitation and Compensation	212	56	16	20	0
Pilfering and diversion of relief materials	40	8	164	40	24
Violence and Abuse of Children	16	8	48	158	40
Sexual harassment and abuse	0	0	40	80	104
Physical and Psychological trauma	40	0	40	96	104
Family split up and disintegration	144	0	40	16	80
Poor Nutrition	140	54	40	40	32
Growing distrust and perpetual fear	96	72	40	24	16
Poor water & sanitary condition	40	0	40	120	56
The inaction of Agencies & Government	24	0	40	80	80
Alcohol and Drug Abuse	100	72	40	80	22
Phobia & suicide	8	40	40	80	80
Unwanted pregnancies	24	0	56	88	88
Deprivation of liberty	120	80	40	8	0
Proliferation of arms	112	40	0	40	40
Abduction, Kidnapping, and Trafficking	64	0	40	40	88
School Drop-out	120	40	60	42	20
Overpopulation / non-classification of IDPs	128	80	40	45	23
Improper Records Keeping	126	40	68	40	20
Issues of Finance and Empowerment	130	80	40	60	24
Low Employment Opportunity	124	46	40	40	22
Risk of child labour	128	72	40	40	16
Torture and Beatings of Children	16	40	48	43	120
Access to medicare& immunization	120	80	40	44	50
prevalence of Diseases and infections	92	80	40	62	12
Lack of leisure and leisure place	40	0	56	80	120
Fear of safe delivery & Infant mortality	106	68	40	20	36
incapability due to Physical Disability	40	16	0	102	120
Poor Skills Development	100	48	48	43	21



How frequently are these services provided	56	120	80	40	16
You are satisfied with the service provided	32	160	50	44	8

Source: *Author's compilation from the questionnaire (2023)*

Data in Table 3 above indicate that safety and insecurity are very often a concern for 128 of the respondents, this perception occurs often to 8 (2%) of the respondents, while 112 (31%) only perceive so sometimes, with 16 (4%) rarely perceiving so and 8 (2%) don't perceive this as a concern at all. A large number of them 212 (59%) very often see rehabilitation and compensation as a concern for them and their children. Family split up and disintegration is very often a concern to 144 (40%) of the respondents just as 140 (39%) very often express concern over poor nutrition. These concerns range across important aspects of life that affect the development and well-being of the children in the camp and thereafter in the larger society in due course. These concerns cover education, health, social stability, and psycho-sociological issues.

Table 4: Agencies and Organizations Providing Services in IDP Camps

S.No	Agencies/Organizations	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Benue State Emergency Management Authority	336	93
2	Nigeria Securities Services	321	89
3	Christian Organizations	320	88
4	International Committee of the Red Cross	320	88
5	Non-Governmental Organizations	312	86
6	Red Cross Society of Nigeria	310	86
7	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund	300	83
8	Doctors Without Borders	288	80
9	Benue State Health Fund	244	68
10	Women Empowerment Programme	240	67

Source: *Authors compilation (2023)*

Table 4 above, shows the agencies and organizations that were present and functioning in the internally displaced persons' camp. Of this, Benue State Emergency Management Agency has the most recognized presence as acknowledged by 93% (336) of the respondents. This is followed by other agencies/organizations both local and international as listed above.

Table 5: Respondents' Perception of Service provided by Agencies and Organizations

S.No	Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Emergency	336	93
2	Religious	312	87
3	Education	310	86
4	Health	288	80
5	Security	280	78
6	Social Stability	240	67
7	Psycho-Social	144	40



Source: *Authors compilation (2023)*

The respondent's perception of the services provided by these agencies and organizations is shown in Table 5 which indicates that emergency services were the most acknowledged of the services, as stated by 93% (336) of the respondents. This is not unusual for displacement cases as every hand is always on deck to alleviate the immediate crisis, but afterwards, this tempo fizzles out. Religious services 87% (312), Education services 86% (310), Health services 80% (288), and social stability services 67% (240) were also acknowledged as indicated in the table. Psycho-social services 40% (144) and Income & empowerment services 22% (80) were the least acknowledged and a source of worry for internally displaced persons. The most worrisome is the psycho-social issue, as the conflict and the camp have exposed the children to serious issues of depression and trauma that need to be addressed. In general, the respondent's perception of the services provided for the children in the camp is not very often and satisfactory delivery is not very often, although they are both perceived to occur often (Table 2). This implies that there is a need to tailor service delivery to the needs and satisfaction of the IDPs.

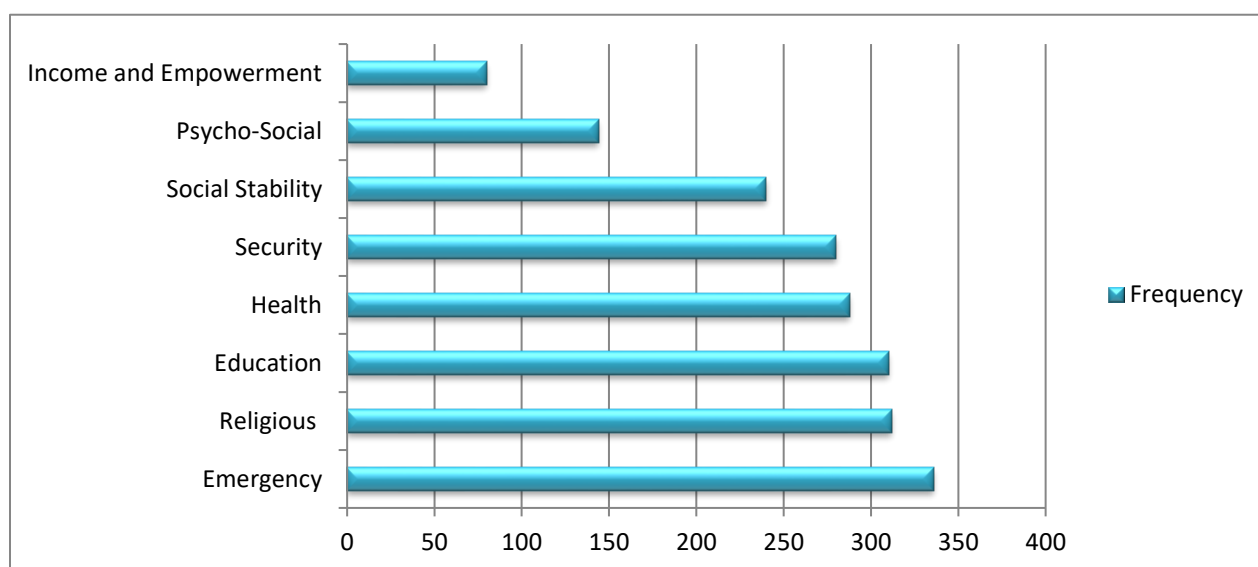


Figure 3 shows respondents' acknowledgement of services provided in the camp.

Table 6: Prioritizing the concerns of Children in IDP camp

S.No	Concerns	Frequency
1	Issues of rehabilitation and compensation	212
2	Family split up and disintegration	144
3	Poor child nutrition	140
4	Low income and empowerment	130
5	Over-population in the camp	128
6	Risk of Child labour	128
7	Safety and insecurity	128



8	Poor record keeping	126
9	Deprivation of liberty	120
10	Dropping out of school	120
11	Inadequate medical care & immunization	120
12	Proliferation of Arms	112
13	Fear of safe delivery and infant mortality	106
14	Fear of Alcohol and Drug abuse	100
15	Poor Skills Development	100

Source: *Author's compilation (2023)*

Using the 5- 5-point Likert type scale, the study obtains the frequency and the weights of each of the question items related to the objectives of the study as shown in Table 6 above. The items are ranked in descending order of magnitude. That is, the item with the highest frequency (mode) is ranked first, and others follow in the order of their magnitude.

From Table 6, rehabilitation and compensation are uppermost in the minds of the IDPs, as there are strong feelings of the deprivation of their liberty. This is to enable them to return to their normal life and take adequate care of their families and the children in particular. This is so, as it can be observed that a family split up constitutes a major hindrance to the children's growth and well-being. Poor nutrition is also noted as a concern for the children as are fed with what is available for all not minding the nutritional value, and the ratio is such that will reach all; adults and children alike.

Overpopulation in the camp also takes its toll on the children, as due to lack of adequate accommodation they are crowded with adults in the same space. This exposes them to harmful lifestyles and practices experienced in camps such as alcohol and drug abuse and the proliferation of arms, perhaps the reason for the concern about safety and insecurity may be more within the camp than from external aggression. There are also cases of school dropouts with consequences for vices as stated above, and more with the risk of child labour and its attendant adverse effect on the children and society now and in the future. More so, there are concerns about skills development and low income and empowerment.

There are concerns about access to medical care for the children as respondents considered it inadequate. This is such that the issue of immunization for the children is also of concern, same with the issue of safe delivery and infant mortality.

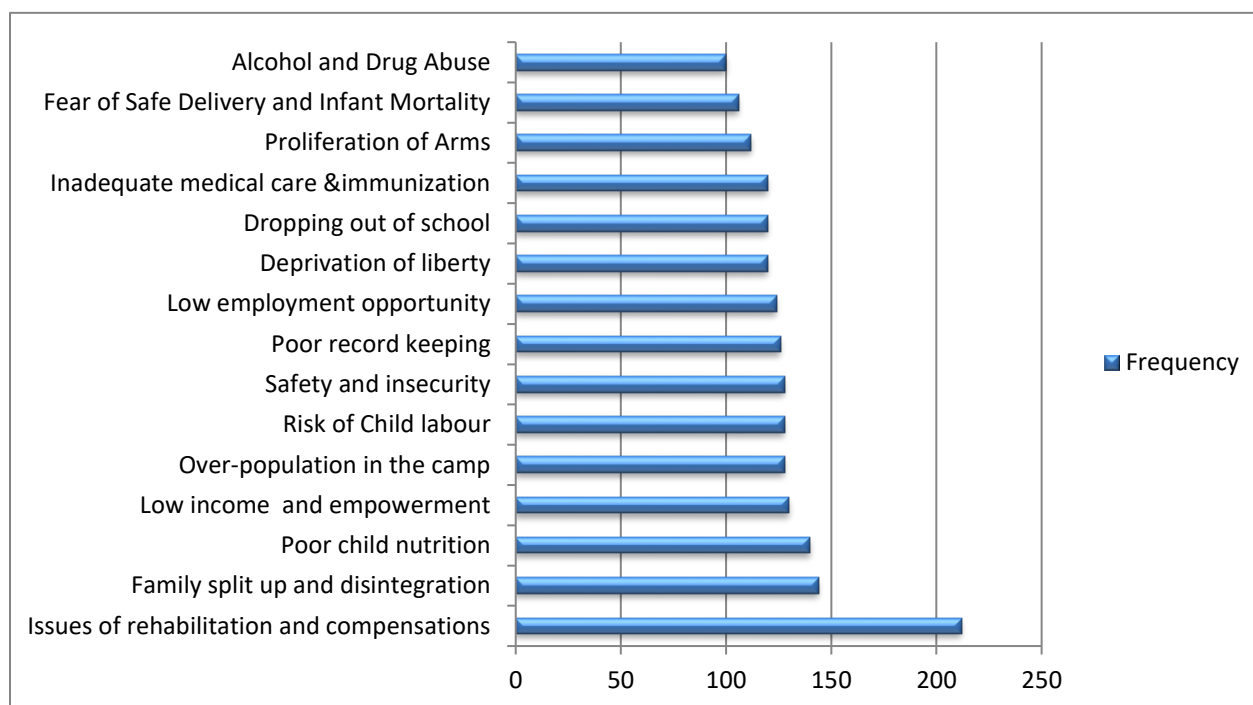


Figure 4: Bar Chart showing prioritized concerns for children in IDP camps

CONCLUSION

Internal displacement in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon, but the focus of this study is the impact of displacement on children in Guma LGA of Benue state. A major finding of the study is that in the internally displaced persons' camp, the children experienced harsh conditions that should be a concern. A worrisome one is that some of the children are in camp alone as a result of the loss of their parents in the conflict. This situation leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Another issue is the psycho-social issue, as the conflict and the camp have exposed the children to serious issues that can depress and traumatize them. Access to medical care for children is important to stem dangerous infections, malnutrition, and infant mortality. The concern for school dropouts is another trend that should be addressed immediately as this leads to poor skill development and exposes the kids to the risk of Child labour and its adverse consequences.

It is based on these findings and conclusion, that the study makes the following recommendations;

1. There should be a proper record of all internally displaced persons based on all the indices of demographic and socioeconomic data. This will allow for adequate planning and logistics that will ensure that all categories of IDPs are catered for.
2. There should be a general psychological treatment for all the IDPs, the unaccompanied and single-parent children IDPs should be identified as special cases for this treatment to help their psycho-social integration with the larger society.



3. Access to medical care should be improved for the children as this would stem the tide of dangerous infections and epidemics that children especially are vulnerable to in such camps. This will also improve child and maternal care.
4. All-encompassing education services should be provided for the children to eradicate the school drop-out rate as this has implications for skills development and controls the risk of child labour and other vices.

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