



Socio-economic Impact of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) on Host Communities in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the socio-economic impact of internally displaced persons (IDPs) on host communities in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. Survey design was used for the study. The sample for the study consists of three hundred (300) respondents. The instrument used for the study was "Social and Economic impact of IDPs on the Host Community Questionnaire" (SEIIDPHCQ) made up of 20 items. The items of SEIIDPHCQ were subjected to face and content validity. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has significant Socio-Economic Impact on Host Communities. Socially, IDPs severely stretch services, worsen security, increase health risks, and disrupt local cultures. Economically, while IDPs can boost local markets, the prevailing view is that they displaced opportunities, drive up prices, and deprive communities of vital resources. It is therefore recommended that Government should construct dedicated settlements to relocate IDPs and reduce pressure on host communities; Government and NGOs should support the voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin where conditions permit; Government should also strengthen local integration by expanding economic opportunities, livelihood sources, and anti-poverty programs for both IDPs and host communities; Government and communities should contribute to security initiatives to safeguard communities from crime.

Keywords: Host communities, Internally Displaced Persons, Impact and Socio-economic.

Introduction

Nigeria is gradually becoming one of the leading countries with conflict and natural disaster situations in the world, resulting in political instability and economic marginalization of several regions; leading to an inconceivable internal displacement crisis over the past decade. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), according to the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGP) (2017) are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border". It is therefore important to note that the movement is involuntary and takes place within national borders. According to Musa, Abba and Baba (2016), IDPs are thus different from persons who can stay

safely in their place of residence but have opted to go away on their own free will, without coercion. Not only that, they are also different from refugees because they have not crossed an internationally recognized territorial border, and thus do not require a special legal status as a result of being outside their country and without its protection. As such, they are entitled to all the rights and guarantees as citizens and other habitual residents of their country.

Human displacement remains one of the most significant humanitarian challenges facing the world today. Statistics showed that out of 33.3 million internally displaced persons in the world (exclusive of the development-induced displacement), 15 million internally displaced persons can be found in Africa (Osagioduwa & Oluwakorede, 2016). This trend has increased with a rate of 7.5% between 2013 and 2014 and Nigeria hosting over 3,300,000 IDPs

(Osagioduwa & Oluwakorede, 2016). Millions of people have been forced to leave their homes to seek safety in places unfamiliar to them, in the process losing their assets and being exposed to enormous hardship. In the midst of these hardships, these displaced persons experience challenges with regards to their rights and their welfare condition. More than half of the world's internally displaced persons can be found in Africa (Crisp, 2010).

Historically, Adesote and Peters (2015) said internal displacement is not a new thing in Nigeria as it has occurred many years ago. For instance, during the Biafran war (1967- 1970) some two million people died and ten million people became internally displaced. While displacement of this magnitude has not been repeated since then, approximately 500,000 people were forced to flee their homes after ethnic violence rocked Nigeria in October 2001 (Adesote & Peters, 2015). Most of them returned to their homes by mid-2002 (Adesote & Peters, 2015). Reports have shown that a good number of persons are displaced as a result of both federal and state governments' activities such as demolitions, the oil explorations in the Niger-Delta region leading to environmental degradation and pollution, loss of the people's sources of livelihood in the region. Under the Governor Fashola's led administration, over 1 million people were displaced from the demolition of Ijora, Oshodi, Makoko and many other communities in Lagos State (Hamzat, 2013). Although the causes of displacement differ, armed conflict and other forms of mass violence are the major causes of human displacement in the country.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) recorded as at 2013, 3.3 million displaced persons in Nigeria especially as a result of the insurgency. It also recorded over 1 million internally displaced persons as of April 2015 and at December 2015, the total figure of IDPs identified in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States amounted to 2,152,000 people (Alobo & Obaji, 2016). From the total figure of internally displaced persons in this region, the examination shows that "13.33 per cent were displaced due to communal clashes, 0.99 per cent by natural disasters and 85.68 per cent as a result of insurgency attacks by Boko Haram activities in the region" (Obikaeze & Onuoha, 2016). Taraba State has recorded several forms of crises ranging from farmers-headers to ethno-religious crisis, banditry and natural disasters like the seasonal flooding which has led to the creation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps across the state.

The populations of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) bring both benefits and disadvantages to the host populations. The influx of IDPs and relief resources significantly altered economic opportunities for the host communities and same can be said of the IDPs in Jalingo, Taraba State. With the increased local market, there was an upsurge in business and trade conducted by both local hosts and IDPs. In terms of agricultural opportunities, local farmers generally hired IDPs to do agricultural work and also to build houses, tend livestock and fetch water and firewood (Whitaker, 2002).

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is not only a humanitarian issue, but also has important economic, social, political, and environmental impacts not only on the places of origin but on the destination as well. The development impacts of IDPs on host communities, however, remain poorly understood. As the number of displacement situations increases, it is especially important to understand these impacts to be able to develop evidence-based policy responses. IDPs usually entails large population inflows to

host communities that are unprepared to receive them. More generally, understanding the effects of IDPs on host communities is a first step toward creating rational political responses from national and international bodies since the displacement, is often associated with social disruption, tension, grievance, social fragmentation and economic upheaval, which is usually transferred to the host communities. Not only that, the arrival of new people under circumstances of forced movement may exacerbate social and economic differences disrupting previous balances of tolerance, social acceptance and cohesion. It is against this background therefore, this study examined the socio-economic impact of internally displaced persons in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Aim and Objectives of the Research

The aim of this study is to assess the socio-economic impact of IDP'S on host communities in Jalingo Local Government Area (LGA). The specific objectives of the study include:

- i. To investigate the social impacts of IDPs on the host Community.
- ii. To examine the economic impacts of IDPs on the host Community.

Research Questions

- i. What are the social impacts of IDPs on the host community?
- ii. What are the economic impacts of IDPs on the host community?

Materials and Methods

This study adopted survey research design. The population for the study was all the people from host communities where all the 9 IDPs camps were situated in Jalingo Taraba State. The sample for the study consists of three hundred (300) respondents from host communities using simple random techniques. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Social and Economic impact of IDPs on the Host Community Questionnaire" (SEIIDPHCQ) made up of 20 items. The items of SEIIDPHCQ were subjected to face and content validity. Descriptive statistic such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

Result of the Findings

Demographic Characteristics

The result on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study area is presented in Table 1.

Table1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
18-30 years	54	18.0
31-35 years	92	30.7
36-40 years	108	36.0
41 and above	46	15.3
Educational Qualification		
Non-formal	18	6.7

Education		
Primary school	68	22.7
Secondary	180	60.0
Tertiary	34	11.3
Marital status		
Single	92	30.7
Married	182	60.7
Widowed	24	8.0
Divorced/Separated	2	0.7
Occupation		
Civil servants	110	36.7
Farming	36	12.0
Business	104	34.7
Student	50	16.7
Religion		
Christianity	168	56.0
Islam	120	40.0
Traditional African religion	12	4.0
Total	300	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 1 presents key socio-demographic attributes of the 300 respondents surveyed across various settlements in Jalingo LGA. Capturing the demographic profile of respondents provides crucial contextual understanding and allows disaggregated analysis of results across different subgroups.

The age distribution indicates that a significant majority of respondents (67%) were between 31-40 years of age. This shows that the sample has a fair representation of adults in their prime working and family-raising years. Only 15.3% were over 41 years old, indicative of the lower life expectancies and survival rates in the region. The youth segment of 18-30 years comprised 18% of the sample. This is an important demographic that is vulnerable to unemployment, poverty, and conflict. The dominance of adults and youth can help understand perspectives on livelihoods and economic opportunities. Older respondents above 60 years were not specifically captured but may have provided useful historical insights.

An assessment of educational qualifications reveals that most respondents have received some formal education. While 6.7% reported not having any formal education, 22.7% attended primary school, and a majority of 60% made it to secondary school level. However, only 11.3% have tertiary level education, indicative of limited higher education access. The secondary school graduates form a crucial group as their skills may not match labour market requirements, rendering them frustrated. Education level is an

important aspect that influences understanding of social issues and the ability to access economic opportunities.

The marital status distribution shows that 60.7% of respondents were married, 30.7% were unmarried, 8% were widowed, and only 0.7% were divorced or separated. This is broadly representative of marital status trends in the region. The perspectives of married households that have to care for families are especially important to gauge the impacts of IDPs on issues like livelihoods, food security, and resource constraints. Unmarried youth may have different economic priorities and concerns.

The predominant occupations reported were civil service jobs (36.7%), business/trade (34.7%), and farming (12%). About 16.7% were students. This shows reliance on government sector jobs where available, while business/trade indicates the entrepreneurial need to generate income given limited formal job opportunities. Agriculture remains an important sector but may be constrained by the availability of land and inputs. Only about one-sixth report being students, pointing to lower educational enrolment rates overall. The dependence on varying livelihood patterns adds nuance to understanding the impacts on hosts.

Christians constituted 56% of the sample and Muslims 40%, broadly reflecting the overall demographic composition in Jalingo LGA. Only 4% reported adhering to traditional African religions. No major discrepancies are evident in religious representation. However, given the spread of both faiths, analysing perceptions across religious lines can reveal useful insights on aspects of social cohesion.

Social Impact of IDPs on Host Community in Jalingo LGA

Table 2 below provided an insight into the perceived social impact of IDPs on host communities in Jalingo LGA.

Table2. Social impact of IDPs on the Host Community in Jalingo LGA

S/N	Statements	N=300		
		Yes%	No	Total%
	The presence of IDP's has caused congestion in places of worship, schools and learning institutions?	266 88.7	34 11.3	300 100
	IDPs have increased high rate of rape and theft in the community	249 83.0	51 17.0	300 100
	IDPs have led to difficulty in assessing health facilities in the host community	245 81.7	55 18.3	300 100
	Access to water and electricity are a major challenge in the community due to presence of IDPs	252 84.0	48 16.0	300 100
	IDP activities have affected intergroup relations such as marriage, religious worship and sacred	256 85.3	44 14.7	300 100

	festivals			
	The activities and assistance rendered to IDPs has created tension, insecurity and hatred in the host community	246 82.0	54 18.0	300 100
	The IDPs in the host community are affecting our children's behavior negatively	189 63.0	111 37.0	300 100
	The activities of IDPs are causing cultural extinction in the host communities	228 76.0	72 24.0	300 100
	The level of laziness and begging in the host community has increased due to the presence of IDPs	260 86.7	40 13.3	300 100
	The spread of STDs and STIs and other killer diseases have increased due to IDPs in the community.	250 83.3	50 16.7	300 100

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The result of the findings in Table 2 above revealed that a large majority of respondents (over 80%) agreed that the presence of IDPs has caused severe congestion and stretch on existing social infrastructure, such as places of worship, educational institutions, and health centres. 82–86% of respondents agreed that IDPs have led to increased crime like theft and rape, negative social practices like begging, tensions between groups, and erosion of local cultural values and practices. About 37% of host community members disagreed about the impact on children, indicating more nuanced opinions. The findings of the study also revealed that about 83.3% of respondents agreed that IDP influx has increased host community exposure to diseases like cholera, STDs, and STIs.

Economic Impact of IDPs on Host Community in Jalingo LGA

Table 3 seeks to illicit respondent's view on the economic impact of IDPs on the host community in Jalingo L.G.A.

Table3. Economic Impact of IDPs on the Host Community in Jalingo L.G.A

S/N	Statements	N=300		
		Yes%	N%	Total%
	Do you think IDP activities have promoted economic activity in the study area	280 93.3	20 6.7	300 100%
	Do you think IDP activities are also affecting the community negatively	268 89.3	32 10.7	300 100%
	Do the presence of IDPs	236	64	300

	caused a rise in prices of goods and services in the host community	271 90.3	29 9.7	300 100%
	Do you believe that IDPs in the host community are leading to scarcity of resources and business opportunities?	260 86.7	40 13.3	300 100%
	IDPs have taken over menial jobs and employment opportunities away from youths by collecting lower wages	224 74.7	76 25.3	300 100%
	The prices of school fees, transport fares and health bills (drugs/treatment) have increased due to IDPs?	270 90.0	30 10	300 100%
	There is high rate of burglary of shops/store houses, arm robbery and theft, fraud	230 76.7	70 23.3	300 100%
	The presence of IDPs has attracted more investment and investors in the community?	260 86.7	40 13.3	300 100%
	There is high competition for land, shops and locations for farming, business transactions and sales due to IDPs			

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The findings in Table 3 shows that 280 respondents representing 93.3% think that the IDP activities have promoted economic in the study area and 20 (6.7%) said No; and most 191 representing 63.7% identified increased farming activities as some of the activities that promoted the economy of the community. More so, 268 respondents representing 89.3% are of the opinion that IDP activities are also affecting the community negatively while 32(10.7%) are of a different opinion; 236 (78.7%) agreed that the presence of IDPs caused a rise in prices of goods and services in the host community while 64 (21.3%) disagreed. The respondents were also asked if they believe that IDPs in the host community are leading to scarcity of resources and business opportunities; 271 (90.3%) said yes while 29 (9.7%) said no. 260 (86.7%) agreed that IDPs have taken over menial jobs and employment opportunities away from youths by collecting lower wages while 40 (13.3%) disagreed with the statement; and most 224 (74.7%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the prices of school fees, transport fares and health bills (drugs/treatment) have increased due to IDPs while few (76) respondents representing 25.3% said no that the presence of IDPs do not has impact on the increase of prices of schools fees, transport fares and health bills.

To buttress more, data in Table 3 indicates that most 270(90.0%) agreed that there is high rate of burglary of shops/store houses, arm

robbery and theft, fraud while few, 30(10%) disagreed. The table above was also designed to determine if the presence of IDPs has attracted more investment and investors in the community? Results shows that 230 respondents representing 76.7% agreed while 70(23.3%) disagreed. Finally, majority (260) respondents representing 86.7% agreed that there is high competition for land, shops and locations for farming, business transactions and sales due to IDPs while only few 40(13.3%) disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings revealed that social impact of IDPs on host communities in Jalingo LGA. From the findings, sudden spike in IDP populations has increased demand and imposed excessive pressure on already limited public services and facilities in host communities. Local schools and learning centres are overstretched without adequate teachers or seating capacity to absorb the influx of children from IDP families. Similarly, respondents complained about long queues and waiting times at health centres due to rising patient loads.

According to the findings, IDPs have led to increased crime like theft and rape, negative social practices like begging, tensions between groups, and erosion of local cultural values and practices. This suggests that the rapid and unplanned influx of IDPs has disrupted the existing social fabric and harmony in host communities. Finally, according to the respondents, the IDP influx has increased host community exposure to diseases like cholera, STDs, and STIs. This could be due to over-crowdedness in health facilities, filthy IDP camps, lack of clean water, or illnesses. The government must prioritise basic facilities, sanitary infrastructure, and clean water in IDP settlements. IDP activities have promoted economic in the study area through increased farming activities. More so, the presence of IDPs caused a rise in prices of goods and services in the host community, high rate of burglary of shops/store houses, arm robbery and theft. The respondents also agreed that there is high competition for land, shops and locations for farming, business transactions and sales due to IDPs.

This is in line with the findings of Badeson (2020) in a study conducted in Adamawa State of Nigeria to assess the impact of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) on host community. The study is also in line with the findings of Couldrey, Peebles, Schoenfeld and Ellis (2018); Chantavanich and Kamonpetch (2017); Depetris-Chauvin and Santos (2017) and Verme and Schuettler (2021). The findings of their analysis revealed that IDPs have considerable impact on their host community. The impacts are usually obvious in creating socio-economic instability, increases in crime rate and the deterioration of infrastructures. This is an indication that most of the respondents are of the opinion that IDPs have socio-economic impact on the host community in Jalingo LGA.

Conclusion

This study has examined the socio-economic impact of internally displaced persons (IDPs) on host communities in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria. It is evident from the findings of this study to conclude that Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has significant Socio-Economic Impact on Host Communities. Socially, IDPs severely stretch services, worsen security, increase health risks, and disrupt local cultures. Economically, while IDPs can boost local markets, the prevailing view is that they displace opportunities, drive up prices, and deprive communities of vital resources. It is hence evident that

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has significant socio-economic impact on host communities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

- i. Government should construct dedicated settlements to relocate IDPs and reduce pressure on host communities.
- ii. Government and NGOs should support the voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin where conditions permit.
- iii. Government should also strengthen local integration by expanding economic opportunities, livelihood sources, and anti-poverty programs for both IDPs and hosts.
- iv. Government and communities contribute to security initiatives to safeguard communities from crime.

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