

The Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on the Occupations of Internally Displaced Persons in Damaturu, Yobe State

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Abstract

This study addresses the social service problems encountered by Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Damaturu, Yobe State, as a consequence of the Boko Haram insurgency. The research objectives are to examine the impact on IDPs' occupations, assess the effects on the education of IDP children, and evaluate accessibility to shelter in Damaturu. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and in-depth interviews, the study collected data from 805 survey respondents and conducted in-depth interviews with five participants from Abbari YBC, Abujan Mai-Mala, Alhaji Muhammadu Gombe (AMG) Farm, Kasaisa, and Kuareta IDPs settlements. Major findings reveal a demographic profile emphasizing women and a younger age group among IDPs. The insurgency has led to significant disruptions in employment, skills loss, economic instability, and challenges in education, with barriers to access and declining academic performance for IDP children. Shelter conditions are precarious, marked by congestion and a lack of amenities. The study concludes by emphasizing the urgent need for targeted interventions to rebuild livelihoods, enhance education, and improve shelter conditions. Recommendations include livelihood support, urgent education interventions, shelter and infrastructure enhancement, gender-sensitive assistance, and collaborative efforts for comprehensive policy advocacy and support for IDPs in Damaturu.

Keywords: *Boko Haram, IDPs, Livelihood Disruption, Terrorism*

Introduction

Terrorism and insurgency, global in scope, have deeply impacted nations, exposing vulnerabilities in socioeconomic and political systems worldwide. There were widespread conflicts, involving 572 militia, guerrilla, and separatist groups across 64 nations. This issue transcends regions, affecting Africa, the Middle East, Asia, America, and Europe, each grappling with distinct conflict forms (Alao, cited in Garba & Muktar, 2019). Northeast Nigeria has seen increasing numbers of IDPs in the main cities of the region, in response to the violence perpetrated by the Islamist group Boko Haram (Kamta & Scheffran, 2022)

The conflict's complexities have led to significant displacement trends, forcing individuals and families into Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and host communities. This displacement mirrors broader patterns observed in conflict-ridden regions across Africa.

The impact of insurgency-induced displacement extends beyond physical relocation, causing the loss of homes, disruption of livelihoods, and breakdown of community structures. Damaturu's socioeconomic fabric vividly illustrates the profound consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency, necessitating a critical examination of its implications (Cederman & Pengl, 2019; Kamta & Scheffran, 2022)

Recent statistics underscore the severe consequences of conflict-driven displacement globally, revealing millions of deaths and an overabundance of socioeconomic challenges, particularly evident in Nigeria's northeast, experiencing a worrying decade-long rising trend (Cederman & Pengl, 2019). By the end of 2020, a staggering 82.4 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, with 48.6 million being internally displaced persons (IDPs) (UNHCR, 2022). The situation escalated in 2021, reaching 89.3 million forcibly displaced individuals, more than double the figures from 2012. This marked an 8% increase of nearly 7 million people within a year, equating to over 1% of the world's population being forcibly displaced. The stark comparison highlights the urgency of addressing the global crisis of displacement (UNHCR, 2021).

Despite a significant decline in insurgents' control since 2018, Boko Haram continues to carry out abductions, suicide bombings, and attacks on military and civilian targets, as noted by Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2022). This ongoing threat sustains the plight of internally displaced persons in the northeastern part of Nigeria, posing a contemporary challenge in Damaturu, Yobe State. Since the group's inception in 2009, numerous lives have been lost, and properties worth millions of naira destroyed, leading to mass displacement. Vulnerable groups, especially children, the elderly, and women, face severe socioeconomic challenges. Despite government efforts to establish IDP camps, challenges persist, including overcrowding, poor sanitation, unemployment, poverty, increased illiteracy, and insecurity in Damaturu and across the Northeast (Adeboye, 2021; Garba & Muktar, 2019; Jamri, 2021).

In 2022, the global number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) reached 59.1 million, with 53.2 million resulting from conflict and violence, and 5.9 million from natural disasters (IDMC, 2022)). Specifically, the Boko Haram conflict displaced 2.2 million individuals in the northeast of Nigeria, with the majority affected in Borno State (Human Right Watch, 2022). These figures encompass people displaced by Boko Haram attacks, government counter-insurgency operations, and inter-communal clashes. The largest increase in IDPs occurred in Borno State, the most vulnerable among the northeastern states affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, followed by Adamawa and Yobe States.

The IDP figures in Nigeria have risen significantly due to the Boko Haram Insurgency and inter-communal conflicts, according to (HRW, 2022; UNHCR, 2022). The escalation of Boko Haram attacks and heavy-handed counter-insurgency measures has adversely impacted every aspect of life, especially for internally displaced people. In Yobe State, economic infrastructure damage has obstructed income sources, affecting both IDPs and host communities, primarily farmers denied access to their land. Non-agricultural livelihoods have also suffered. The World

Food Programme aims to support over 40,000 households in Yobe State in 2022, predominantly comprising direct victims of Boko Haram activities (World Food Programme, 2022).

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Yobe State, particularly Damaturu, confront various challenges due to forced displacement caused by the Boko Haram insurgency. Many are housed in congested, isolated, or insecure shelters, with fragmented humanitarian responses failing to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups. Notably, unaccompanied children, the elderly, sick, handicapped, and pregnant women lack proper attention. The study by (Alkali & Sharma, 2022) underscores the urgency of exploring modalities to alleviate the socio-economic impact of Boko Haram on IDPs, aiming to enhance their well-being and enable their meaningful contributions to the broader development of Yobe State and Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The violent activities of Boko Haram insurgents against civilians and sporadic attacks on Nigerian security agents in northeast Nigeria have subdued in the region. However, internal displacement and its resultant effects remain nearly fresh in the region. According to UNHCR, (2020) report, a total of 26 million Nigerians has been affected by the crisis, with an estimated 2.7 million people internally displaced in north-eastern Nigeria, further aggravating the humanitarian crisis. The World Food Programme (WFP, 2022) reports that conflict in northeast Nigeria remains a protracted crisis, with persistent inequalities and poverty affecting the region. As of August 2020, 2.3 million individuals remain internally displaced in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) States, with women and children comprising the majority.

The greatest cause for concern is the unimaginable suffering these defenseless and vulnerable groups must endure in their new homes (Hemba, 2021). This condition has occasionally compelled the IDPs to leave the camps to protect themselves, worsening their situation. However, due to the increasing complexity and devastating ramifications, there is currently no accurate, officially agreed-upon record of the overall number of IDPs brought about by Boko Haram insurgents.

IDPs in Damaturu face various socioeconomic issues, including lack of access to food, clothing, shelter, sanitation, employment, and disrupted social networks. The upheaval of internal relocation obstructs IDPs' social networks and may lead to prejudice and dropouts for IDP's children in schools. Unsanitary dwelling conditions accelerate the spread of infectious diseases (IDMC, 2018).

Internally displaced people coexist and share resources with host communities, placing additional strain on existing structures. Whether in camps, camp-like settlements, or host communities, IDPs confront socioeconomic obstacles such as a lack of access to basic necessities and loss of employment (Hemba, 2021; IDMC, 2018). Host communities also suffer from accommodating the massive influx of displaced individuals from areas directly attacked by Boko Haram.

Despite existing studies examining the consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency and internal displacement, there is a gap in understanding the full spectrum of its socioeconomic effects on internally displaced people. Most studies focus on specific nations, geopolitical regions, and states. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining social service problems among internally displaced persons (IDP) in Yobe State

Literature Review

Boko Haram has disrupted livelihood activities and markets and reduced trade flows. Staple food and other basic commodities have become scarcer and prices have risen, preventing IDPs from buying basic foodstuffs (Alkali & Sharma, 2022). Most of them are food insecure and host families are overstretched. An inter-agency humanitarian needs assessment carried out in the northeast in mid-2014 found that it was common practice for households to ration food portions as a means of getting by (The World Bank, 2016). Worse again is the loss of farmland, livestock and tools, which render many IDPs unable to resume their livelihoods after displacement and most receive no form of assistance to do so. In many cases, farming and grazing land is not available during displacement, so IDPs may have been unable to farm since their flight (National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons [NCREMID], 2014). These have greatly affected the IDP families' occupational status as most of them become jobless and vulnerable to all sorts of abuse and challenges due to the simple fact that they are economically unsecured.

State security measures have also disrupted rural markets and transport, contributing further to the food shortages of both IDPs and their hosts. Trade at major urban markets in Maiduguri, Potiskum, Damaturu, Mubi, and Yola has been halved and many sub-urban markets have closed. Vulnerable households including IDPs in the worst affected areas of southern Borno and Yobe States and northern Adamawa State face phase three or crisis-level food insecurity (The Famine Early Warning Systems Network [FEWS NET], 2014). All these happened with the declaration of a State of emergency in some parts of these states, which attracted market closure, and farming and livestock restriction in some areas all in the name of security with no concrete alternative that would bring succor to their occupational challenges.

Methodology

The paper apart from the secondary data used in the literature review also sourced primary data, through the use of a mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative). The quantitative data were elicited through surveys (Questionnaires) administered to the sampled displaced persons in Damaturu electronically using Open Data Kits (ODK). The qualitative data were elicited through the use of In-depth Interview (IDI) with five (5) IDPs leaders. The sample size of this study is 803 for survey and 5 for IDI totalling 810 from Abbari YBC, Abujan MaiMala, Alhaji Muhammadu Gombe (AMG) Farm, Kasaisa and Kuareta IDPs settlements. Simple random and purposive sampling strategy were used in sampling the research respondents and participants respectively. For data analysis, the study employed descriptive statistic in the form of simple percentage and frequency count. The qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) where the data were organised in theme aligned to the research objectives and the findings were used in complementing the quantitative data. Overall, the methodology is rooted in quantitative rigor, with qualitative components serving as supplementary tools to enrich the understanding of the multifaceted impact of displacement in Damaturu.

Result and Discussion

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Population

Sex	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Female	495	61.5
	Male	310	38.5
Total		805	100.0
Age			
	21 – 30	217	27.0
	31 – 40	245	30.4
	41 – 50	174	21.6
	51 years and above	138	17.1
	Below 20 years	31	3.9
Total		805	100.0
Marital Status			
	Divorced	11	1.4
	Married	707	87.8
	Single	38	4.7
	Widowed	49	6.1
Total		805	100.0
Family Members Living Together as IDPs			
	1 – 2	61	7.6
	3 – 4	183	22.7
	5 – 6	192	23.9
	7 or more	369	45.8
Total		805	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The sociodemographic analysis of the study's respondents, as presented in Table 1, provides key insights into the composition of the sample. The majority of respondents are female (61.5%), emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive interventions. In terms of age, the concentration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) within the 21 – 40 age group (57.4%) highlights the impact of the conflict on the productive segment of the population, with implications for future workforce and community development. Marital status diversity is evident, with 87.8% being married and 6.1% widowed, underscoring the complex dynamics of families affected by displacement. The data on family size as IDPs reveals that 45.8% live with seven or more family members, emphasizing the challenges faced by larger households and the need for comprehensive aid packages and community support. This sociodemographic overview provides a foundation for contextualizing and analysing the study's findings within the broader social and familial context of the displaced population.

Analysis of the Extent to which *Boko Haram* Insurgency Affects the Occupations of Internally Displaced Persons in Damaturu

This section presents the analysis of the data in Tables 2 which provides valuable insights into the extent to which *Boko Haram* Insurgency affects the occupations of internally displaced persons in Damaturu.

Table 2: Respondents' Perspectives on the Occupation and Livelihood Impacts of the *Boko Haram* Insurgency on IDPs in Damaturu

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
IDPs were Denied Temporary Access to Farmlands and can't Afford to Rent		
Agree	521	64.7
Disagree	12	1.5
Neutral	28	3.5
Strongly Agree	241	29.9
Strongly Disagree	3	0.4
Total	805	100.0
Lack of Concentration and Thought of Temporary Settlement Impede IDP Members from Seeking Occupations		
Agree	536	66.6
Disagree	22	2.7
Neutral	69	8.6
Strongly Agree	170	21.1
Strongly Disagree	8	1.0
Total	805	100.0
Finding Suitable Employment Opportunities by IDPs in Damaturu LGA is Extremely Challenging		
Agree	499	62.0
Disagree	7	0.9
Neutral	20	2.5
Strongly Agree	277	34.4
Strongly Disagree	2	0.2
Total	805	100.0
The <i>Boko Haram</i> Insurgency Has Significantly Hindered IDPs Financial Stability and Livelihood		
Agree	514	63.9
Disagree	26	3.2
Neutral	23	2.9
Strongly Agree	239	29.7
Strongly Disagree	3	0.4
Total	805	100.0
IDPs Feel that their Skills and Expertise are Undervalued or Underutilized in the Job Market Since Becoming an IDP		
Agree	578	71.8

Disagree	3	0.4
Neutral	17	2.1
Strongly Agree	206	25.6
Strongly Disagree	1	0.1
Total	805	100.0
The <i>Boko Haram</i> Insurgency Has Negatively Affected their Long-term Career Prospects		
Agree	549	68.2
Disagree	3	0.4
Neutral	11	1.4
Strongly Agree	242	30.1
Total	805	100.0

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

This Table 2 above offers a nuanced perspective of how respondents perceive the diverse occupation and livelihood Impacts of the *Boko Haram* Insurgency on IDPs in Damaturu. The findings reflect not only the challenges faced by IDPs but also the depth of the impact on their daily lives and long-term prospects.

Firstly, a substantial 64.7% of respondents agree that IDPs were denied temporary access to farmlands, with an additional 29.9% strongly agreeing. This underscores the significant disruption in agricultural activities, a critical livelihood for many in Damaturu. The high agreement suggests a consensus among respondents regarding the challenges faced by IDPs in accessing essential resources for their sustenance.

Secondly, 66.6% of respondents agree that the lack of concentration and the thought of temporary settlement impede IDP members from seeking occupations, with 21.1% strongly agreeing. This finding delves into the psychological and emotional challenges faced by IDPs, revealing how the uncertainty of their situation affects their ability to engage in meaningful activities, including seeking employment. The high agreement and strong agreement per centages indicate a widespread recognition of the mental health impact of displacement.

Moreover, the table indicates that 96.4% of respondents find suitable employment opportunities for IDPs in Damaturu to be extremely challenging. This finding suggests a grim employment scenario for the displaced population, possibly attributed to factors such as competition, discrimination, or the lack of available positions. The agreement here is exceptionally high, underscoring the severity of the employment crisis faced by IDPs.

Furthermore, 93.6% of respondents agree that the *Boko Haram* insurgency has significantly hindered IDPs' financial stability and livelihood. This aligns with the broader economic consequences highlighted in the previous table, emphasizing the pervasive challenges faced by IDPs in sustaining their livelihoods. The high agreement per centage indicates a shared understanding among respondents of the extensive economic impact on the displaced population. Additionally, a notable 71.8% of respondents agree that IDPs feel their skills and expertise are undervalued or underutilized in the job market since becoming IDPs. This perception underscores a critical issue of perceived discrimination or neglect of the capabilities of displaced individuals in the employment sector. The high agreement per centage suggests a shared sentiment among respondents regarding the challenges IDPs face in having their skills recognized and utilized.

This was re-affirmed by the qualitative data elicited through IDI with one of the IDPs leader in *Kasaisa* reported to have said:

“Our occupations took a hit due to the insurgency. Many of us arrived here without capital, leaving behind businesses and trades. Joblessness became a reality as we focused on survival (IDI with IDPs Chairman in *Kasaisa*, 2023).”

Moreover, another qualitative data sourced from IDI with IDPs leader, *Abbari YBC* who asserted that:

Before the *Boko Haram* insurgency, we were prosperous farmers with thriving occupations in our original place of origin. However, the insurgency resulted in the loss of cattle, takeover of farms, and destruction of homes. NGOs provided some support, distributing animals, but the lack of grazing land and security forced us to sell or slaughter them. The negative consequences are long-lasting, making a return to our original residences seem impractical (IDI with IDPs Chairman in *Abbari YBC*, 2023).

It is evident from the above findings that the impact of the *Boko Haram* insurgency on the occupations of IDPs is profound. From once prosperous farmers, many now face the challenge of sustaining their livelihoods. The efforts of NGOs, though well-intentioned, encounter practical challenges like insufficient grazing land and security concerns, leaving IDPs with limited options and creating long-term challenges for their occupations.

Finally, 98.3% of respondents agree that the *Boko Haram* insurgency has negatively affected the long-term career prospects of IDPs. This finding emphasizes the enduring consequences of the conflict on the professional trajectories of the displaced population. The exceptionally high agreement per centage underscores the collective understanding among respondents of the profound impact of the insurgency on the long-term aspirations of IDPs.

In the light of the above findings on IDPs occupational challenges, a Female IDPs' Leader in *Kukareta* also expressed the situation of IDPs on occupation related challenges.

The *Boko Haram* insurgency has profoundly disrupted our occupations as IDPs in *Kukareta*. Formerly thriving in farming and trading, we now face idleness and an inability to engage in our previous economic activities. The consequences extend beyond personal livelihoods; the vacuum created may even contribute to rising criminal activities in the main town of *Damaturu LGA* (IDI with Female IDPs' Leader in *Kukareta*, 2023).

In conclusion, Table 4.5.2 provides a comprehensive view of respondents' critical perspectives on the multifaceted impacts of the *Boko Haram* insurgency on IDPs in *Damaturu*. The high agreement per centages across various dimensions highlight the gravity of the challenges faced by the displaced population, urging a thoughtful and targeted response to address their complex needs and restore a sense of normalcy to their lives.

Discussion and Recommendation

This section discusses the major findings on this study, which investigates the impact *Boko Haram* Insurgency on occupations, education, and shelter accessibility, providing a comprehensive understanding of the conflict's repercussions on affected communities.

Among the 805 participants, 61.5% were women, emphasizing a higher female representation. The age distribution highlights a younger demographic, with 27.0% in the 21–30 age group and 30.4% in the 31–40 age group. This aligns with the Displacement Tracing Matrix, (2021) report, emphasizing a similar age trend among IDPs in the region. Gender distribution among IDPs reveals 53% female and 47% male, with 58% being minors (under 18) and 6% over 60. Marital status indicates that 87.8% of respondents were married, while 6.1% were widowed (Table 1).

The results shed light on how the *Boko Haram* insurgency has affected IDPs' access to jobs and means of subsistence in Damaturu. The findings show that the majority of respondents (98.3%) were forced to leave their former jobs, and that (96.4%) they had fewer work possibilities. Additionally, many respondents reported facing challenges in finding alternative employment opportunities (57.6%) and losing essential skills (89.4%). The findings underscore the significant disruption caused by the insurgency on the employment, financial stability and livelihood options of IDPs in the Damaturu (Table 2). This cleared the door for gender-based violence (GBV), child labour, hawking, begging, and other unhealthy coping techniques, particularly in households headed by women as reported by (DTM, 2021; International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2018, 2019). Additionally, the *Boko Haram* insurgency was claimed to be having the greatest impact on infrastructure, investments, and revenue, to name a few things. (Foyou et al., 2018).

Finally, the study reveals the experiences of IDPs regarding their shelter and housing conditions in Damaturu. The results show that the majority of respondents (99.1%) were obliged to seek refuge as IDPs and that (95.8%) they had difficulty obtaining acceptable lodging. Many responses (96.9%), congestion (69.1%), and a lack of basic amenities (66.0%) in the shelters were mentioned. Numerous respondents lamented their living circumstances and emphasised the need for better shelter options. To satisfy the needs of IDPs and guarantee their wellbeing, these findings highlight the urgent need for enhanced housing and shelter facilities (Table 4). The research of (Adeboye, 2021) asserts that IDPs frequently cannot exercise their basic rights to food and necessary household items like sleeping mats, mosquito nets, jerry cans, soap, and cooking utensils in the camp-like settlement, can be used to corroborate these conclusions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the devastating impact of the *Boko Haram* insurgency on internally displaced people (IDPs) in Damaturu, Yobe State. The findings reveal significant disruptions in the lives of IDPs, with a majority being women and a prevalent younger demographic. The insurgency has led to widespread unemployment, loss of essential skills, and economic instability, fostering gender-based violence and unhealthy coping mechanisms. Education has been severely affected, as IDP children face barriers to access and experience a decline in academic performance. Shelter conditions are challenging, with congestion and a lack of amenities prevalent. Government and Non-governmental organization responsible should tailor their interventions appropriately to address these pressing issues, emphasizing the need for targeted measures to rebuild livelihoods, enhance educational opportunities, and improve shelter conditions for the well-being of IDPs in Damaturu.

Recommendations

To address the challenges faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Damaturu, Yobe State, several key recommendations are proposed. It is essential to implement gender-sensitive livelihood programs that cater specifically to women and minors, who form a significant portion of the displaced population. Skills training and job creation initiatives are necessary to help IDPs regain lost skills and improve their employment opportunities. Improving shelter infrastructure is crucial to reduce congestion and ensure the availability of basic amenities. Protection measures must be integrated into all support programs to combat gender-based violence, child labor, and other negative coping mechanisms. Additionally, the provision of essential household items such as sleeping mats, mosquito nets, jerry cans, soap, and cooking utensils is vital to enhance the living conditions in shelters. These recommendations aim to improve the resilience and well-being of IDPs, helping them regain stability and dignity amidst ongoing conflict.

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