
CHALLENGES OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) IN BAKASSI IDP CAMPS IN CROSS RIVER STATE: THE ROLES OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

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ABSTRACT: *Displacement remains arguably the most significant humanitarian challenge globally, as the number of IDPs continues to increase. This study, examines the challenges of internally displaced persons in Bakassi IDP camp in Cross River State in Nigeria, the roles of social workers, government and non-governmental organization. 150 respondents from the 4 blocks in Bakassi IDP camp in Cross River state were surveyed using availability sampling technique. 100% returned questionnaires were analysed using bar, pie and line charts, while Indebt Interview complimented the quantitative data. Finding from this study revealed that IDPs face overwhelming challenges in Bakassi IDP camp. The respondents were positive on Social workers and NGOs meaningful contributions to the IDPs, but on the negative, they emphasised the need for an improved intervention. The findings provided a better understanding of the challenges faced by IDPs and the roles of social workers and NGOs therein. Thus, suggesting the need for a collaborative effort in ameliorating their plight.*

KEYWORDS: internally displaced persons, social work, non-governmental organizations, roles, collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

Displaced persons are those whom as result of violence, conflict and situations of severe natural disasters are been forced to flee and leave their home of residence (Ladan, 2012). Displacement remains the most significant humanitarian challenge globally. An estimated 68.5 million people are forcibly displaced around the globe, with about 40 million people as refugees and 3.1 million as asylum seekers. It is also estimated that 85% of the world displaced people are in the developing countries, 10 million people are stateless, while 44, 400 people a day are forced to flee their homes because of conflict and fear of persecution (United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2019).

Internally displaced persons face enormous challenges across the globe, a good number of them do not have access to shelter, food and clothing. Displaced persons face the problem of economic insecurity; which is exemplified by less of means of livelihood, unemployment and limited access to natural resources on which the people and the communities depend, lack of

access to common resources, involuntary relocation and lack of supports, all of which makes it difficult to maintain standard of living and this leads to abject poverty (Oyefara& Alabi, 2016).

Internally displaced persons in Nigeria, face challenges which undermines their health and wellbeing in general. Some of the problems they face are as follows: lack of financial support, intolerance, lack of medical supplies, violence and lack of federal government help (Ibenegbu, 2018). The federal government of Nigeria leaves the internally Displaced persons to cater for themselves. Thousands of people in Nigeria have been internally displaced from their homes and neither government nor volunteers can provide them with sufficient financial support. There are no sufficient medical supplies (Ibenegbu, 2018). There has also being so many reports of sexual abuse of internally displaced persons, perpetuated by soldiers who are supposed to guide and protect them.

A number of factors have led to internal displacement of people in Nigeria. One of the most dreaded factors in Nigeria is the Boko Haram Islamist. The Boko Haram extremist group have displaced more than 3 million persons across Nigeria, and have rendered about three hundred thousand people refugees in the neighboring countries (Lenshie, 2016). With the Boko Haram insurgency attacks, the number of internally displaced persons in Nigeria and most especially in the Northern part of the country have risen sporadically (Ejiofor, Oni & Sejoro, 2017). Across the spectrum of issues that leads to displacement, climate change that destroyed the livelihoods of whole population. Environmental pollution, natural disasters, violent, conflicts are at the top of the chart (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2017). Natural disaster, development induced displacement and armed conflict are among the leading causes of internal displacement in Nigeria. The effects of climate change, scarcity of resources, political instability, and weak governance and justice system may all be catalyst for conflict-induced displacement (Committee of the Red Cross, [ICRC], 2009).

Government, non-governmental agencies and researchers have tried to come up with a compendium of what can be seen as durable solutions to the challenges of internal displacement. Some of them are as follows: adequate security has to be put in place; properties of displaced persons have to be restored and developmental programme that will engineer sustainable development condition should also be put in place and sufficient reconstruction and economic rehabilitation should also be put in place. Helping displaced population to return and reintegrate can simultaneously address the root cause of a conflict and prevent further displacement (Kalin, 2018). Durable solution to the challenges of internal displacement is achieved when internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are in connection to those displaced and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. Durable solutions to the challenges of IDPs can be achieved through sustainable reintegration at the place of origin; sustainable local integration in areas where internal displaced persons take refuge and sustainable integration in another part of the country (Inter-agency Standing Committee, [IASC] 2010). Social workers have key roles to play in the rehabilitation and re-integration of internally displaced persons. Same is also applicable to non-governmental organization who are poised to intervene in time of humanitarian crises.

The point of departure of this paper is that while good number of studies have been conducted in Nigeria and beyond on the challenges of internally displaced persons non has been done in cross river state with reference to Bakkass IDP camp, hence this study is designed to void that gap as well as bringing social work in the picture which provided various strategies that could be adopted to ameliorate the these challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical frame work of this study will be anchored on human need theory. The theory was propounded by Coate and Rosati in 1988. The basic assumption of the theory is that human needs are a powerful source of explanation of human behavior and social interaction. Human needs theory in its sense of applicability to this study would explain the various needs captured by the internally displaced person as a burden which requires effective intervention through social systems of independently-action which goals are anchored on improving the well-being of individual and improvement/development of the society in general. Therefore, in this sense, the theory examines several IDPS needs and the successive roles social workers and NGOS have relatively played across IDPS camp of Bakkassi cross-river state in Nigeria. NGOS are known to play significant roles in bringing policies and programs of government to the people (Gberevbie, 2013). This shows that they serve as a bridge between government and the citizens and this makes the populace to feel the positive impact of government policies. In the same vein social workers are seen as professionals whose main purpose are to improve the well-being and social functioning of individuals in a social context through appropriate linkage of people to receive adequate services and resources and also ensuring the humane operation of those systems.

Scholars over the years have made significant effort to bring to the fore a definite definition of internal displaced persons. However, a more popular definition of IDP by Goodwin-gill (2007) sees an IDP as someone who has moved within the bounds of his or her own country either to escape persecution, other violation of human rights, or the effects of conflict or because of national or development project; such as high-dam building. According to United Nations Human Right (2019) persons forced to flee or leave their homes-particularly in situations of armed conflict are generally subject to heightened vulnerability in a member of areas. Displace persons suffer significant higher rates of mortality than the general population. They also remain at high risk of physical attack. Sexual assault and abduction, and frequently are deprived of adequate shelter, food and health services.

DATA AND METHODS

This study is a case study of Bakassi IDP camp in Ikot-Effiom estate, Bakkass Local Government Areas, in cross river state, Nigeria. The Ikot-effiom estate is the resettlement place where the government-built houses for the internally displaced persons. Bakassi IDP camp in Cross river houses over one thousand internally displaced persons. Despite the fact that persons in the camp have charitable re-accommodation, they still live without adequate supply of basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and medical care. Article 2, section K of the Kamala convention makes it a responsibility for the state to provide adequate welfare for victims of internal displacement within its state. Despite the effort of the

government, non-governmental agencies and individuals to provide for the victims. The fact remains that these victims still live in far worst condition than when they were in their original habitat (Nsa, 2018).

The design for this study is a case study design. The study applied mixed method of data collection. Data was collected both quantitatively and qualitatively through questionnaire and indebt interview guide (IDI) instruments. Ethnographic technique was adopted to enable a close observation of the challenges of internally displaced persons in Bakassi IDP camp and the role of social workers and non-governmental organization. Secondary data was also utilized efficiently.

The population of the study includes men and women who are adults of 18 years and above in Bakassi IDP camp of Cross River State. The sample size for the study was 150 respondents. The availability sampling technique was employed for the study, because not all the IDPs and staff of the camp were disposed to provide information as respondent and this gave the researcher the opportunity to use only respondents who were readily available for the study. The sample includes elders, staff and IDPs in the camp which formed a total of 150 respondents to the study. The Bakassi IDP camp is made up of four (4) blocks of which are blocks A to D. However, the researchers were permitted to have access to only block A and B. Block A had a total of 57 persons, while Block B had a total of 73 persons. In addition, 15 persons from both blocks were elders of the camp, five (5) staffs of the camp and 130 IDPs which gave a total of 150 respondent for the study.

The instruments for data collection was questionnaire and IDI. The questionnaires were self-administered for the literates and other administered for the illiterates. The IDI session was conducted by a researcher and one research assistance. The later served as the note taker while the former served as the moderator. Qualitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the qualitative data was analyzed by bringing out relevant quotes in themes.

RESULT

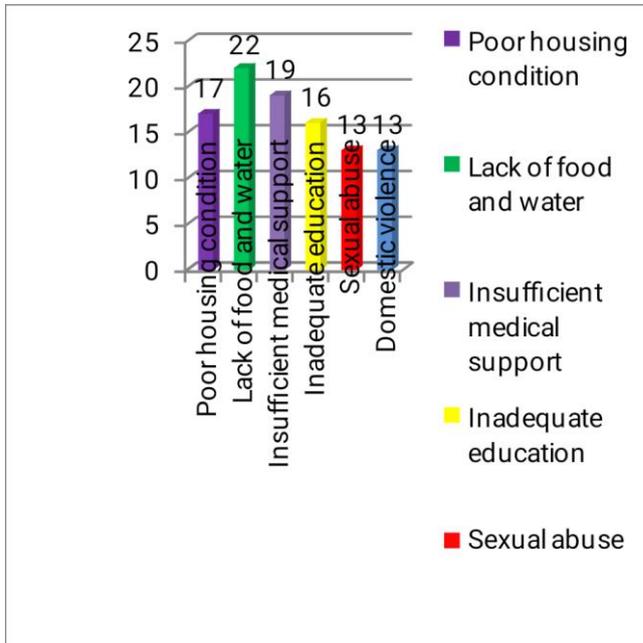
This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data obtained from the field. A total of 150 questionnaire that were distributed in Bakassi IDP camp were all returned adequately filled. The 100% return was possible because the researcher and research assistants had a close monitoring of the exercise.

Figure 1 shows the challenges faced by IDPs in Bakassi IDP camps. Some of the IDOs indicated that they face the challenge of poor housing condition (17%), some also reported lack of food and water (22%), another set of IDPs revealed that they face the problem of inadequate and insufficient medical facilities (19%), the others indicated inadequate education (16%), some of the IDP said that they face the problem of sexual abuse (13%) and the remaining respondents indicated domestic violence as the challenges they face in IDP camp (13%). It was observed that greater percentage of the respondent indicated that the challenge they face is lack of food and water and this is because the two commodities are the most pressing social and physiological needs that every human requires to be alive.

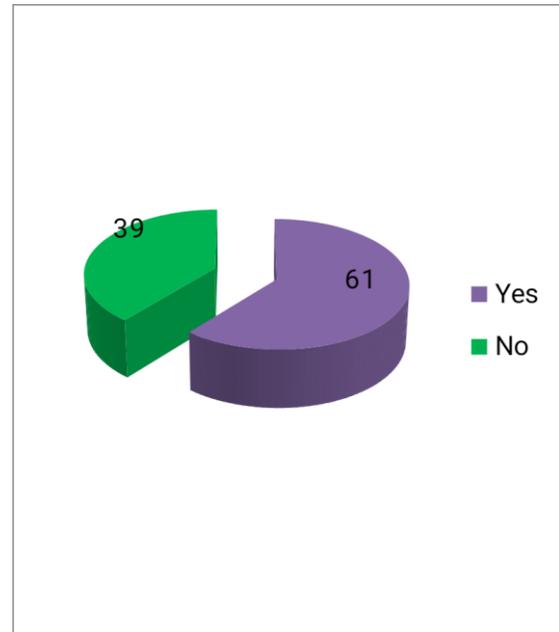
The above challenges riled out by the IDPs in Bakassi IDP also collaborate with the information provided by a female IDP in an IDI session, thus:

We encountered a lot of problems in this camp, the accommodation is very inadequate, the roofs are leaking, we have complained and nobody seems to do anything about it. My children are suffering because there is no adequate food for them to eat and water to drink. I do not have money for their education, even when the government have promised to provide us with money so that our children can go to school but we have not seen anything. Most at times we do not ide us with money so that our children can go to school but we have not seen anything. Most at times we do not ide us with money so that our children can go to school but we have not seen anything. Most at times we do not ide us with money so that our children can go to school but we have not seen anything. Most at times we do not ide us with money so that our children can go to school but we have not seen anything. Most at times we do not get medical support and even when we get it, medical support is not sufficient. We are crying out for the government to help, this is just too much (Female IDP).

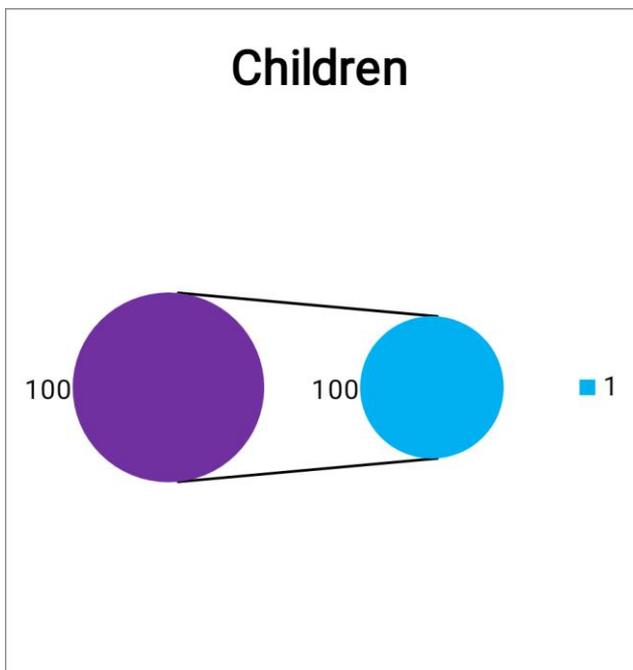
Figure 2 shows that there are cases of family gender violence among spouses in IDP Camps. Among the respondents in IDP camp, 61% indicated the incidence of family gender violence among spouses. Figure 3 shows that the highest group of persons in the IDP camp were children (100.0%). This corroborate with the information provided by a male IDP during an IDP session who indicated that children were the highest number of persons in the IDP camps and they are also the most vulnerable. Among the questionnaire respondents (see figure 4) 40% indicated that persons age 0-5 years are more vulnerable in IDP camps, 27% indicated that persons age 6-12 years are more vulnerable in Bakasi IDP camp while 33% said that persons age 13-25 years are more vulnerable in IDP camp. According to WHO persons age 0-5 are children, so from the observation of data provided by the respondents, it shows that children are the most vulnerable in the IDP camp. This is because of their fragile nature and of course they are not of age and more likely to be helpless in the face of hostile condition except the intervention of older persons.



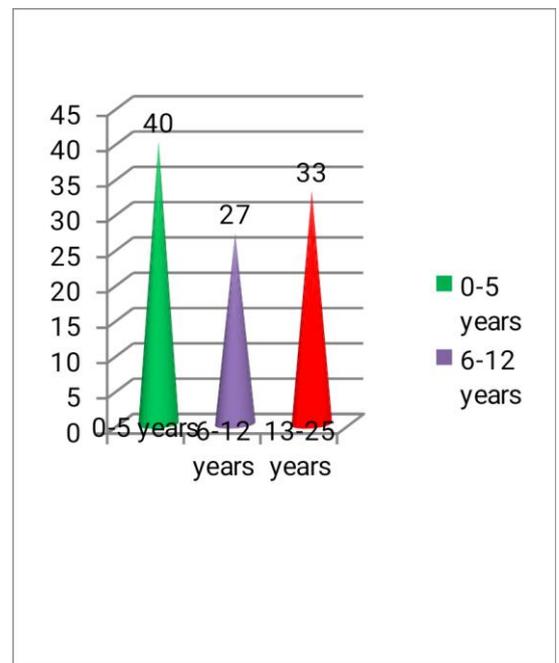
Source: Field work 2018



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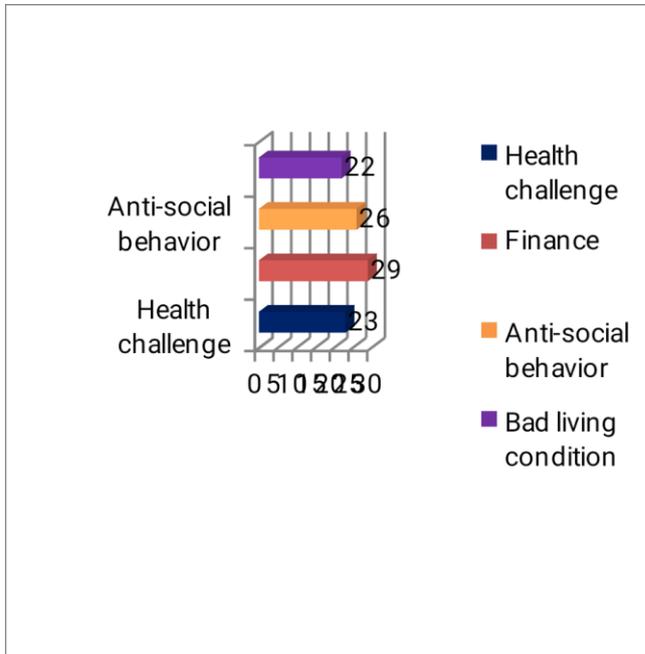
Figure 5 shows data distribution on challenges encountered by children in Bakassi IDP camp. Among the respondents 23% indicated that children face the problem of health challenges, 29% said that lack of finance to take care of children was also a major challenge children face in the IDP camp, 26% of the respondent indicated that children in IDP camp face the problem

of involvement in anti-social behaviour and 22% revealed that children face the challenges of bad living condition which is not good for physical, psychological and social wellbeing of children. Observation from the data provided by the respondents shows that lack of finance to take care of children in the IDP camp was the most challenge children face in IDP camp. The above information agrees with the interview conducted with a female IDPs respondents who complained that children experience different health challenges like malaria caused by mosquito bites, cold attacks as a result of open and leaking roofs, moody roads which exposed the children to disease, unclear water and currently there is no health facilities available to treat these children in the camp.

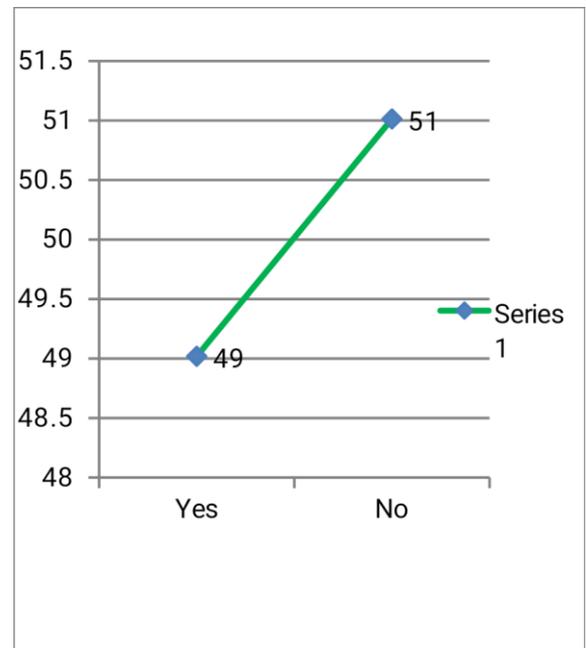
The foregoing finding also collaborate with the responses of an elder in the IDP camp, thus: Our children face severe challenges in this camp. There are no sufficient medical services for the ones who get sick, we do not have the money to also send them to school and this is disheartening for parent who are concerned about the development of their children. Sometime the children engage in illicit activities like sex but we try to redirect them the right way. The condition of the house here is not conducive for children, we have leaking roofs (An elder in IDP camp).

Figure 6 shows distribution of respondents on children's educational experience. The data revealed that 49% of the IDPs said that children have educational experience in the camp while 51% indicated otherwise. It can be observed that majority of the respondents were of the view that children do not have educational experience in the camp. This is because parent in the camp do not have the money to send their children to school. The forgoing information collaborates with the responses of male IDP in Bakassi IDP camp, thus:

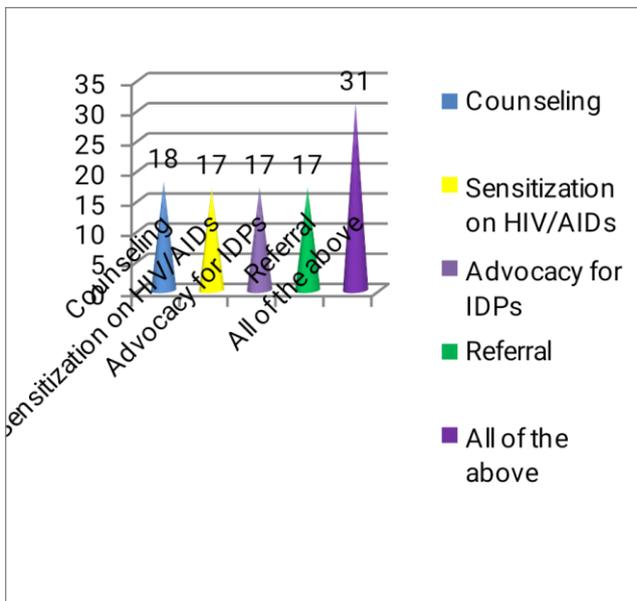
Government does not give us educational welfare anymore for our children to be in school and it makes us not to be happy with the government because the # 5000 welfare the government usually gives us no longer come to us again and we don't know why (Male IDP). Figure 7 shows data distribution on social workers' intervention with the IDPs. Among the respondents 18% indicated that social workers render counselling services to victims of displacement, 17% said that social workers sensitize IDPs on HIV/Aids prevention mechanism, 17% were of the view that social workers play advocacy role to the government on behalf of the IDP, 17% indicated that social workers play referral roles, in this case they refer individuals with mental illness to psychiatric facility and access to resources for effective treatment and 31% of the respondents reveal that all of the above are the roles social worker play while working with IDPs in Bakassi IDP camps. Figure 8 shows distribution on the roles of NGOs in Bakassi IDP camp. Among the respondents, 23% indicated that NGOs intervene to provide basic human needs, 27% said that NGOs influence policy on food security and provision of amenities, 21% revealed that NGOs engage in empowerment and educational services and 29% were of the view that NGOs engage in settling land dispute the IDPs and members of their host communities, this is because it was observed that some of the IDPs who try to engage in farming are having conflict with members of the host community over access to lands for cultivation. It can be observed that NGOs intervene more in land dispute settling because IDPs are eager to have access to land and help themselves in terms of farming.



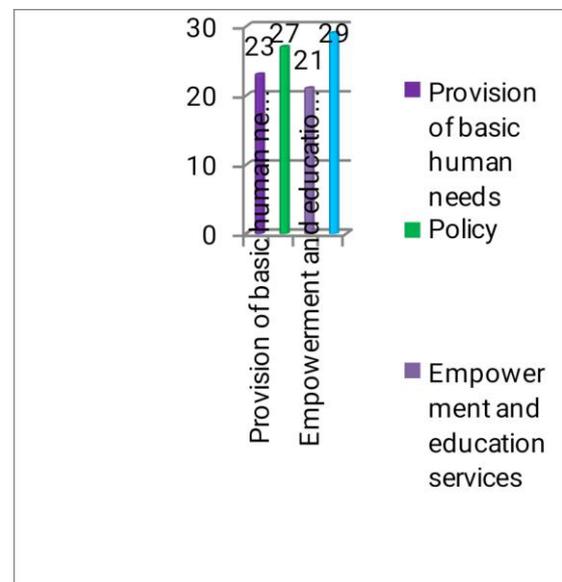
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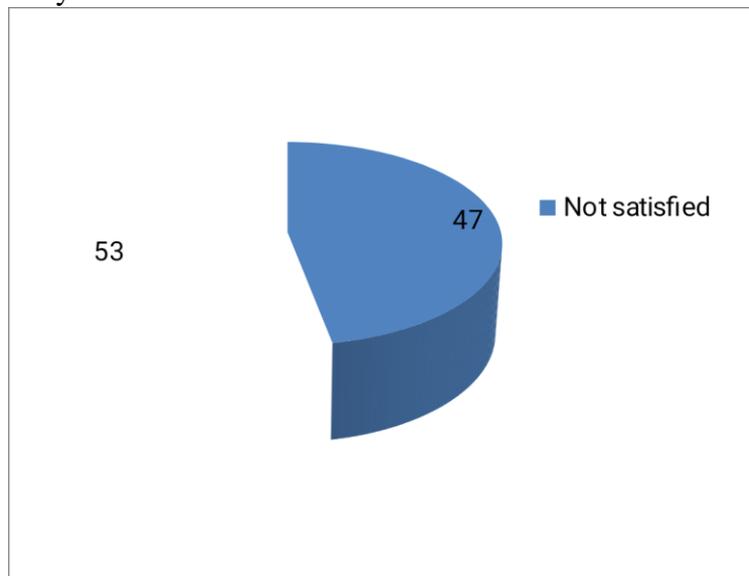
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Source: Field work 2018

Figure 9 shows the distribution of respondents on their perception of the intervention of the social workers and the NGOs. Among the respondents, 47% indicated that they were not satisfied with the influence and interventions of the NGOs and the social workers. on the

other hand, 53% were of the view that there were need for more improvement in the assistance rendered by social workers and NGOs.



Source: Field work 2018

DISCUSSION

Internally displaced persons are among the groups of disadvantaged people commonly known as population at risk. Communal clashes, natural disasters and internal terrorism are responsible for the increasing rise in internally displaced persons across the nation and setting of camps where they receive temporary shelter and their needs provided. However, some of their basic needs are intermittently met or not met at all, additionally, some of their human rights and privileges are trampled on by camp officials and governments. It is on these grounds that necessitated social work and other NGOs presence and services for IDPs so their psychosocial needs will be provided and other essential services duly provided. Therefore, the attention of the international community, government and non-governmental agencies, including African scholars has been to create awareness and proffer remedial solutions to the problems of IDPs.

Challenges of IDPs

This study revealed that the major challenges faced by IDPs in Bakassi IDP camp of cross river is lack of food and water. Other challenges faced by the IDPs ranges among poor housing condition, inadequate and insufficient medical facilities, inadequate education, sexual abuse and domestic violence. Akuto (2017) in an ethnographical study pointed out several challenges faced by Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria. These challenges unarguably make life very unbearable to the displaced persons. These challenges include: Insecurity- women and girls are been raped on a daily basis as a result of insecurity in the camps. Recent reports also indicated that soldiers in some of the IDP camps in Nigeria are participants and perpetrators of this heinous crime of rape of women and girls. Trauma and bitterness- the IDPs are traumatized and frustrated because of the situation they find

themselves; hunger and starvation; acute malnutrition; sexual transmitted disease; lack of education; the rights of the IDPs are undermined in so many ways; lack of shelter/accommodation; poor waste management and lack of electricity; and lack of good water. The findings of an empirical study conducted by (Abbas, 2017) also collaborate with the fact that IDPs in Nigeria face overwhelming and enormous challenges. It was discovered that IDOs in Nigeria face the challenges of lack of adequate and safe shelter (IDMC, 2014). Basic needs unmet- IDPs are often unable to exercise their basic rights to food and essential household items such as sleeping mats, mosquito nets, jerry can, soap and cooking utensils. The IDPs also face the challenges of poor health and hygiene. Limited access to clean water and no access to education.

Gander based violence in IDP Camp

The study revealed incidences and reports of gender-based violence in the IDP camp, most especially among spouse. Incidence of gender-based violence have given government, nongovernmental organization and faith-based organization concern over the years. Reports shows that most women residing in IDP camps endure domestic violence including physical and sexual assault and often remain with their husband as a result of cultural beliefs that dictates submissive behaviour for women. Child marriage is also prevalent in most of the Nigerian IDP camps (UN High Commission for Refugees, 2018). An empirical study conducted in Uganda by Ager, Bancroft, Berger & Stark, (2018) also shows evidence of gender-based violence in IDP camps in the study. Amongst the forms of gender-based violence faced by women, rape was ranked as the greatest concern amongst participants (with mean problem rank of 3.4) followed by marital rape (mean problem rank of 4.5) and intimate partner violence (mean problem rank of 4.9). Obradovic (2015) stated that the brutalization of women in Nigerian IDP camps is a deplorable and persistent trend.

Children in IDP camp

This study revealed that children were the highest number of persons in the Bakassi IDP camp and the most vulnerable. They are more affected by the hash condition of the IDP camp because of their tender and fragile nature. Report on the condition of children in Bama IDP camp of Borno State revealed that children are in critical state in the camp. Poor assistance and access to health care further deteriorate their condition. The report revealed that in first two weeks of August 2018, 33 children died in the camp. The number was alarming considering children aged under five, numbering around 6,000 in the camp. Many children are severally malnourished and facing medical complication that requires intensive care and close follow-up. The lack of inpatient nutrition and pediatric health facility in IDP camp is having catastrophic consequences for children (Okafor, 2018). The regions of the world characterized by conflict and displacement have high fatality rate. Women and children constitute around 80% of IDP populations. During displacement children are at the highest risk. They are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Girls are often the targets of sexual violence, have special health needs that are often neglected and lack the protection formally afforded by their families and communities (Buscher&Makinson, 2006).In addition to the above, the study reveals that children face health challenges in Bakassi IDP camp, they have no option than to live in a very poor housing condition and some of them do get into anti-social behaviour such as illicit sex and smoking which is unarguably very dangerous to their health. Most striking point equally is that lack of access to education was the major

developmental challenge children face in IDP camp. This is because at this tender age they are supposed to have access to education to be able to develop literacy ability but they are denied this opportunity because of displacement.

The study also revealed that social workers have interventions with the IDPs in Bakassi IDP camp. The study went further reveal few specific roles social workers play to ameliorate the hardship encountered by the IDPs. The study indicated that social workers render counseling services to the IDPs; they also sensitize IDPs on HIV/Aids prevention mechanism; they also do advocacy for the IDPs to the government by way of presenting the needs of the IDPs to the government and speaking on their behalves; social workers also play referral roles for the IDPs, they referred them to places where they can get access to essential services, for example, there are cases whereby those who have mental problems were referred to the psychiatric hospital for proper medication. Studies shows that social workers have history of intervention with IDPs. The president of Association of Medical Association of Social Workers of Nigeria (AMSWON) was captured speaking to the press of the need to have more and well-equipped social workers in the IDP camps and the need to pass the social work bill which make social workers better poised to intervene deeply with the IDPs (Kashimana, 2016). International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW] (2012) demonstrated the imperative of social workers to defend the human rights of the IDPs because evidence shows large extent of human right abuses of IDPs in the camp. Social work profession has been committed to the defense and promotion of human rights. Social workers focus on working with the most vulnerable population across the world regardless of ethnicity, language, gender, sexual preference. Religious or belief, ideology, age, physical ability. Dombo and Aheam (2013) also emphasis the imperative of social work skill in interventions with internally displaced persons.

This study demonstrated that NGOs has been immensely relevant in the work of helping and ameliorating the hardship and difficulties of the IDPs in Bakassi IDP camp. It is noteworthy that NGOs help to provide basic human needs of the IDPs such as food and clothing; NGOs also negotiate and influence government policy on food security and provision of amenities for IDPs; NGOs also engage in empowerment and educational services and NGOs also engage in settlement of land dispute between the IDPs and the members of the host communities. Daily Trust (2019) report revealed that NGOs construct 32 classrooms for internally displaced persons and host communities in Borno State to enable them have improved access to learning. The NGOs also trained 299 primary school teachers on pedagogy, methodology, psychological support and live skill for IDPs and host communities (Omirin, 2018). In another narrative two NGOs in Lagos signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to donate 10, 291, 500 million to support IDPs in Lagos and Benue State (Okorafor, 2018). It was also reported that in 2018 a UK- based NGO (Royal Initiative Against Poverty and Starvation) donated relief materials to Abuja IDP comp. In an empirical study, Yagub and Mtshali (2015) examined the role of NGOs in providing curative health services in North Dafur State IDP, Sudan. The study revealed that NGOs provided 70% of curative health services to the state. NGOs have been managing and supporting 89 public health facilities and established 24 health centers in IDP camps.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that IDPs in Bakassi IDP camp Cross River State face enormous challenge which are detrimental to their health and wellbeing. The specific challenge they face are poor housing condition, lack of food and water, inadequate and sufficient medical supply, lack of access to education, sexual abuse and domestic violence. Children were the most vulnerable population. The study demonstrated that social workers and NGOs unarguably have imperative role to play to ensure that IDPs are comfortable and that their wellbeing is ensured. The study, therefore recommend:

- A more collaborative efforts by key stake holders such as host communities, social workers, NGOs and governmental organizations to ensure that the plight of the IDPs are ameliorated and further eradicated on the long run.
- Social workers and NGOs should intensify advocacy to ensure that the government perform their responsibility of providing basic amenities for the IDPs to a great extent.
- The government should expediate effort to pass into law the social work bill. This will enable social workers to be better poised to practice with the IDPs in Nigeria.

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