

Challenges of coordinating humanitarian services in Yobe North Senatorial District: A study of Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (YSEMA).

By

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Abstract:

Internally Displaced Persons living in host communities of Yobe North Senatorial Zone, Yobe State seems to suffer countless humanitarian challenges due largely to seeming inadequacies in the coordination of humanitarian services to alleviate the plights of the IDPs. The recurring insurgency especially in rural communities of the affected states in the north-east has compelled the displaced persons not to return to their original places of abode, hence, persistence of humanitarian crises in host communities of Yobe north senatorial district. This research dwelled on assessing the challenges of coordinating humanitarian services by Yobe state government in Yobe north senatorial district. The study used mixed method involving qualitative and quantitative approaches to elicit data from interviews and questionnaire respectively. Primary data is sourced from IDPs living in host communities of Yobe North Senatorial Zone, traditional authorities and officials of Yobe State Emergency Management Agency. Secondary data is obtained from official records, gazettes, books on best practices, journals and relevant materials from reputable sources. Structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. Focus Group Discussion with IDPs was conducted in each of the three areas of study selected. Key informant interviews was conducted with three officials of Yobe State Emergency Management Agency. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was

analysed using Thematic Content Analysis on Qualitative Data Analysis Miner (QDAM) based on the research objectives. Findings of the study were presented using Explanatory Sequential Design where narratives from the qualitative data support numerical findings.

Key words: Coordination; Displacement; Humanitarian; Yobe State

Background to the Study

Displacement is one of the most obvious humanitarian challenges facing humanity. As the number of internally displaced persons continues to increase, attempts at addressing such crisis turned to be more challenging for affected countries. Despite the fact that internal displacement poses a daunting challenge to the global peace, the concern tends to focus more on refugees than the internally displaced persons and the two situations bears troublesome consequences to a greater extent. Internal displacement has caused countless traumas to people in so many instances, it has forced people to leave their homes to seek safety elsewhere, and in the process they lose their assets and become exposed to enormous hardship and dangers and even loss of lives. In the midst of such hardships, the displaced persons suffer challenges related to their fundamental rights and social conditions.

Yobe is one of the worst hit states by insurgency where many people got displaced; the displacement has rendered many to serious humanitarian crises. In Yobe state particularly south and east zones, people suffered grossly the consequences of displacement, many fled to the relatively safer zone for safety. The constitution of Nigeria mandated the responsibility for the welfare and the security of the citizens on the government (Adam & Rasheed, 2016). However, the Nigerian government has for several years failed in fulfilling the constitutional responsibilities that citizens expects them to provide towards securing both lives and property of her citizens, this has caused insecurity in the affected states thereby leading to human displacements.

Against this background, the study therefore investigated the condition and level of utilization of the funds disbursed to the IDPs by State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in Yobe North senatorial zone in Yobe state from 2015-2020.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Insurgency in the North-East Nigeria has resulted in massive displacement of people in the region. Many internally displaced persons have fled to relatively safer zones hence the choice of Yobe North Senatorial zone became necessary due to relative peace. The zone turned to be a safe haven for Internally Displaced Persons especially with the official closure of IDP camps in Yobe state in May 2016. Despite the fact that insurgency has been significantly addressed in northeast Nigeria, recurring insurgency is still looming and is affecting the internally displaced person's intention to go back to their original places of residence. Hence they move further to safer host communities for security.

Yobe north senatorial zone is a relatively safer zone in the state where vast majority of IDP's live in host communities and seems to be in deplorable conditions; such is evident in food insecurity situation of the IDPs and host of other humanitarian crises. One of the mandates of Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (YOSEMA) includes the coordination of humanitarian services which includes management and harmonization of interventions wrought by ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) of governments and nongovernmental organizations. The coordination of this humanitarian services is not without challenges that affect the roles and performance of YOSEMA as well as the internally displaced persons. This research intends to examine the challenges faced by the Yobe State Emergency Management Agency towards the coordination of humanitarian services in Yobe North Senatorial zone of Yobe state.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

- i. How are the internally displaced persons coping with livelihood in Yobe North Senatorial zone between 2015-2022?
- ii. What role did Yobe State Emergency Management Agency play in coordinating humanitarian services in Yobe North senatorial zone between 2015-2022?

iii. What were the challenges in the coordination of humanitarian services in Yobe North Senatorial zone between 2015-2022?

iv. What were the strategies used in addressing the challenges of coordinating humanitarian services in Yobe North Senatorial zone?

The objectives of the study are:

i. To identify how the internally displaced persons cope with livelihood in Yobe North Senatorial zone between 2015-2022?

ii. To examine the role of Yobe State Emergency Management Agency in coordinating humanitarian services in Yobe North senatorial zone between 2015-2022?

iii. To identify the challenges in the coordination of humanitarian services in Yobe North Senatorial zone between 2015-2022?

iv. To suggest strategies of addressing the challenges of coordinating humanitarian services in Yobe North Senatorial zone?

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of the study are:

The Internally Displaced Persons in Yobe North Senatorial Zone live in deplorable situations as a result of humanitarian crises such as food insecurity between 2015-2022.

ii. The Coordination of the humanitarian services for Internally Displaced Persons in Yobe North Senatorial Zone by Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (YSEMA) was ineffective due to inadequate funding between 2015-2022.

iii. The Coordination of humanitarian services for Internally Displaced Persons in Yobe North Senatorial Zone by Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (YSEMA) between 2015-2022, was characterized with challenges such as discrimination and neglect.

Justification of the Study

Coordination of humanitarian services with regards internally displaced persons is an issue that deserves urgent concern and attention, considering the pathetic situation IDPs found themselves particularly in Yobe North Senatorial zone. The research therefore seeks to examine the level of involvement by Yobe State Government towards the coordination of humanitarian services for internally displaced persons in host communities of Yobe North Senatorial zone between 2015-2022.

The study will help improve coordination strategies for handling the displaced persons as well as for addressing the causes and mitigating the effects of displacement on IDPs and to enhance commitment towards their management especially in host communities. The findings of the study are hoped to contribute to knowledge, especially as will be replicated by subsequent research works in academia.

Scope and limitations of the Study

The study will focus on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Yobe North senatorial zone of Yobe State, Nigeria. The study is concerned with displaced persons that are residing in host communities and not those residing in officially designated IDP camps due to the closure of camps in May 2016. The study will focus on displaced populations in Yobe North within the study period from 2015 to 2022. The choice of this period is informed by the fact that within the chosen periodic range, the number of displaced persons escalated due to official closure of camps in the state in addition to recurring insurgencies in some northeastern region of Nigeria thereby increasing the population of IDPs settling in host communities as identifiably distinct communities. Bade, Karasuwa and Nguru, Jakusko, Machina and Yusufari Local Government Areas of Yobe North senatorial zone will be selected for the study because of the large number of IDPs in the respective Local Government Areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This research studied various related literature based on thematic dispositions which are relevant to this work. Because the author acknowledged his sources on the ground of the themes occupied. This chapter also discusses the theoretical framework adopted for the study.

The plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): The global perspective.

UNHCR, (2016b); Oxfam, (2012); Lopez, Arredondo, Salcedo, (2011) all corroborate the idea that settlement of internally displaced persons in host communities is a global phenomenon, especially after the occurrence of wars, insurgencies and natural catastrophes.

Globally the challenges of conflicts remain an intractable phenomenon which is resulting in massive displacement at alarming rate. Presently, the continent of Africa, Asia and South America are in the deep menace of displacement obvious in human migration to Europe and the United States as a result of economic challenges in the southern American region. In Asia the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar to the issue of migrants crossing the Mediterranean sea from Africa.

The plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa.

UNHCR (2017) observed that Africa is undoubtedly one of the worst hit continents plagued by the incidences of internal displacement. The continent is perpetually recording an increase in the number of internally displaced persons due largely to protracted wars and conflicts

NRC/IDMC (2017) stressed that the internal displacement monitoring center report that those affected are mostly women, old and children who are physically and psychologically deprived and exposed many forms of abuse and atrocities. Sub-Saharan Africa suffers countless conflict and violence throughout 2018 and in addition, suffered floods, droughts and storms that forced millions of population to flee their places of abodes. About 7.4 million new displacements were linked to conflict and violence and 2.6 million related to disasters were recorded, which signifies prevailing accounts of more than 36 per cent of all displacements globally. Nigeria, Ethiopia, DRC, Somalia and CAR were the worst hit countries by the scourge of displacement.

The plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria.

Nigeria in Africa is one of the most troubled states in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of internal displacement. Armed conflicts and natural disasters are some major causes of displacement in the continent of Africa.

IDMC (2018) stressed that Nigeria just like some of her counterparts in the troubled sub-Saharan Africa is in deep woes of internal displacement. Nigeria accounted for 1,707,000 internally displaced persons in the year 2017. The highest account of IDPs in Nigeria is in BAY State which include Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states in the North-East segment of the nation. The North East region accounts for about 94% of the total internally displaced persons in the country.

The plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Yobe State.

The plights of the displaced population living in various places of displacement is unequivocally challenging. This is evident considering the fact that the IDPs have been disjointed from their families (Alkassim, 2013). Derderian and Schockaert (2012); Bohnet et al. (2013); posited that forced displacement results in urgent needs that require immediate responses. During forced displacement, IDPs face peculiar vulnerabilities and have specific needs. They further observed that, the displaced persons are, for example in a perpetual risk of being dislocated from their families, and are particularly exposed to abuse in times of displacement. Their examination further revealed that displacement of persons brings up their specific protection needs, which are due to the distinct vulnerabilities they face. Among their special needs, the IDPs are in need of urgent protection and assistance due to their vulnerabilities.

Challenges in Coordination of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria

Adebowale (2013) in a study observed that, the management of the internally displaced persons has become a global phenomenon. Nigeria is not an exception due to the high number of displaced persons. The government of the federation of Nigeria has accorded much towards the management of IDPs using the instrumentalities of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) together with the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). The collaborative efforts by the institutions with other humanitarian agencies help to manage the

humanitarian crises. NEMA and SEMA were mandated to organize, coordinate and distribute emergency relief material to those affected by natural and man-made disasters.

Olagunju (2006) revealed that one of the major problems hindering the effective management and rehabilitation of internally displaced persons in North Eastern Nigeria is that both federal and local governments in Nigeria have failed to put in place adequate machinery to address IDPs issues. He observed in line with other scholars that non-availability of required United Nations Organisation (UNO) provisions in the country, most especially as it relates to the rehabilitation of the IDPs, which is on humanitarian grounds, can be traceable to lackluster attitude of Nigerian leaders.

Olagunju (2006) in his studies realized that the efforts of government sending relief packages towards the management of internally displaced are inadequate. He argued that the governments at the three tiers are not having adequate machineries to address the problems of the IDPs. Despite the presence of agencies to provide assistance, their effect is not noteworthy. After many years of violence including insurgency, it is unfortunate to hear that the country Nigeria could not design a laudable institutional framework for managing the displaced persons, most displaced persons seek for refuge in the neighboring state like Niger republic and Cameroon. The displaced take refuge in less secure places such as schools, uncompleted structures and places of worship.

OCHA (2005) argues that majority of IDPs are living with their relatives in host communities, some are benefiting from the communal spirits of communalism as they were sympathized as a result of pathetic conditions they found themselves. Most of those receiving assistance have no access to food, water, healthcare, sanitation and shelter. The management of the IDPs globally is seemed to be mired with some intractable challenges which serve as serious impediment to the effective management process in addressing the plights of the IDPs.

The perpetual plights of the internally displaced persons and the attendant challenges are evidently unfolded by researches as indicated above. Majority of IDPs seemed to reside in host communities due largely to poor concern by government regarding issues of IDPs. The official

closure of IDP camps in Yobe State remains a veritable reason for concluding that the state has less or no concern for the displaced.

Theoretical Framework

Structural Functionalism is an explanatory theory primarily developed by Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. Further debates and theories on Structural Functionalism have been articulated by various scholars like Radcliffe Brown, Kingsley Davis, and Wilbert Moore.

Structural Functionalism which is also referred to as Functionalism lays its emphasis on large-scale social structures, social institutions, their interrelationships, and implications on society. In Structural Functionalism, the terms structure and function are not necessarily complementary. One can study the structure of society without examining its functions, similarly, functions of different social processes can be studied without being concerned with its structural form.

The basic principles of Structural Functionalism can be comprehended in three simple terms: maintenance of social stability, collective functioning, and social evolution. The social structure of society consists of various components such as social institutions, social norms, and values, that are interconnected and dependent on each other. Each component of the structure has a specified role and altogether these social patterns contribute to the balanced and stable functioning of society. Furthermore, social structure adapts to the changing needs of society, if any part of the structure acts dysfunctional then society as a whole might collapse.

The structural-functional approach is based on the premise that a political system is made up of several key components, including the organs of government viz: the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary. More so, there are the political parties, and interest groups in the polity. In addition to structures, Almond and Powell stressed that a political system comprised of various functions, chiefly, the functions are political socialization, recruitment, and communication: socialization refers to the way in which societies pass along their values and beliefs to succeeding generations, and in political terms describe the process by which a society inculcates civic virtues or the habits of effective citizenship; recruitment denotes the process by which a political system generates interest, engagement, and participation from citizens; and communication refers to the way that a system promulgates its values and information.

In the 1960s, functionalism was criticized for being unable to account for social change. Also, it ignores inequalities including race, gender, class, which cause tension and conflict.

Criticism of Structural Functionalism

Structural Functionalism is estimated as incompatible with understanding modern advanced society. It has been subjected to criticism in the contemporary world primarily because Structural Functionalism sees social change as a consequence of society's changing needs. Any form of immediate change is considered a deviation. The Structural Functionalist perspective considers social reforms as paradoxical in nature. Furthermore, the perspective neglects the importance of individualism in the functioning of society. It claims individualism to be substantively erroneous. Structural Functionalism legitimizes the system of hierarchy in society and promotes social inequality in terms of roles and positions.

Relevance of the theory to the study

The choice of this theory to address issues regarding the need for coordination of humanitarian services for internally displaced persons in Yobe North Senatorial zone was informed by the understanding that there is a nexus between human needs satisfaction and the role of government in fulfilling those needs. The core of the argument is that satisfying human needs will prevent the occurrence of social conflicts. Conflicts arise mostly because the basic needs of the individuals and groups are deprived, hence, frustration ensued, and the aggrieved think of a way out of the malaise of deprivations and despair. The result of such psycho-social and personality imbalances, social harmony becomes destabilized and eventually leads to chaos and loss of social order. The theory, therefore, is relevant because if the daunting food security and other challenges of the IDPs are ignored, may result to proximate humanitarian crises, hence, the need for management of the IDPs in Yobe North Senatorial zone, Yobe State by the State government as a fundamental function of the state towards fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities.

Methodology

This research adopted mixed method which include qualitative and quantive approaches to eliciting data. Four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered but only three hundred and eighty nine (389) were successfully filled and retrieved. Key informant interview with SEMA officials was successfully conducted and data were elicited. The Focus Group Discussions with internally displaced persons from respective areas of study were equally successful; the data generated from the respondents were based on the research objectives and was analyzed as findings based on the objectives of the research. The data from qualitative source was analysed using qualitative data miner software (QDM), whereas data from quantitative source was analysed through the use of statistical tools.

Discussion of findings

Based on the research outcome, the following are hereby discussed.

i. Beginning with Research Question 1 (RQ 1, How did the internally displaced persons cope with livelihood in Yobe North Senatorial Zone between 2015 and 2022?) The results obtained from the analyses revealed that the population of internally displaced persons living in host communities of Yobe North Senatorial Zone between the period 2015 and 2022 has been suffering countless humanitarian challenges due largely by the conditions of deprivations by the Yobe State Government which is justified by the various responses of the IDPs and other stakeholders. Responses from FGD revealed that, the crisis over the utilization of common pool resources is a potential factor that compels the IDPs to be wandering from one place to another searching for a preferred destination.

This situation is seen to be a serious issue that worsens their food insecurity as justified by various responses.

With regards to Research Question 2 (RQ 2, How did Yobe State Emergency Management Agency, Manage the Internally Displaced Persons in Yobe North Senatorial Zone between 2015 and 2022 revealed that the Yobe State Emergency Management Agency could not coordinate

humanitarian services effectively to the internally displaced population as expected. Despite the fact that it is the responsibility of state government to address the plights of the IDPs, responses have justified the shortcomings of the state government in managing the crisis suffered by IDPs. Respondents' views from both questionnaires and FGD proved that the IDPs suffered neglect in the host communities especially with official closure of camps in May 2016. As supported by responses from traditional rulers, the food and non-food needs of the IDPs has not been adequate, Interview with YSEMA official also sensed this view by stating that government is trying its best to improve funding in that direction.

On Research Question 3 (RQ3, What were the challenges that characterized the management of the internally displaced persons in Yobe North Senatorial Zone between 2015 and 2022). It was obtained that the internally displaced are in need of return to their original places of abode but situations of recurring insurgency and inadequate concern by the state government for their return have been hampering their return intention, Triggers to their worry for return, this was justified by responses from the IDPs which shows that, they have been in a state of worries regarding food insecurity and other humanitarian abuses such as stigmatization, stereotype and sexual abuse.

The study more so found that, even the inadequate intervention by YSEMA has been a source of disharmony between the IDPs and members of host communities, based on a response by one traditional ruler, the members of host community consider donations in the community as strictly for the members and not only for IDPs, this they viewed as the trend even before the coming of the IDPs, so as this became a source of rift in the community arising from envy. An interview by YSEMA official also added that poor statistics of the number of IDPs in host communities is an attributing factor in creating disharmony; this is because many members of host community pretend to be IDPs and this of course generate conflicts and make the effort of government seems inadequate.

The results obtained in the analyses also revealed that the state government that is supposed to be the protector and provider of basic life necessities is proved from the findings that it is doing less than expected. Such is justified by evidence from respondents who admitted that the world food programme (WFP) has been the major source of donations both in terms of food and non-food

material. Outcome from FGD sessions revealed that due to the poverty situations of the IDPs they were compelled to remain focused and dependent on donations from non-governmental organisations particularly the world food programme.

As revealed in an FGD and series of interviews, the IDPs rely more on interventions from NGOs. Based on the outcome from the respondents' views, the responsibility of the state government to manage the conditions of the internally displaced persons is overtaken and managed by non-governmental organisations, the intervention of the state government is justified to be inadequate, therefore indicated the outright inability of the state government to discharge its responsibilities of protecting and providing the basic life needs of the citizenry particularly the vulnerable.

Another veritable issue of concern that justified the inability of Yobe state emergency management agency to coordinate the humanitarian issues effectively is seen in the manner relief material are distributed. The distribution of food and non-food items are done not based on peculiar needs of the beneficiaries. Where food items are required, non-food items are distributed instead and vice-versa. Such is a prove of poor coordination strategy by the constituted authority.

Conclusion

The coordination of the humanitarian services by yobe stae government is deservedely a serious issue of concern due largely to the prevailing circumstances that befall the internally displaced populace in the study area. The livelihood conditions of internally displaced persons in host communities of Yobe North Senatorial Zone has been in awkward predicament, as a result of the insurgency in the North-Eastern part of the country, countless number of persons from their places of abodes to other parts of the state and beyond. Yobe North Senatorial zone happened to be the safest and least affected by the scourge of insurgency, this became the reason for prevalence of internally displaced persons in the host communities of the zone. The official closure of IDPs camps in Yobe state has attributed largely to the prevalence of IDPs in the area under study. The livelihood of the IDPs appeared to be suffering from numerous humanitarian challenges especially food insecurity that is worsened due to their conditions of seeming neglect by the Yobe state government which this research investigated and justified and concluded that

there are justified inadequacies in the willingness and capacity of the state government towards managing the plights of the IDPs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

Yobe state government should focus more towards the plights of the internally displaced persons in Yobe North Senatorial Zone, by addressing food security challenges, fighting recurring insurgency, creating social harmonies and to provide basic life necessities to the IDPs. Government should lay more emphasis on state of agriculture which is rather declining, since majority of the internally displaced persons are farmers, there is need to provide them with requisite facilities for their farming activities. Recurring insurgency remains a serious factor that hinders return of the willing IDPs to their original places of abode, they are in fear of attacks by the insurgents who recur frequently in rural areas, and government should therefore increase ‘efforts towards fighting the insurgents so that rural areas will be safe for return and agricultural activities.

Government and other stakeholders such as traditional rulers, religious leaders should emphasize awareness creation for the two communities, i.e members of host communities and the internally displaced persons as regards the harmonious utilization of common pool resources without resorting to discords. Records of rifts have been prevalent in the host communities, there is growing mistrust between the two communities. Awareness creation on the importance of embracing each other will help mitigate animosities in the study area.

Government should endeavor to fulfill its mandate of providing the basic life necessities to the people without relinquishing that mandate to individuals and non-governmental organizations. Since the number of population have increased in the host communities, the resources available were over stretched, hence, the need for government to improve the living standards of the people by building schools, dispensaries and sources of water.

Government should emphasize efforts towards the return of the internally displaced persons that are willing to return to their original places of abode. Some IDPs are willing to return but are fearful of the recurring insurgency in rural communities. Government should emphasize on

sensitization of the IDPs whose fear of return is due largely to psychological feelings that insurgency is in their communities, this is important because some communities are well safe for return. Where recurring insurgency is real, government should fight to bring an end to the menace.

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