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Environmental and Demographic Implications on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS)

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Abstract

The history and development of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) globally is associated with the World War 11. In African for example, IDPs are linked to slave trade, inter-tribal war and colonialism. Therefore, the paper seeks to examine: environmental and demographic implications on internally displaced persons (IDPS). These has caused Displacement of inhabitant who seek refuge in another location outside their ancestral homes. Environmental factors associated with the climate change have a devastating demographic implications on the IDPs especially women and children. Environmental factors like drought, inundation, communal conflict and other elements of climate changes have propelled forced movement of people within the Nigerian geography. In Nigerian environment, the emerging issues of IDPs became prominent as a result of internal insecurity occasioned by the separatist /secessionist agitations in the country. In methodology, secondary materials were used to identified issues relating to the environment and how it had affected the IDPs. The paper adopts Social exclusion theory as a framework. The paper recommends an integrated and holistic responses to needs of the most vulnerable population like the IDPs. Environmental factors that predisposes human population to force or involuntary migration should be checked. The unconditional cash transfers scheme of the government should be enhanced to promote the sustainability and livelihood of the IDPs.

Introduction

From the historical perspective and demographic analysis, the concept of IDP**s** is associate with "displaced, homeless, involuntary migrant" etc. Human Displacement remains one of the most substantial demographic and humanitarian challenges facing the world. Of the 33.3 million internally displaced persons in the world, 15 million internally displaced persons can be found in Africa with an increase of 7.5% between 2013 and 2014 and Nigeria hosting over 3.300,000 IDPs (Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede 2016). In Nigeria, insecurity and environment constitute threat to lives and property, hinders economic activities leading to internal displacement of Nigerians (Abdulrahman and Muhammad, 2021).

Environmental factors and demographic indices are the key determinants in the process of movement or resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in temporary or permanent camps in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Therefore, there is a demographic relationship between environment and all forms of migration. Most displacement in Nigeria and other African countries is associated with environmental and man-made disasters like communal conflict, internal armed conflicts, political instability, ethnic agitation, tribal war, soil erosion, banditry, population density, flood and amongst others (Ushie, Ogar, Egidi and Ushie, 2020). Internally Displaced Persons are persons who have been displaced from their ancestral homes due to demographic and other social factors. The Internally Displaced Persons face grave dangers in their home countries as they are vulnerable within their environment which pushed them to move internally (Grace, 2017).

According to the United Nations (UN) working definition of IDPs, they are seen as Displaced persons under international law are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obligated to flee or to have cause to leave their homes or place of habitual residence in particular, as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and they must have either remain within their own national borders (Ladan, 2006). According to the IDP Atlas of October 2022, in Nigeria, a total of 1,087,875 IDPs in 180,307 households in Nigeria's North-Central and North-West zones have been recorded. Hence, IDPs have increased by 12.2 per cent. The report further indicates that between August and September 2022 in 1,690 localities in the eight states of North-Central and North-West Nigeria (Benue, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Nasarawa, Plateau, Sokoto and Zamfara) the incidence of IDPs have increased as a result of banditry. Based on Atlas report of October 2022, the highest IDPs concentration was in Benue state due to farmer's/ herders clashes. The environmental and demographic implications on the IDPs include: environmental pollution, food insecurity, over population, depopulation (Egidi, Ayuk, and Emeka, 2019). The rate of internally displaced persons in Nigeria occasioned by environmental and demographic changes is becoming alarming. Internally Displaced persons are victims of brutality of inhumanity against man, environmental and climate change. Since Nigeria's returned to the democratic government in 1999, Nigeria had recorded thousands of people being killed in recurring inter-communal conflicts and politically motivated violence that have also led to consistently large waves of internal displacement (IDMC, 2013).

Literature review

Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Africa as a continent, and sub-Saharan countries in particular, are experiencing incomparable urbanization, economic and population growth, which has increased the number of people exposed to internal displacement. Internal displacement refers to the voluntary or forced movement, removal or relocation of persons or groups of persons within an internally recognized State borders (Adesote and 2015).

The internally displaced persons are different from refugees because the IDPs are within the national boarder (Syrakoy, 2018). The incidences of IDPs are often unsolidified with new displacements and movements of people in search of a durable solutions in new environment. In Africa, the demographic implication is that Africa hosts over one-third of the global IDPs population (Adesote and Peters, 2015). At the end of 2011, more than 26 million people were internally displaced by conflict and violence across the world. More than a third of them were in Africa, the region with the highest number of IDPs.

Environmental hazards such as floods, storms and drought have triggered 2.6 million displacements in Africa in 2020 (Umaru, 2017). In Nigeria, internal displacement is also linked to the activities of banditry, communal clashes, Boko Haram's activities, insurgency, farmers/ herders clash which has caused 74,000 displacements in north-western and North Central of Nigeria (Syrakoy, 2018). In Nigeria, the issue of environmental factors on the internally displaced persons became prominent in 1990s because during these eras, the people forced from their homes as a result of environmental factors like: armed conflict, communal violence, human rights and humanitarian law abuses, natural or man–made disasters and other climate change factors. IDPs always flee to neighboring communities that are asylum, usually taking refuge in temporary locations like schools, police stations, military barracks, public buildings and places of worship among others. In most camps of the IDPs, there is overcrowding which create informal settlements on public and private lands thereby affecting the aesthetics of the environment. Within the IDPs environment, trees are cut down for firewood, building material and charcoal burning, causing environmental degradation. In an urban environment where the IDPs flee to, they turned into migrants, settle and re-integrate into urban life and seek opportunities of new livelihood of self-reliance and economic emancipation especially when families are torn apart and relatives are killed or missing within their ancestral homes and these are considered as the demographic implications.

Environmental issues and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Internally displaced persons in any environments are always in a hazardous situation affecting their rights, lives and social wellbeing. Deprivation and violence attacks are weighty environmental issues affecting the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from both the ancestral homes and host communities (Ushie and Egidi, 2021). Environmental issues that degenerate into internal displacement are armed attacks, military junta, family separation, loss of shelter, heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary deprivation of land, poor

condition of housing, flooding and climate change are factors promoting internal displacement. These environment issues left the IDPs without protection as their plight is matted up with regular migration, voluntary environmental migration, and climate change migration manifesting inform of Land dislocation, Livelihood displacement, Family disorganization, retarded development and Population loss as people go into different locations (Ushie, and Egidi, 2021). Environmental factors are profound to over-population and depopulation of any countries of the world.

The rapid alterations of ecosystems prompted by climatic and anthropogenic influences have direct and indirect impacts on societies which have caused displacement and force migration within the human environment. In 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that "the gravest effects of climate change may be those on human migration as millions are displaced by shoreline erosion, coastal flooding and severe drought" these will necessitate the displacement of the affected populations (Adesote and Peters,2015). Therefore, climate change has increasingly impacted on ecological and social systems of the people leading to force migration and population movement internally. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) projected in 2001 that for the first time the number of environmental IDPs exceeded those displaced by war. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2002) estimated there were then approximately 24 million people around the world who had fled because of floods, famine and other environmental factors. The survey further revealed that there are already 30 million environmental displaced persons. The Almeria Statement (1994) observed that 135 million people could be at risk of being displaced as a consequence of severe desertification within the human environment. Myers, in 1993 predicted 150 million environmental human displacement, now believes the impact of global warming could potentially displace 200 million people (Myers 2005). Friends of the Earth (2007) predicted that climate change have the propensity to displaced 200 million people worldwide and one million from small island states of Africa by 2050. Christian Aid have postulated that a billion people could be permanently displaced by 2050, 250 million by climate change-related phenomena such as droughts, floods and hurricanes and 645 million by dams and other development projects within the environment (Christian Aid 2007). Therefore, environmental changes accentuate and superimposes the internally displacement of human population within Africa and Nigeria in particular.

Demographic implications on internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are always faced with the following Demographic implications: Mortality, there is a growing rate of infants and maternal mortality amongst the IDPs. The mortality among the IDPs on camp is associated with lack of access to food, water, shelter, sanitation and medical facility unhygienic environment (Al Asali Elizabeth and Ramage. 2019). Due to preventable infectious diseases with the camping environment. The mortality at the IDPs camp is prevalence among women and children. Mortality at the IDPs camps are associated with draughts, floods, famine, epidemics and other communicable diseases. Food security is poorer for IDPs than for other groups which leads to mortality of

women and children. Another demographic implication is the unemployment rate: displaced persons, have lower rates of occupation in government and small businesses and sometimes lacks employability skills leading to low-paying positions like domestic workers and laborers (Abdulrahman and Muhammad, 2021). The income level of the IDPs is considerably low because displaced families have a greater dependence on secondary sources of employment and income. Secondary sources are more likely to be insecure like casual labour, begging, hawking or family support gifts for survival. Due to the unemployment levels of the IDPs, their income is unpredictable. IDPs earn less from their petty trading activities within the camp and host community. Reduction in household composition is another demographic consequence on the IDPs (Obikaeze and Onuoha, 2016). This is because the IDPs share single rooms and sometimes sleep outside due to a lack of space. Majority of IDPs at the camp live in houses constructed of wooden planks, with a corrugated iron roof. Buildings are often hastily and hazardously erected through a self-build process to meet the housing need of the IDPs. Therefore, housing security is poor, especially among displaced families. The structural view of the IDPs houses are often in need of repair, do not lock, have visible damage or can be easily forced open. Another issue is the sanitation and hygiene; the Overall sanitation conditions of the IDPs are poor, with many households using poorly built or dilapidated latrines and, in several quarters, open sewers (Odusanya, 2016). Displaced persons are less likely to have a latrine within the camp premises. In a critical situation, those without latrines are most likely to use those of the neighbors, public latrines and the practice of open defection. Other demographic implications include: morbidity, food shortage, Fertility, changes in population size, displacement of household structure and livelihoods displacement.

Methodology

Expository discourse was used in explaining environmental and demographic implications on internally displaced Persons (IDPs). Secondary materials were used to identified issues relating to the environment and how it has affected the IDPs. The study used content analysis method to analyzed the data obtained from the secondary source.

Social exclusion theory

The theory was propounded by Black and Muddiman, (1997). The basic assumption of the theory is that individuals and groups are subjected to discriminatory practices that expose them to humiliations and deprivations within the environment. The theory also noted that social exclusion separates and alienates some groups of individuals from the conventional society with resultant negative effects on environment and other socio-economic and demographic wellbeing of migrants. These exclusions are not limited to material resources but also interpersonal relations and group interactions. The paper lean on the strength of the theory which explains the reason for migration of people from their home paternity. Hence, the theory is appropriate to the study because it exposed demographic and environmental implications of IDPs. The shortfall of the theory is that the theorist never made a realistic recommendations towards the resettlement of the IDPs. Secondly, approach to mitigate the environmental and demographic implications were not preferred in the theory. However, the theory reminds a useful framework to the paper.

Conclusion/recommendations

The IDPs account for the greatest share of displaced populations globally either socially or environmentally induced with demographic implications on the victims. In Nigeria, the number of internally displaced people is on the increase because of the raising level of insecurity and sectoral violence across the country. The issue of IDPs has become a humanitarian and demographic phenomenon.

IDPs are experiencing growing exposure to environmental and demographic challenges like mortality, overcrowding, morbidity, food insecurity, health concern, climate change amongst others. Thus, it has made the process of achieving human development and sustainable development goals utopia. The paper recommends an integrated and holistic responses to needs of the most vulnerable population like the IDPs. Environmental factors that predisposes human population to force or involuntary migration should be checked. The unconditional cash transfers scheme of the government should be enhanced to promote the sustainability and livelihood of the IDPs. The paper also recommends modern infrastructure to reduce the environmental impacts on the health and wellbeing of the IDPs especially at the camp.

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