

**IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISPLACEMENT ON WOMEN IN INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs) CAMP IN GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OF
BENUE STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING**

DR. (MRS) LUCY UGBE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING UNIT

NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Abstract

The study sought to determine the extent to which displacement has impacted on the psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State, Nigeria. Ex-post facto and correlational research designs were adopted for the study. Three research questions were answered in the study and one hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0 .05 level of significance. Twenty eight (28) displaced women participated in the study and were selected through purposive, convenient and simple random sampling techniques. A self developed fixed-alternative interview schedule consisting of 18 items was used to collect data for the study. The split-half reliability of the instrument yielded a coefficient of 0.84. Mean score was used to answer the research questions while Pearson r' was used to determine the relationship between effects of displacement and psychological well-being of women in the IDPs camp. The result indicates that there is a significant relationship between displacement and psychological well-being of displaced women. It was therefore recommended that a functional counselling centre be established in the IDPs camp in order to meet the psychological needs of displaced women on a regular basis.

Key Words: Displacement, Psychological well-being, Implications for Counselling.

Introduction

The displacement of people from their own homes and communities is a contemporary global phenomenon. The concept is seen as either or both physical removal or restrictions on access to resources needed to maintain current livelihoods (Dear and McCool, 2010). Displacement of people from their natural environment (a place they have lived for years and have become acquainted with) can be very devastating and traumatic. This is because wherever they find themselves; becomes

==== *Impact Of Psychological Displacement On Women* ====

new entirely to them. It is like beginning a new life. It can also be likened to the hand of a clock going anti-clock wise. Therefore, the need to check any form of causes of displacement is paramount. Some of the causes of displacement has been identified by The British Council (2004), the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2016) and Ojo (2016) as man-made disasters (such as armed conflicts, general violence, communal clashes, mass violation of human rights, civil war, terrorism, religious crisis, and armed attacks) natural disasters (such as flood, drought & earthquake). Unfortunately, in most parts of Africa, Nigeria inclusive, the main causes of people's displacement are not natural disasters but man-made adversities such as terrorism, herdsmen/farmers clashes, armed attacks, communal clashes and religious crisis.

According to a report by Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), that in some part of Africa like in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, and South Sudan, that it is sometimes difficult to make a clear distinction between conflict and disaster as the main trigger for displacement, as the phenomenon there is multi-causal. Droughts, poor access to basic services and infrastructure, lack of livelihoods, hunger and ongoing conflict converge in a toxic mix that leaves people no other option but to flee either internally or across the border.

People that are displaced by either natural or man-made disasters are generally known as “internally displaced persons” (IDPs). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as cited in the British Council (2004) defines IDPs as “people (who) are forced to flee but they either cannot or do not wish to cross an international border.” Those who have crossed an international border are known as refugees but those who have obliged to vacate their homes or places of habitual residence for one reason or the other are known as IDPs. Over the years, the growing number of IDPs in Nigeria is unprecedented largely due to increased number of Boko Haram attacks, herdsmen/farmers clashes, communal clashes, religious crisis and heavy counter insurgency operations by the armed forces. These attacks have forced many people to flee to nearby villages, towns and States for safety. Most often, these IDPs are settled by the government and non-governmental organizations in places known as “camps” which are mainly school facilities and empty government buildings with few basic amenities.

Norwegian Refugees Council (NRC) Secretary General Jan Egeland said: “In 2016, one person every second was forced to flee their home inside their own country. Internally displaced people now outnumber refugees by two to one”.

In 2016, conflict and violence displaced more people in Sub-Saharan Africa than in the Middle East, according to a report released by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Of the 6.9 million new internal displacements by conflict in 2016, 2.6 million took place in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 2.1 million in the Middle East and North Africa, according to the Global Report on Internal Displacement. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was the country worst affected, with a spike of 922,000 new displacements during the year. Next were Syria (824,000), Iraq (659,000), Afghanistan (653,000), Nigeria (501,000) and Yemen (478,000).

As of the end of 2016, a total of 40.3 million people were displaced within their own country as a result of conflict and violence, the highest level since 1989, the first year which global statistics on IDPs are available. (NRC 2016)

(The International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC, 2010). The total population of IDPs globally in 2015 stood at 37.494 million (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 2016). Out of this figure, 13.933 million are in the Middle East and North Africa, 10.762 million are in other African countries, 7.113 million in America, 2.879 million in Asia and the Pacific, while 2.804 million in Europe. At the end of 2014, it was estimated that there were 38.2 million IDPs worldwide,

This figure shows that there is significant increase in the number of IDPs largely due to the increase in armed conflicts and other natural disasters across the world. It is however very difficult to obtain accurate figures for IDPs because while some IDPs may be returning home, others may be fleeing due to fresh attacks or other forms of disasters. Still, others may periodically return to IDPs camps to obtain different kinds of humanitarian aids. Thus, any figure or statistics presented must be considered as an estimate.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Switzerland (IDMC, 2016) estimates that there are almost 2,152,000 IDPs in Nigeria as at 31st December, 2015. IDMC explained that the figure was based on an assessment conducted from November to December, 2015 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) team in 207 local government areas covering 13 States of Northern Nigeria. This figure as confirmed by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) include: Abuja (13,481); Adamawa (136,010); Bauchi (70,078); Benue (85,393); Borno (1,434,149); Gombe (25,332); Kaduna (36,976); Kano (9,331); Nasarawa (37,553); Plateau (77 ,317); Taraba (50,227); Yobe (131,203); and Zamfara (44,929). Of the total figure (2,152,000), the assessment indicates that 12.6% were displaced due to communal clashes, 2% by natural disasters and 85% as a result of insurgency attacks.

The report added that the decrease in the percentage of IDPs who were displaced by insurgency from 95% in August 2015 to 85% in December 2015 and the increase in the number of those displaced by communal clashes from 4% to 10% in October were due to the inclusion of five additional States witnessing communal violence more than insurgency. This figure

==== *Impact Of Psychological Displacement On Women* ====

clearly reveal that majority of IDPs in Nigeria flee from their homes as a result of insurgency attacks.

The Leadership news paper of 03/02/2018 reported that the Benue State governor, Samuel Ortom, disclosed that the IDP in the state have increased in that month from five to seven with a total population of about 100, 000 IDPs.

It is estimated that 80% of refugees and IDPs are women and children (The British Council, 2004). The impact of displacement is felt more acutely by women, children, disabled and elderly people. The overwhelming majority of armed conflicts are organized, started and led by men, yet women represent a large proportion of war victims (ICRC, 2010). Women are forced to leave their homes and communities for safety. In the ensuing panic, chaos and confusion, many women find themselves alone with their children to look after single-handedly even in a strange or unknown place. Suddenly, they have to shoulder all the daily responsibilities for their survival and that of their children. The burden of such responsibility, coupled with the psychological trauma and anguish of sudden loss, also takes a toll on their general health and well-being.

The associated impact of displacement on women ranges from loss of husband, children, relatives and friends; physical and psychological injuries; various forms of sexual abuses; hunger; loss of economic opportunities; loosening of social and family structures; poor health care; exploitation and various forms of human right violations. Carnea as cited in Dear and McCool (2010) identified eight (8) means by which displaced people become further impoverished to include: landlessness, increased morbidity and mortality, homelessness, joblessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation. The British Council (2004) also reported that four (4) most common psychological reactions found in refugees and IDPs include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, somatization and existential dilemmas. These incessant attacks have left residents of these affected communities in perpetual fear.

The wanton destruction of lives and property add to their sorrows. They are scared as they are not sure who will be the next victim. More worrisome is the fact that there is a wide tendency for an increase in displaced populations due to the upsurge of social, political and cultural conflicts. Most of the camps where displaced women are settled lack most of the basic things they need urgently such as water and sanitation facilities, food, shelter, clothing and

beddings, psychological relief and security. As the case in Nigeria, most of the camps are school buildings and dilapidated government buildings while some are left in open places. What these women need urgently upon arrival in the camps is relief. But the camps rather add to their emotional trauma and distress.

Stelwart (2001) also reported that the traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in a variety of ways such as recurrent and intrusive, distressing recollection of the event; recurrent, distressing dream of the event; sudden acting or feeling as if the traumatic event was recurring (flashback); intense psychological distress at exposure to event that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event. Stelwart added that symptoms may persist and may show as difficulty falling or staying asleep, irritability or outburst of anger, difficulty in concentrating, being ever on the alert, being easily startled and anxiety. These experiences undoubtedly put these women emotionally/psychologically off-balance. From the reviews above, it has become so glaring that these IDPs who are mostly women need psychological and social support. Stelwart (2001) suggested some crisis intervention approaches to include appropriate social and material assistance and “emotional first-aid.” Stelwart added that these women are experiencing some psychological and emotional disorganization; and their thinking, emotions and behaviours are all affected and their inability to cope adds more to the stress they are experiencing.

The central objective of all crisis intervention is the restoration of psychological balance to at least what was prior to the crisis. The aim is not mainly to explore their inner feelings but to assist them cope with the immediate difficulty and to think realistically and rationally.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To identify the effects of displacement on women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA, of Benue State.
- ii. To determine the extent to which women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA, of Benue State are psychologically affected by displacement.
- iii. To identify the intervention measures that will support the psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA, of Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

- (i) What are the effects of displacement on women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA of Benue State?
- (ii) To what extent has displacement affected the psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA of Benue State?
- (iii) What are the intervention measures that will support the psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA of Benue State?

==== *Impact Of Psychological Displacement On Women* ====

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between the effects of displacement and psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA of Benue State.

Methodology

The camp in Guma consists of hundreds of IDPs as at the end of June, 2018 (UNHCR). Out of these, 55 women, that is, those from 18 years and above were selected for the study as sample was half. The sample of the study was 28 ($55/2=27.5=28$). The 28 participants were selected through purposive, convenient and simple random sampling techniques.

Ex-post facto and correlational research designs were adopted for the study. Ex-post facto design was adopted in order to investigate the impact of a variable that has occurred already (displacement) on another variable (psychological well-being of displaced women). The independent variable (displacement) was not manipulated as is the case in this design. Correlation research design was also adopted in order to determine the degree of the relationship between displacement and the psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp.

Fixed-alternative structured interview method was used to collect data for this study. It was titled “Psychological Impact of Displacement Interview Schedule, (PIDIS).” The instrument was designed by the researchers. It was evaluated by three experts, one each from guidance and counselling, basic psychology and research, measurement and evaluation from the Nasarawa State University. Split-half method of reliability was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument and it yielded a coefficient of 0.84 which means that the instrument was reliable for collecting the data for the study.

Letter of introduction was presented to the Director of the IDPs camp to seek for his consent and approval to interview the women. Appointment was booked with the authorities of the camp and the women before the interview was conducted two days later. The researcher conducted the interview (with interpreters interpreting in Tiv and other Languages where necessary).

Means score were used to answer the research questions. Mean score of 2.00 ($3+2+1=6\div3=2$) was set as decision point. A mean score of 2.00 and above was used to accept an item as positive while below 2.00 were used to reject an item as negative. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) method was used to test the

hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 22.

Results

The results are presented as follows:

Research Question One:

What are the effects of displacement on women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA of Benue State?

Table 1: Effects of Displacement on Women in IDPs Camps in Guma LGA, Benue State

S/	Item	X	SD	Decisio
1.	Are you comfortable living in this place?	1.89	.629	reject
2.	Did you lose any member of your family?	2.71	.713	accept
3.	Did you lose any of your property as a result of your displacement?	3,00	.000	accept
4.	Are you here with some members of your	2.79	.713	accept
5.	Did you suffer any physical injury as a result of displacement?	3.00	.000	accept
Sectional Mean		2.68		

Table I indicates that displacement leads to discomfort and untold hardship among women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA. It denies them access to their homes and lots of valuable properties. The sectional mean is 2.68.

Research Question Two: To what extent has displacement affected the psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA, Benue State?

Table 2: Effects of Displacement on Psychological Well-being of Women in IDPs Camps in Guma LGA, Benue State

S/N	Item	X	SD	Decision
1.	Do you experience frequent flashbacks of what has happened to you?	2.79	.418	accept
	Do you feel happy most often?	1.64	.731	reject
2.	Do you experience frequent anxiety?	2.82	.390	accept

==== *Impact Of Psychological Displacement On Women* ====

3.	Do you usually sleep well?	1.61	.737	reject
4.	Do you freely relate with people in this place?	2.43	.742	accept
Sectional Mean =		2.26 (high extent)		

Table 2 shows result of the extent to which displacement affected the psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA. The sectional mean of 2.26 indicates that to a high extent, displacement impacted negatively on the psychological well-being of the women such as frequent flashbacks (recall), sadness, anxiety, and loss of sleep.

Research Question Three: What are the intervention measures that support the psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA Benue State?

Table 3: Intervention Measures that Support the Psychological Well-being of Displaced Women in IDPs Camps in Guma LGA, of Benue State

S/N	Item	X	SD	Decision
1.	Do you need emotional "first-aid"?	3.00	.000	accept
2.	Do you need counselling to support your psychological well-being?	2.96	.189	accept
3.	Do you need emotionally supportive environment to support your adjustment process?	2.75	.441	accept
4.	Do you need material assistance of some kind?	3.00	.000	accept
5.	Do you need information on current happenings			
6.	at home?	3.00	.000	accept
7.	Do you need some kind of medical attention?	2.18	.863	accept
8.	Is social support necessary to you?	2.82	.390	accept
9.	Do you need adequate security here in the camp?	3.00	.000	accept
Sectional Mean		2.84		

Table 3 shows the result of the various intervention measures of supporting the psychological well-being of displaced women. It shows that all the items are

accepted as appropriate intervention measures of meeting the psychological needs of women in IDPs camp. These measures include counselling, emotionally supportive environment; material assistance, medical attention, social support and adequate security,

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between displacement effects and psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp in Guma LGA, Benue State.

Table 4: Effects of Displacement on Psychological Well-being of Women in IDPs Camps in Guma LGA, Benue State Variable

	N	Mean	SD	R	P-value	Remark
Effect of Displacement	28	13.36	1.4	.377	.048	significant
Psychological Wellbeing	28	11.29	1.74			

Table 4 shows relationship between effects of displacement on psychological well-being of women in IDPs camp at 0.05 level of significance. The p-value of .048 (<.05) statistically indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. This therefore means that there is a significant relationship between effects of displacement and psychological well- being of women in IDPs camp

Discussion

The results in Table I indicates that displacement leads to discomfort and untold hardship on women in IDPs camp. It denies them access to their homes and loss of valuable properties. This confirms the position of Carnea as cited in Dear and McCool (2010), that displaced people suffer from landlessness, homelessness, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation. This generally means that displaced women are being denied of their various sources of livelihood. These combined factors may make them vulnerable to a number of social ills in the society such as rape, prostitution, discrimination and slavery.

Table 2 shows that to a high extent, displacement impacted negatively on the general well-being of women such as frequent flashbacks (recall), sadness, anxiety, and loss of sleep. This agrees with the position of The British Council (2004) that the most common psychological reactions found in refugees and IDPs include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, somatisation, and existential dilemmas. Stelwart's (2001) findings were also confirmed by the

==== *Impact Of Psychological Displacement On Women* ====

result in Table 2 that the traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in various ways such as recurrent and distressing recollection of the event, flashbacks, intense psychological distress and difficulty in falling asleep or used staying asleep, outburst of anger, difficulty in concentrating and anxiety. This shows that the displaced are experiencing acute psychological and emotional disorganization as a result of the traumatic events that displaces them.

Stelwart (2001) suggests some crisis intervention approaches to include social support, appropriate material assistance and “emotional first-aid.” The result in Table 3 also confirmed the usefulness of these approaches. Other practical intervention measures that can support the psychological well-being of the displaced women as revealed by the result include counselling, emotionally supportive environment, accurate and reliable information and medical attention. The displaced women acknowledged that these measures if adequately offered can bring them psychological relief.

Table 4 revealed that there is a significant correlation or relationship between effect of displacement and the psychological well-being of displaced women. This means that the psychological disorganization of women in the IDPs camp is significantly related with displacement. In other words, effects of displacement cause them psychological disequilibrium.

Implications for Counselling

Displaced women are in distress. Counsellors are expected to encourage them and create responsible and professional avenues to render psychological therapies that will bring psychological relief to them. These therapies should include:

- i. **Emotional First-Aid:** This is a supportive therapy involving care and empathy particularly during the early days of the event (displacement) with the aim of preserving life, preventing the psychological condition from worsening and promoting gradual recovery of the victims. The author of emotional first-aid, Guy Winch said that “psychological injuries present exactly the same risks to our emotional well-being as physical ones do to our physical health. If we ignore them, they will grow bigger. If we don't treat them, they will hurt and will take time to heal”, Winch (2016). Emotional first-aid should be the first counselling approach by the counsellor to ensure psychological relief and physical adjustment before he/she administers proper therapies. The counsellor could achieve this through individual and group counselling using techniques such as questioning (close-ended questions); reflection of feelings; restatement of content; reassurance, encouragement and supporting; contrasting

and showing alternatives; information and advice-giving; prestige suggestion; and persuasion and exhortation.

- ii. **Trauma Counselling:** Most displaced victims suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). They continue to feel afraid, anxious, and apprehensive even when nothing seems to be threatening them. Trauma counselling can help heal them from this disorder. It will help them regain their psychological balance thereby addressing existential questions that may arise in the aftermath of the event. The counsellor could adopt either or both Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and Existential Therapy in order to get the victims back to proper functioning.

Conclusion

Displacement is a contemporary global phenomenon. Its peculiar nature in Africa and in Nigeria in particular is that it is mainly caused by man-made disasters such as insurgency, communal clashes and religious violence and not natural disaster. The victims of all this violence are mostly women, children and the elderly. Displaced women therefore suffer psychological imbalance as a result of the devastating effects of these unfortunate incidents, thus further making them vulnerable in the society.

Recommendations

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

- i. Government, traditional rulers, religious leaders, opinion leaders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the international community should join efforts in order to check further eruption of violence.
- ii. Peacefully resolve whatever differences that exist among the people in order to check further eruption of violence.
- iii. A functional counselling centre should be established in the IDPs camp with a view to rendering professional counselling and other psychological services to the inmates on a regular basis.
- iv. Government should ensure adequate security at the IDPs camp.
- v. Appropriate, adequate support and assistance by the government, NGOs and spirited individuals should be urgently channelled to the camp in order to meet the various needs of the IDPs.
- vi. Funding and political attention should be directed to the underlying drivers (unemployment, illiteracy, insecurity etc) of conflict, and communal clashes.

References

Dear, C. & McCool, S. (2010). Causes and consequences of displacement decision making process in Banhine national park, Mozambique, *Journal of Conservation and Society*, 8 (2), 103-111. Retrieved from: www.conservationandsociety.org/article.

International Committee of Red Cross (2010). Women and displacement: Strength and diversity. Retrieved from: <https://www.icrc.org/.../women>

==== *Impact Of Psychological Displacement On Women* ====

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2016). Nigeria internally displaced persons (IDPs) figure analysis. Retrieved from: [www.internal-displacement.org/ ... /Nigeria](http://www.internal-displacement.org/.../Nigeria) Leadership news paper (03/02/2018), Benue IDPS population rises, <https://leadership.ng/2018/02/03/benue-idps-population-rises-100-000-ortom/>

Ojo, J. (2016). Caring for Nigeria's internally displaced per sot Retrieved from [www.authorityngr.com/.../ caring-for](http://www.authorityngr.com/.../caring-for)

Premium Times (Monday, August 2016). 63,000 displaced person taking refuge in. Plateau. State Retrieved from [www.premiumtimesng.com//184530-6](http://www.premiumtimesng.com/..../184530-6)

Stelwart, W. (2001). An A-Z of counselling theory and practice. Unit, Kingdom: Nelson Thomas Ltd.

The British Council (2004). Displacement and health. British Medical Bulletin, 69. Retrieved from bmb.oxfordjournals.org/content/...115.f...

Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (2016). Internally displaced person Retrieved from [https://en.m.wikipedia.org//Internally-](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/..../Internally-)

Winch, G. (2016). Improve your mental health by practicing emotional first aid. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday..co,m/>