

Forced Displacement, Migration and Security Challenges in Benue State

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Abstract

Globally, forced displacement and massive movement of persons has constituted a huge humanitarian challenge. Annually, the displacement figures continue to increase at an alarming rate, resulting in massive population surge, developmental and even security challenges. This study examines the security implication of forced displacement and migration on Benue State. Mixed method research was adopted for carrying out this study while theories of forced migration and social inclusion were used for analysis. Findings indicate that there are at least 2.2 million displaced persons in Benue state (as at end of 2022) and that farmers and herders' conflicts are major cause of these displacements. The study also revealed that, the displaced persons have continued to be at risk of attacks due to the insecure nature of the IDP camps and host communities where they live. The displaced persons in turn, also constitute a security threat to their host communities and neighboring communities. This due to lack of sustainable livelihood especially, for the youth who constitute the largest part of this displaced population, many of them are driven into criminal activities. This has accounted for the increasing crime rate and insecurity in the state. Again, the communities where people were displaced from, in many cases have been abandoned and thereby becoming breeding grounds for criminals. Based on these findings, the study therefore, recommends amongst others that, governance should be more inclusive given the diverse nature of human societies, human needs and multi-cultural, ethnic and dimensional nature of conflicts and that Benue state government must be proactive in developing new security architecture to decisively address these security challenges in synergy with neighboring communities and organizations especially by developing an early warning mechanism that will prevent escalation of conflicts.

Keywords: *Forced Displacement, Forced Migration, Security*

Introduction

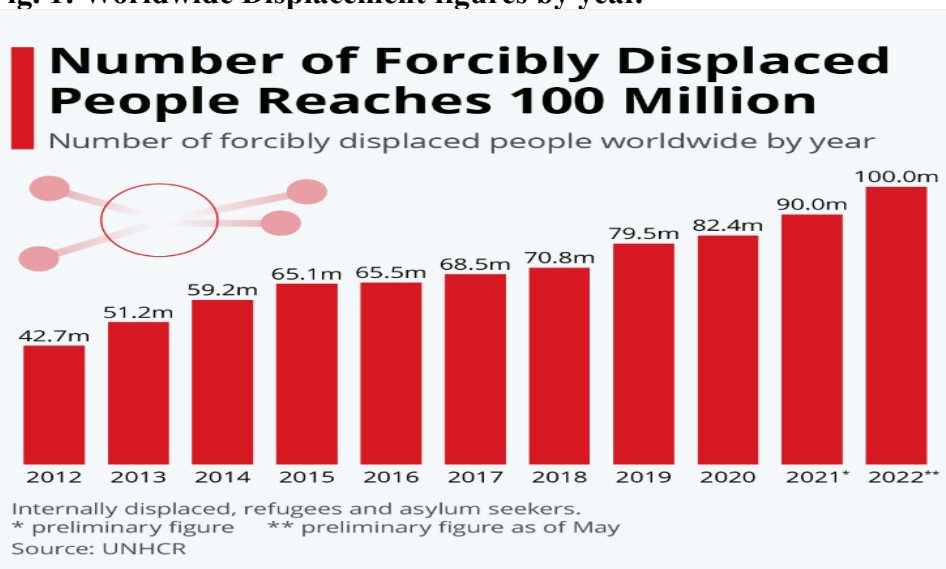
One of the most critical humanitarian challenges the world is currently dealing with is forced displacement. Over the past decades, millions of people are displaced around the globe yearly. According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)¹, a total of 59.1 million persons were displaced, as at the end of 2021. Of this figure, 53.2 million persons were displaced by conflict while 5.9 million were displaced by disasters. Though a global phenomenon, its occurrence in Africa is highest in the world. As at the end of 2021, 36 million persons were forcibly displaced in Africa while 10.7 million were displaced in Asia and the Pacific and 9 million in Europe (IDMC). The United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)² on the other hand

¹ IDMC Annual Report (2022).

² UNHCR accessed April 2, 2023. <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/insights/explainers/100-million-forcibly-displaced.html>

records a total of 100 million forcibly displaced persons as at end of 2022. This population includes asylum seekers and displaced persons from the Ukraine – Russia war.

Fig. 1: Worldwide Displacement figures by year.



In Nigeria, with the numerous security challenges and increasing natural disasters, the scale of displacement has continued to increase. Again, the UNHCR put the number of forcibly displaced persons in Nigeria at 3.3 million as at end of 2022. This population is inclusive of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The concentration of this population is predominant within the north-eastern and north-central states of Nigeria. Displacements in the north eastern parts of Nigeria have largely been attributed to the violent activities and insurgency of Boko Haram since 2009 and more recently, armed banditry. According to IDMC, more than 1.9 million persons have been displaced in the north-east since then. Within the north-central, Benue state, has played and still plays host to a teeming population of displaced persons. Benue state is said to be home to at least 1.9 million of the total population of forcibly displaced persons in Nigeria. It is important to note that, when persons are forcibly displaced, they migrate involuntarily to migrate to other locations - many times, unfamiliar locations for safety.

Benue state has over the years, experienced incidents of forced displacement due to several reasons. These displacements however, reached a crescendo with events of communal, boundary and ethnic conflicts especially, with the neighboring states of Nasarawa and Taraba which have led to high level of IDPs in the state. Again, the conflicts in neighboring southern Cameroon have also led to the influx of refugees into Benue state without any possibility of stopping soon. The increase in criminal activities and issues of kidnapping and banditry have escalated the concerns of all citizenry. This study is therefore motivated to interrogate the extent to which forced displacement and migration have affected the nature of security in Benue state.

Conceptual Clarification

Forced Displacement: This is regarded as the forceful removal/ movement of people from their locality or environment and routine activities. According to UNHCR, forced displacement is an involuntary or coerced movement of a person or group of persons away from their home or home

region because their lives, livelihoods and welfare have been placed at serious risk. Similarly, Mooney³ refers to forced displacement as persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. Millions of individuals have been compelled to flee from their homes in search of safety, most times in unfamiliar places, losing their possessions and being subjected to extreme suffering. These displaced people have difficulties with regard to their rights and welfare conditions in the midst of these sufferings.⁴

Within national borders, forceful displacement creates Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) while outside national borders forceful displacement creates refugees. According to Kampala Convention,⁵ Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee their homes or places of habitual residence suddenly or unexpectedly as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border. In other words, IDPs refers to persons who have been displaced from their homes and traditional support structure but have not crossed the borders of their countries whereas, Refugees are persons who have been displaced from their homes either by natural or man-made disasters and have crossed the borders of their countries in their flight to safer locations.

Forced migration: This is regarded as the forcible movement of persons from their original locations to another in order to escape persecution, conflict, repression, disasters or any other situation that endangers their lives, freedom and livelihood. Mafukidze,⁶ sees forced migration as the forceful relocation of people within space that involves their permanent or temporary change of residence. Forced migration connotes involuntary movement which could be:

- Conflict induced – which involves issues like wars, terrorism, banditry and armed conflicts.
- Development induced – siting of new projects for common good such as bridged/flyovers, roads, hospitals etc.
- Disaster induced – which could be natural or man-made involving issues like flooding, drought, landslides, environmental degradation etc.

The definitions of these concepts are useful, but the lines between them may be blurred in practice. It is however, important to state that, forced displacement and forced migration do not mean one and the same thing. Rather, forced migration is a function of forced displacement. That is to say that, forced displacement results in forced migration.

³ Erin Mooney “*The Concept of Internal Displacement and the Case for Internally Displaced Persons as a Category of Concern.*” *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, (2005) 24(3): 9-26. doi. 10.1093/rsq/hdi049.

⁴ Jeff Crisp “*Forced Displacement in Africa: Dimensions, Difficulty and Policy Directions*”. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, (2010), 29(3): 1-27

⁵ Kampala Convention “*African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*” (2009)

⁶ Forced migration as the forceful relocation of people within space that involves their permanent or temporary change of residence.

Security: security is simply put, is the protection from hostile forces or absence from harm. According to Baldwin, security ⁷is a low probability of damage to acquired values. Similarly, Krause and Nye ⁸ see security as the absence of acute threats to the minimal acceptable levels of basic values that people consider essential to survival. Ogaba ⁹ captured it more elaborately thus:

security has to do with freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people. Thus, internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies, which could undermine internal cohesion, and the corporate existence of a country and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people.

Security, therefore has to do with the process connected with assuaging any kind of threat to people and their precious values.

Objectives: the objectives of this study are;

- a) To identify the drivers of forced displacement and migration in Benue state
- b) To interrogate the extent to which forced displacement and migration have affected the nature of security in Benue state.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a mixed methods for data collection. Mixed methods refer to a combination of both elements of qualitative research and quantitative research in a single study in order to gain a more complete picture rather than a standalone approach ¹⁰. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative data were used extensively in this study. Quantitative data was derived from surveys were conducted in five of the local governments namely; Makurdi, Guma, Logo, Agatu and Kwande. These local governments were purposively selected because, they constitute the local governments with the highest figures of internally displaced persons and refugees and were also more accessible. A total of 385 surveys were conducted with displaced persons who were randomly selected from the IDP camps and host communities across the five local governments. The sample size was evenly distributed among the selected local governments in order to select the respondents. 77 respondents each, were selected from the local governments. The surveys were conducted using questionnaire on kobo collect app.

Qualitative data on the other hand was derived from in-depth interviews (IDIs). A total of 15 IDIs were conducted. The respondents for the IDIs were purposively selected to include community leaders, women and security operatives.

⁷ David Baldwin A. "The Concept of Security" Review of International Studies. 23 (1997): 5

⁸ Lawrence Krause and Joseph Nye "Reflections on the Economics and Politics of International Economic Organizations: In Bergsten & Krause (eds.) World Politics and International Economics. (1975):

⁹ Ogaba Oche "Security, Globalization and Climate Change. A Conceptual Analysis". In Osita C.E and Ogaba, O (eds.) Climate Change and Human Security in Nigeria. (2010): 35-36

¹⁰ Tegan George "Mixed methods research. Definition, Guide and Examples" (2021) accessed April 17, 2023, <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/mixed-methods-research/>

Data was also gotten from critical agencies such as The Benue State Emergency management Agency (SEMA), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Theoretical Considerations

This study has adopted two theories – forced migration theory and social inclusion theory. According to the hypothesis of forced migration, individuals are compelled to leave their usual residences because of situations that endanger their lives or their safety¹¹. Prior to the Cold War, trends in the number of people fleeing their countries for political asylum were concerning; however, it wasn't until the end of the Cold War that the trend changed to include the number of people fleeing to their own countries for safety after being uprooted by one government action or another. The aforementioned information indicates that among the several types of people who are internally displaced are those who are affected by armed conflict, natural catastrophes, environmental disasters, and construction projects. These are all government-related projects or actions. In light of contemporary worries about migration and security, forced migration increases concerns about the government's inability to regulate the state¹². This theory's shortcoming is that it is unable to take into account the government's obligation to rein in the excesses of forced migration, either internally or outside. However, the theory of forced migration helps to explain the involuntary movement of those who are internally displaced as well as their vulnerabilities inside their own countries in the context of this study.

To this end, the study adopts theory of social inclusion. The notion of social inclusion is concerned with social groups who require help because of their prevailing circumstance. The theory is easily equated with "Social Exclusion" as a theory and may be traced to the French concept of *les exclus* in 1970, with René Lenoir given credit as the phrase's creator¹³. According to this notion, everyone is respected and has access to the necessities of life in a socially inclusive society. The result is a sense of community and commonness among the populace. There is also the cornerstone of the social inclusion theory - that everyone deserves support, can learn, contribute, communicate, and is prepared¹⁴. The good steps taken to alter these people's situations therefore, lead to social inclusion.

Overview of Forced Displacement in Benue State

The wave of forced displacements in Benue State began in 2008 when armed Fulani herdsmen attacked and wreaked havoc on communities in Guma Local Government Area¹⁵. These attacks have continued over the years and become so severe that almost all parts of the state have been affected in one way or the other. From what started in 2008 at Guma and Gwer-West Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state as a minor skirmish, the attacks on the farmers gradually proceeded beyond these two LGAs by 2010 and by January 2018, it had covered the entire Guma and several Council Wards in Gwer-West LGA. Other LGAs attacked include: Agatu, Makurdi,

¹¹ Benz, S. and Andreas Hasenclever. The Global Governance of Forced Migration (?) Paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions 2009, 14-19 April, Lisbon, Portugal workshop 27 (2009).

¹² Stephen Castles "*Towards a sociology of forced migration and social transformation*". Sage Journals 37, 1 (2003):13 -34.

¹³ Marsela Robo "*Social Inclusion and Inclusive Education*" Academicus - International Scientific Journal (2014): 181-191, accessed April 17, 2023. <http://www.academicus.edu.al/nr10/Academicus-MMXIV-10>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ SEMA. State Emergency Management Agency Report (2021)

Okpokwu, Logo, Ukum, Kwande, Katsina-Ala, Tarka, Buruku and Gwer-East¹⁶. These invasions have resulted in the massacre of thousands of people, especially in farming communities and mass displacement of millions as well as total obliteration of economic assets and activities.

Since then, Benue State continued to witness an influx of internally displaced persons in various official and unofficially established camps. Fleeing families now occupy several IDP camps across the state, with many more cohabiting with relatives in overcrowded and extremely vulnerable spaces. Benue State has 27 IDP camps accommodating displaced citizens. SEMA has classified eight of the camps as official while the remaining 19 are unofficial. Official camps are those established and maintained by government and usually have SEMA staff on-site while unofficial camps are not staffed, receiving limited SEMA support.

Forced migration in Benue State resulting from forced displacement occurs in the following strands:

- Rural to Urban migration, which connotes the movement or relocation of people from rural to urban areas, happens both at intra-state and inter-state levels. At the intra – state level, people move from the rural areas within the state to urban centers in the state. For example, there have been massive movements of displaced persons from villages like Anyiin, Abeda both in Logo local government; Moon in Kwande to Makurdi – the state Capital or other Local government headquarters like Gboko. At the inter-state level, people move from rural areas in other states (especially neighboring states of Taraba and Nasarawa) to urban centers in Benue state. For example, people migrating from neighboring rural areas of Yelwata, Agyaragu and Kadarko, all in Nasarawa state to Benue state.
- Urban to Urban migration – this takes place majorly at the inter-state level. A surge of violent conflicts in Nigeria has also led to historically high levels of displacements and influx of displaced persons into Benue state.
- Cross-border migration – the influx of refugees from neighboring Cameroon accounts for this strand of migration.

Results

Table 1: Gender distribution of Respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	200	51.95
Female	185	48.05
Total	385	100

Source: Field work, 2022

Table 1 indicates that a total of 385 persons were sampled and responded to our questionnaire in this study. Of this population, 200 representing 51.95% of the total population sampled were male while 185, representing 48.05% were female.

Table 2: Age distribution of Respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
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¹⁶ Patrick Ukase I. & Terungwa Paul Jato “Socio-Economic Consequences of Conflict: The Predicament of Internally Displaced Persons in Benue state”. In African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research ISSN: 2689-5129 5, 5 (2022): 10-26

Below 20 years	18	4.68
21 -30 years	83	21.55
31 – 40 years	107	27.79
41 – 50 years	95	24.67
51 years & above	82	21.30
Total	385	100

Source: Field work,2022

Table 2 indicates that the age bracket 31 – 40years has the highest population representing 27.79% of the sampled population. 41 – 50 years has 95 representing 24.55% while ages 21-30 years represents 21.555% of the population. This explains that the largest population represents the most active and able-bodied population of displaced persons.

Table 3: Causes of Displacement

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Conflict between farmers & herders	229	59.48
Communal Clashes	71	18.44
Natural Disaster	51	13.25
Insurgency	0	0
Others	34	8.83
Total	385	100

Source: Field work,2022

This table indicates clearly that conflict between farmers and herders representing 59.48% are the major cause of displacement in Benue state. Communal clashes representing 18.44% are also accountable for displacement in the state while natural disasters especially flood account for 13.25% of displacement. Others include factors like political conflict like in Southern Cameroon leading to forceful migration into Benue state.

Table 4: Places Migrated to (New locations)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
IDP camp	231	60
Host community	102	26.49
With Relations	41	10.65
Others	11	2.86
Total	385	100

Source: Field work,2022

Table 4 indicates that 60% of displaced persons in Benue state moved into IDP camps within the state, 26.46% are in host communities while 10.65% live with their relations.

Table 5: Efforts by Government to care for IDPs

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfactory	52	13.51
Unsatisfactory	312	81.03
Unsure	21	5.46
Total	385	100

Source: Field work, 2022

Table 5 indicates that 312 of the respondents representing 81.03% say that government efforts in terms of caring for their needs and welfare is unsatisfactory while 13.51% indicate that government effort is satisfactory. 5.46% are unsure.

Table 6: Security of new location

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Secure	31	8.05
Insecure	351	91.17
Unsure	3	0.78
Total	385	100

Source: Field work, 2022

In this table, 91.17% of respondents are of the view that their new locations, both in the IDP camps and in the host communities are insecure as they are open to attacks from their adversaries. 8.05% - especially those who live with their relations, are of the view that their new locations are secure while, 0.78% are unsure.

Discussion

From the data presented, it is clear therefore, that the major cause of forced displacements and migration in Benue state is conflicts between farmers and herders. This finding affirms the study by Omoraka, Ogoh, & Yusuf¹⁷, who aver that internal displacement of persons in Benue state is as a consequence of incessant conflicts between nomadic cattle herders and sedentary crop farmers. Similarly, Shimawua¹⁸ in his work argued that Fulani herdsmen causes displacement from various communities across Nigeria.

Communal clashes within the state and between the state and neighbouring states of Taraba and Nasarawa is another factor that has accounted for forced displacements and migration in Benue state. For instance, in 1993, as Uji¹⁹ notes, communal clashes broke out in the Keana and Awe Emirates of Nasarawa state where Tiv population were compelled on a forced migration and also

¹⁷ Omoraka, Janet E., Ogoh, Augustine O. & Yusuf, Ahmed A. "An Appraisal of the Management of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) In Benue State, North-Central Nigeria, 2015-2022". In Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development 3, 3 (2022): 1-14

¹⁸ Dominic Shimawua "Appraisal of the management of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria". International Journal of Knowledge and Dynamic Systems, 13, 2 (2020): 63-75

¹⁹ Wilfred Terlumun Uji, (2016) "Forced Migration: The Displacement of Tiv People of Central Nigeria in Contemporary Times". In International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH) Bahir Dar- Ethiopia 5,2 (2016):29-38 ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print) ISSN 2227-5452 (Online).

were killed in thousands. The conflict which began by the killing of the district ruler of the Alagos, sparked off the killings and forced migration of Tiv population out of the districts of Keana, Awe, Obi and Lafia of Nasarawa State. Some Alago elements arising from the land question, embarked on a militant and aggressive campaign of driving out the Tiv population from Nassarawa State. In what was referred to as “operation go back to Benue State”, several Tiv towns and settlements in Keana and Awe as well as lives and property were destroyed. The 2012, 2013 and 2014 crisis was a combination of nomadic Fulani herdsmen attack on Tiv population at Keana, Obi and Awe. These attacks led to the internal displacement of Tiv population within Nassarawa and Benue states.

There have also been communal clashes between the Tiv and Jukun in Taraba state over the issues of dominance, of indigene and settler tussles, and over land Akombo²⁰. All these have resulted in huge displacements massive migration of persons into Benue State. In spite of these huge displacements from communal clashes, farmer – herder conflicts still remain more prevalent and accounts for most of the displacements and migration in and around Benue State.

This study equally found that, the inability of the government of Benue State to adequately take care of the welfare and security of the displaced persons, has resulted in the security challenges faced by the state. As Asogwa & Peter²¹ note, that “the primary responsibility of any state is the security and welfare of its citizens without which the sovereignty of that state will be in question”. The implication of this continual inability and/or failure of the state to guarantee the security of lives and property of the people is the total breakdown of law and order.

Security Challenges in Benue State

Displacement of any kind in Nigeria has led to break down in family structure, loss of lives, infrastructure and destruction of property. The security condition left people with no choice than to migrate from their places of residence. In this regard, Obaji and Aloba²² asserted that displaced persons are exposed to security challenges; that range from gender and child-based hostility, separation from family, exploitation, and detention with no consideration of the rule of law.

The massive displacement and influx of displaced persons into Benue state has increased exponentially since 2017²³, thus, resulting in multifaceted security challenges in the state – to both the displaced persons and other inhabitants. An attempt at highlighting some of these security challenges in this section. In this regard, the study identifies human security as a fundamental security challenge especially to the displaced person but also to the state at large. Human security refers to freedom from war and violence as well as the basic needs for the rights to economic security, food security, health and environmental security, community security and political security²⁴. It is the quality of life an individual or people in a society. This means therefore, that

²⁰ Elijah Akombo T. Jukun-Tiv Relations Since 1850: A Case Study of Inter-Group Relations in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. <https://irepos.unijos.edu.ng/jspui/handle> (2005) accessed April 9th 2023.

²¹ Asogwa Martins O. & Peter Musa A. (2009). The Postcolonial State and the Contradictions of National Security: Implications for national development. *African Journal of Economy and Society*, 9 (1 & 2), 180 – 198

²² Eni Aloba & Synda Obaji “Internal Displacement in Nigeria and the Case for Human Rights Protection of Displaced Persons”. *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*. 5,1. (2016)

²³ SEMA

²⁴ Kia Bariledum “Globalization and Human Security Challenges in Nigeria”. *Journal of*

anything which reduces the quality of life of a person or groups of persons, is human insecurity. Therefore, when people in any given society lack access to good quality of life which affords them which affords them access to food, health, economic, economic, environmental and even political security, then they become a burden to society.

From this stand point, it is evident that the inability of displaced persons to access good and adequate shelter, good health, good schools for their children and of course, lack of protection from violence implies human insecurity. According to Newman²⁵, the concept of human security defies the traditional concept of security with the main focus on the individual as the referent object rather than the state as the referent object. By this, it is possible for a state to be secure from external aggression but be insecure in dealing with the conditions of its citizens. Similarly, Ejiofor et'al²⁶ state that, forced displacement creates the opposite of a secure environment for people. To them, displacement is in itself a form of or pointer to the creation of insecurities to humans.

Closely related to this, is the issue of personal security in the IDP camps and host communities. The insecure nature of the camps and communities makes the displaced persons vulnerable and open to continuous attacks and killings of the displaced persons in the IDP camps and even in the host communities. In some instances, some persons have suffered double displacements, that is to say that, having fled from their ancestral homes to places considered as 'safe' however, they equally get displaced from those safe havens as a result of these continuous attacks. Early this year, 2023 – just before the General Elections, attacks were recorded in Guma, Entekpa-Adoka, and in eight communities in Kwande local government. As noted by the respondents in table 6, 91.17% of the respondents indicated that the IDP camps and host communities where they are, are insecure. Accordingly, Akuto²⁷ notes that, the major challenge facing the IDPs in Benue state is insecurity. Conflicts between the displaced persons and the host communities (destination) arising from undue pressure on resources within the host communities is noted as another security challenge. Excessive pressure on especially, environmental resources like land, water which have competing uses and value and which are usually finite and non-renewable, have given rise to break out of conflicts between the displaced persons and the host communities. Also, competition or scramble for relief materials given by government and other philanthropic organizations for displaced persons, usually results in break out of violence. This is usually because members of the host communities argue that, since their resources in their communities are shared with the displaced persons, then it is only proper that what comes to the displaced persons should also be shared with them. It is important to note that, conflicts also arise between members of the host communities and the displaced persons who accuse the men in the host communities of taking away their women

Humanities and Social Sciences, 17, 5. (2013): 34- 41

²⁵ Edward Newman “*Critical Human Security Studies*”. Review of International Studies, 36, 1. (2010): 77- 94. DOI. 10.1017/S0260210509990519.

²⁶ Ejiofor Onaedo C Oni Samuel Sejoro John V. An Assessment of the Impact of Internal Displacement on Human Security in Northern Nigeria (2009- 2016)

²⁷ Grace Akuto, W. “*Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria*”: Implications for Counselling and the Role of Key Stakeholders. In International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development 5,2 (2017):21-27.

from them. This, according to Agaigbe & Aliegba²⁸ is in the light of the fact that, displaced persons in some communities are faced with the barter system in order to get portions of land to continue to farm. Therefore, for women who cannot afford cash payment for land lease, the land owners in most cases take their payment through forceful sex with the women. Others also give the women very tough conditions and when they are unable to meet up, they are made to surrender their bodies in order to save the day. This too, has become a source of conflict in the host communities.

The security implications of forced displacement and migration are observed beyond the displaced persons. It entails much more. It is important to note that, the displaced persons also constitute a security challenge to the state and other inhabitants. The influx of persons into the state has also led to the proliferation of criminal activities, especially given the fact that most of the displaced young people are now jobless, homeless and are under intense pressure to make ends meet. This condition has led them in their numbers into criminal activities like armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, and even killings thereby constituting a major security threat in the state. Again, the issue of abandoned spaces and communities where people were displaced from have become breeding grounds and areas of hideout for criminals. All these activities have caused an increase in the spate of crime in Benue state. Recurrent attacks due to inability of the state to deal decisively with security issues has further compounded the situation in the state. As Ogoh and Agbo²⁹ noted, that most of the time, government management of conflicts and insecurity has not really brought about the expected result rather what it has ended up achieving is suppressing the problem which later re-surfaces in future with greater intensity and ferocity causing severe havoc on the people and society.

Finally, an exponential increase in population sizes of host communities without a commensurate increase in resources and infrastructure has led to excessive and undue pressure on these host communities and their resources which has continued to cause conflict between the displaced person and their host communities. Closely connected to this, is the decline in agricultural activities which has brought about food crises.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study interrogated forced displacement and migration and the extent to which it has impacted on the security of displaced persons and on the Benue state at large. The study found that, the incessant conflicts between farmers and herders account for majority of the forcible displacements and migration in Benue state and that the influx of forcefully displaced persons into Benue State exerts not just environmental and resource pressure on the state due to increase in population but also poses serious security issues both to the displaced and to the state at large. This study equally found that, the primary responsibility of any state is the security and welfare of its subjects, therefore, the inability of the government of Benue State to adequately take care of the welfare and security of the displaced persons, has resulted in the security challenges faced by the state. Based on the findings therefore, the study recommends that, governance should be more inclusive given the diverse nature of human societies, human needs and multi-cultural, ethnic and dimensional nature of conflicts.

²⁸ Faeren Agaigbe, M & Becky Aliegba A. (2022) Gender Based Violence and Access to Environmental Resources by Internally Displaced Persons in Benue State.

²⁹ Augustine Ogoh, O. & Uchechukwu Agbo M. "The Role of Government in Managing Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Plateau state of North-Central Nigeria, 1999-2016". (2021)

That Benue state government must be proactive in developing new security architecture to decisively address these security challenges in synergy with neighbouring communities and organisations especially by developing an early warning mechanism that will prevent escalation of conflicts.

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