

# Sexual Abuse and Health Challenges in Internally Displaced Persons Camps of Monguno Local Government Area of Borno State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This research studies the health implications of sexual abuse and exploitation in the internally displaced persons camps in Monguno local government. The objectives are to determine the prevailing cause, consequence, assess the spread of STDs, determine the relationship between sexual abuse and exploitation, examining the mechanism for mitigating sexual abuse as well as their strength and weakness within the internally displaced persons camps (Fulatari and Stadium) Monguno local government. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents in this study. A total of 306 questionnaires was distributed in the two camps: Fulatari (82) and Stadium camp (224), data obtained is analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. Results are deduced from the frequency to make decisions. The data will be presented in frequency and percentile distributions. Findings of this study showed that the cause of sexual abuse and exploitation is as a result of poverty, insurgency and vulnerability of the IDPs, the victims also are affected by HIV/AIDS, trauma, gonorrhoea, and exploitation, it also showed that the spread of STDs is rampant and it has relation with sexual abuse. Therefore, it was concluded that if the IDPs are integrated in the society, their needs are provided for and their lives and health in the society will be guaranteed. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made.*

**Keywords:** *Sexual abuse, Insurgency, Vulnerability, Poverty.*

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

Sexual abuse today presents a gravest human right violation in the world and is a social vice perpetrated against women and girls in many countries regardless of culture, race and nationality. The number of people who experienced sexual abuse cannot be estimated due to lack of adequate research. Several people are said to be victims of sexual violence especially during armed conflicts, hence conflict, natural or man-made disasters had been one of the reasons behind people migrating their homes, families and source of livelihood. Migration results to people's displacement and displaced people faced serious life threatening challenges such as denial of basic resources and amenities (WEPT, 2002). However, sexual abuse is among the problems faced by the IDPs especially as a result of continuous conflict in their new places (FP, 2002).

Over the years, a myriad of researches has concentrated on the relationship between international laws, regional violence and the effects on women (Ager, Bancroft, Berger and Start, 2018; Farr, 2009; Reilly, 2019; Bunch and Reilly, 2019; Goonesekere, 2019; Grliardi, 2019 and Bawa, 2019). Protection of women and children's rights have drawn many debates especially in war-torn nations and other violent areas. Women and children, especially teenage girls have always been in the middle of the most severe impacts of regional violence (Learning Bertels and Mowafi, 2009). The woman by virtue of her uniqueness also bulges down to the uniqueness of the type of violence she encounters. In times of violence, the woman is vulnerable and exposed to all kinds of exploitation (McAlpine, Hossain and Zimmermann, 2016).

There are certain things which under any circumstances, must not happen in any civilized community. One of this is the sexual abuse of vulnerable, powerless and traumatized persons especially women and children. People abuse their partners because they believe they have right to control the person they are dating. The abusive partner may think that he knows best or believe that they may think equal relationships are ideal. Abuse is a learned behaviour which sometimes people inevitably grow within a society that encourages it; hence, they also indulge in it. It is therefore pertinent to know that growing in a community with high cases of abuse and exploitation does not justify its practice.

### **Statement of Problem**

Sexual abuse as challenge faced by IDPs in Nigeria and world occurs everywhere especially among growing refugees and IDPs population. Perhaps, in most countries there has been little or no studies carried out on the scourge. Despite, there are statistics in some countries. Statistics show in some countries that 1 in 4 women and girls may experience sexual violence either by intimate partner or during armed conflict as the case may be. Hence, report shows 1 in every 3 adolescent girls is sexually abused (Hakimi and Nur-Hayatu, et al. 2001). Sexual violence causes physical injury as reported risk factors associated sexual violence range from sexual reproductive health problems and other psychological problems which have short and long-time effects. Sexual violence ironically affect not only the survivor but also the society at large, parents, friends, partners, children, spouses, classmate and co-workers are all affected by sexual violence. Sexual abuse affects even the mental health of the victim and as well has serious physical consequences with long-lasting effects (Acierno, Resnick, et al. 1999). In addition, sexual violence may also result to murder, death, suicide, HIV/AIDS and other STDs Miller (1999), this occur either during sexual assault.

IDPs in Nigeria like anywhere in the world, women and girls experienced sexual violence and other forms of gender-related violence, for instance, rape has been the experience of significant number of women and girls, similarly, kidnapped women and girls were raped by abductors, hence kidnapped women and young girls are often used as a weapon of war and form of attack on the enemy, and as a way of conquest and degradation of the women or captured girls.

### **Aim of the Study**

This research is aimed at examining sexual abuse and health challenges within internally displaced persons camp in Monguno Local Government Area of Borno State with a view to understand its nature and make possible recommendations.

### **The Objectives of the study**

- (i) To assess the prevailing causes of sexual abuse within the internally displaced persons camps of Monguno Local Government Area of Borno State;
- (ii) To assess the consequences of sexual abuse within the internally displaced person's camps of Monguno L.G.A. of Borno State;
- (iii) To examine the effects of sexual abuse on the spread of STDs within the internally displaced person's camps of Monguno L.G.A. of Borno State;
- (iv) To examine the strength and weakness of the mechanism established to protect the IDPs from abuse within the internally displaced person's camps of Monguno L.G.A. of Borno State;

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

#### **Displace Person:**

**Abuse:** is an improper use, perversion, a corrupt practice, violation, in other word, to take bas advantage of.

**Exploitation:** is the act of victimization or exploiting someone.

**HIV:** This stands for Immundeficiency Virus; it is a virus that causes AIDs.

**Rape:** This is a penile vaginal penetration performed against women's will, through the use of force, pressure, drugs or use of authority.

**Sexual Exploitation:** sexual exploitation is any non-consensual complete contact (between the penis and the vulva or the penis and anus involving penetration, however, slight). Non-consensual contact between the mouth and penis, vulva or anus.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The subject of sexual abuse and exploitation has been viewed differently by different scholars; therefore, many theories have been used by scholars in highlighting sexual abuse, exploitation and other criminal behaviour especially by criminologist and sociologists. In this study, the social disorganization/Anomie theory and the social control theory will be used to explain sexual abuse and exploitation.

#### **Disorganization/Anomie Theory**

Sociological and Criminological perspective in sexual violence is in consonance with other theoretical approaches explaining crime and deviance in the Society. The social

disorganization/Anomie theory is relevant in explaining sexual abuse and exploitation in the IDP camps. Anomie theory was developed by Emile Durkheim in early 1896. According to Durkheim, deviance is at times functional to the society for it provides an opportunity for a particular society to reaffirm its commitment to the society's moral arrangement/order. Therefore, the public outcry in Borno State about sexual abuse and exploitation against women and girls in IDP camps could be a clear indication of the need for the Borno to restore its moral order (Luke, 1973). In his writings, Durkheim was referring to the European societies that were under intense social disorganization resulting from industrial revolution whose impact include the breakdown of the time's traditional order. He discovered, through research, that anomie occurs during and follows periods of drastic and rapid changes to the social, economic, or political structures of society. This is a transition phase wherein the values and norms common during one period are no longer valid, but new ones have not yet evolved to take their place.

As a society, Borno underwent the very same rapid and unexpected social changes following the incidence of Boko Haram insurgency that erupted in July, 2009 resulting to general disorganization in some segments of the country's population. As pointed by Ager, Bancroft, Berger and Stark, (2018) and Farr (2009), war-torn countries experience a political turmoil which results into complete loss of a nation's laws and norms, with women and children being the most victims. In Borno state, the unfortunate thing is that sexual abuse and exploitation against women and girls in IDP camps is part and parcel of the general malaise being experienced. Durkheim further argued that in times of rapid change, people become unsure of what is expected of them and find it hard to re-fashion their actions in terms of conventional norms or collective good. The previously esteemed-old norms (such as the maintenance of social boundaries with regards to the use of separate facilities like toilets for the women and men or for the old and young in the normal home settings do not seem relevant in the new circumstances (such as IDP camps) are still ambiguous and poorly formulated to provide effective and unfavourable circumstances in IDP camps where there appears to be broken down social norms, and deviant behaviours such as sexual abuse and exploitation which are rampant.

Durkheim proposed that the solution to this situation is the restoration of the importance of intermediary group in the society such as the church, family and the schools so that these can have a firm hold on the individual in order for him to adhere to them (Merton, 1957).

Anomie theory gains relevance in the study of sexual abuse and exploitation in IDP camps in Nigeria in general. Apart from disproving or approving the theory in this study, it will help in understanding the approaches and strategies required for restoration of the societal norms especially regarding the health challenges as a result of the societal decay. The parties involved in this restoration campaign, the various drawbacks faced and successes attained will also provide basis for future policy formulation. There are already existing approaches and strategies utilized by the various tiers of government, civil societies and NGOs. This study will expose the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities generated and threats faced.

### **Social Deprivation Theory**

Deprivation Theory is that people who are deprived of things deemed valuable in society, money, justice, status or privilege, join social movements with the hope of redressing their grievances. That is a beginning point for looking at why people join social movements; however, it is even more important to look at relative deprivation theory, a belief that people join social movement based on their evaluations of what they think they should have, compared with what others have (Morrison, 1978). On the contrary, absolute deprivation is people's actual negative condition; relative deprivation is what people think they should have relative to what others have, or even compared with their own past or perceived future. Improved conditions fuel human desires for even better conditions and so can spark revolutions.

Deprivation Theory argues that social movements have their foundations among people who feel deprived of some goods or resources. According to this approach, individuals who are lacking some good, service, or comfort are more likely to organize a social movement to improve (or defend) their conditions. The theory is distinguishable into relative and absolute deprivation. Physical abuse, starvation, and poverty are seen as forms of absolute deprivation, whereas relative deprivation can be defined as the discrepancy between what one expects in life and what one gets.

Internally displaced persons especially during war or insurgency experience absolute deprivation. Despite the various efforts to make IDPs comfortable to a certain extent has proven abortive as you still see them in the streets wandering and begging or engaging all sorts of unlawful and illicit vices. It is quite unfortunate how people have been reduced to nothingness in their countries due to humanitarian crisis such as the Boko Haram insurgency. This study corresponds more with absolute deprivation since starvation, assault and poverty are the watch words of any IDP camp. It will provide the basis for understanding the level of deprivation within the camps. It will prove or refute the theories stand-point in conjunction with creating an avenue for understanding the types or categories of solutions that will be required for mitigation.

### **Social Control Theory**

Travis I. Lirschi developed the control theory of delinquency. The theory focuses on the unique strategies that regulate human behaviour and lead to conformity or obedience, to society's rule – the influences of family and school, religious beliefs, moral value, friends and even beliefs about government. The more involved and committed a person to parents, loved ones, friends, the less likely and that person is to violate society's rule thereby jeopardizing relationship (Adler et al. 1991).

Control theory has two popular perspectives namely the macro-sociological views of control and the micro-sociological views of control. Macro-sociological studies explore formal systems for the control of groups. These formal systems include the legal system, laws and particularly law enforcement, powerful groups in society such as political parties and social and economic directives of government or private groups. These types of control can be either positive that is

inhibiting rule breaking behaviour by a type of social guidance or negative, that is, fostering oppressive, restrictive or corrupt practices by those in power.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Sources of Data**

For the purpose of this research, both primary and secondary data was collected to achieve the objectives of this study. The empirical data will focus on demographic of respondents, cause and challenges of sexual abuse and mechanisms for averting sexual abuse in the IDPs camps. Secondary data will be acquired by review of literature and analysis of vital document from relevant agencies such as State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and other NGOs in the State.

### **Sample Size**

The population of this study will comprise all registered women of such age within the six camps namely Fulatari Gana Ali, Veterinary, G.S.S.S., Stadium and Water Board caps in Monguno Local Government Area. There is a total of 6,123 registered women of age within the six camps (IOM, 2022). The rule of thumb criteria will be adopted and considered in establishing the size for the study (Al-Bayyati, 1971) and (Nwana, 1990). A sample size of 5% will be taken from each camps.

### **Sampling Size schedules**

| S/No | Camp     | Registered Number of Women | Sampled |
|------|----------|----------------------------|---------|
| 1    | Fulatari | 1,635                      | 82      |
| 2    | Stadium  | 4,488                      | 224     |
|      | TOTAL    | 6,123                      | 306     |

Source: IOM (2022)

### **Sampling Techniques**

Simple random sampling technique was use to select the respondents in this study. A total of 306 questionnaires was used for the two camps: Fulatari (82) and Stadium (224). the collection of Data will be done in the evening because most of them go out for other activities in the morning.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Data obtained is analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. Results will be deduced from the frequency to make decisions. The data will be presented in frequency and percentile distributions of occurrence of the variables in the combined data. The most occurrences will be concentrated on.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Findings indicate that the common type of sexual abuse commonly witnessed in these camps included rape, sexual slavery, early forced marriage, and battery.

The cause of these various sexual abuses and exploitation included poverty, insurgency and vulnerability of the IDPs. Poverty is occasioned by displacement of the people by insurgency. The people lose everything they have along with their means of livelihood and are forced to depend on charity, in doing so they become vulnerable to those who may want to take advantage of their situation and offer them help in exchange for sexual gratification.

The findings also revealed that there are three main effects identified in the camps which included, HIV and other STDs, Anxiety/Trauma and Unwanted/Early pregnancy. For each of these effects, the victim suffers, and the person's life can't be the same again. A person who is already stripped of financial and social protection by violence and then faces ill health from sexual abuse, such a person lacks necessary means of coping, it would rather exacerbate the person's already dire situation. Women and girls who fall victim of sexual abuse and exploitation, run the risk of being infected by STDs and even if they don't get infected, they suffer from the anxiety of thinking of the consequences of what has been done to them and leaving with the humiliation and dehumanization of their treatment in the hands of the perpetrators. The study revealed that the STDs common in the camps included HIV and Gonorrhoea, while other health related effect included Trauma/Anxiety, VVF and Abortion. This finding is like what other scholars found out as consequences of sexual abuse against women and girls during war or conflict. Banesome (2007) found out that after violence or war women and girls who are raped are found with sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS and syphilis. While Lehmann (2002) identified unwanted pregnancy and Langba (2007) and Sideris (2003) identified depression and post-trauma diseases. However, these studies had different focus, which is consequences of sexual violence against women during war or conflict. While this study focused on sexual abuse of women after they have escaped conflict and arrived safely in the society provided safe havens. It is therefore clear that the so - called safe haven provided by the government is really not safe haven for women and girls, as the women who escape to IDP camps and those who were captured or sexually abused during war or conflict times suffer or face same predicaments, sexual abuse and its attending consequences.

The finding revealed that sexual abuse and exploitation has aided the spread of STDS like HIV, Gonorrhoea and other health issues like VVF and unwanted pregnancies. The study also further revealed that the knowledge of the effect of sexual abuse on victims' health is dependent on age and education, the higher the age and education, the more aware a person is. This puts younger girls in danger, who may not know the health implication of sexual abuse and may not seek for medical help when needed. They may not even reveal that they have been raped, sexually enslaved or are being.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that most IDPs endanger themselves in the bid to escape hardship, which includes engaging in behavior, prostitution, occupying uncompleted building in the host community where their security could be undermined and keep up spread of HIV which is the most common STD in the camp. It is concluded that if the IDPs are integrated in the society, government intervention by providing all the basic needs will enhanced and their protection, safety and security will be guaranteed.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the result of this study several recommendations are made;

Government and its partners should take urgent measures to secure all IDPs and provide the basic needs of the IDPs and immediate measure in order to guard against further violations.

Most of the forms of sexual abuse and exploitations encounter in the camps are offensive acts and it has been enforced in the criminal justice system. It is recommended that the government should move in to ensure that the act is fully operational so as to bring perpetrators to book to serve as deterrent.

It is also recommended that awareness should be made on the importance of reporting the case and seeking for medications immediately in order to avoid rampant spread of STDs in the camps.

It would be of interest to researchers to try establish if there exist sexual abuse and exploitations in other camps in Borno state. This is on the understanding that when social disorganization occurs in society, it affects all members of the affected society and not only the IDPs.

Health implications of sexual abuse and exploitation is a crime in the society which might be happening in IDP camps. Future studies could be undertaken to investigate the existence and extent of other crimes in the camps. Eliminating one form of crime and failing to address others will not be sufficient in making life in camps harmonious.

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