



**INSURGENCY, INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AND THE REHABILITATION OF
WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN TEACHERS' VILLAGE AND BAKASSI IDP CAMPS OF
BORNO STATE.**

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Abstract

This study examines the causes, consequences, and rehabilitation challenges of the insurgency led by Boko Haram on vulnerable populations in Borno State, with particular focus on internally displaced women and children in Teachers Village and Bakassi IDP camps. The research adopts an exploratory design and relies on secondary sources of data, including books, journal articles, and official reports from government and international agencies. The study identifies structural poverty, youth unemployment, weak governance, and religious extremism as major drivers of the insurgency. It further establishes that the conflict has resulted in widespread displacement, destruction of livelihoods, disruption of education, gender-based violence, and severe psychological trauma, disproportionately affecting women and children. The findings reveal that although the Federal and State Governments, alongside international organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF, have implemented various rehabilitation programs, including shelter provision, psychosocial support, skills acquisition, and educational interventions, these efforts remain constrained by operational, financial, institutional, and security challenges. Persistent insecurity, funding gaps, poor coordination, and weak institutional capacity continue to hinder sustainable reintegration and long-term recovery. The study concludes that a holistic and integrated approach that addresses both the root causes of insurgency and the long-term socio-economic and psychological needs of displaced women and children is essential for durable peace and development in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Keywords: *Insurgency, Internal Displacement, Women, Children, North-East Nigeria*



Introduction

Insurgency and internal displacement are global crises affecting millions of people worldwide. Prolonged conflicts in countries such as Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan have generated massive displacement, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2021) estimating that by the end of 2020 there were over 82 million forcibly displaced persons globally, including 48 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). These crises are typically driven by armed conflict, persecution, and human rights violations, and they disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, especially women and children. Africa has experienced similar patterns of insurgency-induced displacement. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, and Somalia have recorded millions of IDPs due to persistent armed conflicts and ethnic violence. According to the International Organization for Migration (2018), Africa accounted for approximately 19.2 million internally displaced persons, highlighting the continent's significant share of the global displacement burden.

In Nigeria, the insurgency led by Boko Haram has severely destabilized the North-East, particularly Borno State. The group's attacks, ranging from bombings and abductions to destruction of villages and schools, have forced millions to flee their homes. Bordering Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, Borno State has witnessed extensive violence, with Maiduguri and Damaturu serving as key centers for both insurgent activity and humanitarian response. Women and children have been particularly exposed to gender-based violence, exploitation, and limited access to essential services. Within Borno State, IDP camps such as Teachers Village and Bakassi in Maiduguri illustrate the depth of the humanitarian crisis. Established to provide temporary shelter, these camps now suffer from severe overcrowding, inadequate housing, poor sanitation, and limited healthcare facilities. Women and girls face heightened risks of sexual exploitation and maternal health complications, while children experience disrupted education and malnutrition due to under-resourced schools and insufficient services (World Health Organization, 2019). The cumulative effects of overcrowding, insecurity, and limited humanitarian assistance continue to exacerbate the vulnerability of displaced women and children, reinforcing cycles of poverty and instability.



The Boko Haram insurgency in North-East Nigeria since 2009 has generated widespread violence, including killings, bombings, kidnappings, and mass destruction, leading to the large-scale displacement of residents from Borno State to neighboring countries such as Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Reports by UNICEF (2017) indicate that over 1.2 million children were displaced, while the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees documented nearly 2.4 million internally displaced persons by 2018. Women and children have been disproportionately affected, facing sexual violence, loss of livelihoods, psychological trauma, and severe social disruption, especially as many men were killed, abducted, or forcibly recruited. Although welfare interventions exist in camps such as Teachers Village and Bakassi, support remains inadequate, underscoring the urgent need for sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration strategies to restore dignity and promote long-term development.

This research seeks to examine the causes and effects of the Boko Haram insurgency on women and children in Borno State, with particular attention to the social, economic, physical, and psychological consequences of prolonged violence. It interrogates the structural and ideological drivers of the insurgency, such as poverty, unemployment, weak governance, and religious extremism, and evaluates how these factors have translated into displacement, gender-based violence, family separation, loss of livelihoods, trauma, and disruption of education. Furthermore, the study investigates the extent to which federal and state governments, alongside international organizations and civil society groups, have implemented rehabilitation programs aimed at restoring the dignity, wellbeing, and socio-economic stability of internally displaced women and children.

The general objective of the study is to analyze how insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria has affected women and children and to propose sustainable solutions to address its long-term physical and psychological impacts. Specifically, the study aims to explore the causes and consequences of the insurgency on vulnerable populations, assess the rehabilitation efforts undertaken by government and other stakeholders, and identify the operational, financial, institutional, and security challenges confronting these interventions. By systematically addressing these objectives, the research intends to contribute policy-relevant recommendations



that will strengthen reintegration strategies and enhance durable solutions for internally displaced women and children in Borno State.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Women and Children in Conflict in Nigeria

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, (2015) in an address said at the Club de Madrid's Madrid+10: The Global Dialogue on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. Extremist groups such as Da'esh which is the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or (ISIL), Al Shabaab and Boko Haram undermine universal values of dignity and the worth of the human person. They reject the call of the United Nations Charter to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors. Yet, despite all our efforts, terrorism is on the march, he said. The violent extremist ideas that fuel it are spreading, added that it threatens to reverse important development progress. He also noted that violent extremists are responsible for egregious human rights violations, including mass executions, mutilations, torture, rape, the selling of women and sexual slavery and that their actions have contributed to the highest number of refugees and displaced persons since the Second World War.

According to Adebayo, (2014) the Boko Haram insurgents has terrorized the North Eastern region of Nigeria and indeed the entire nation so much that the beleaguered community flee to neighboring communities and countries in hundreds of thousands for refuge. This constant influx of internally displaced persons (IDP) to the neighboring communities and to other countries such as Chad, Niger and Cameroon especially women and children has created a source of concern for the nation and the international community. The groups' attacks have also precipitated a veritable humanitarian crisis spanning the region. Between victims of raids by the militants and those killed by its campaign of terrorist bombings, more than 10,000 people lost their lives in 2014 to violence connected to Boko Haram, according the widely respected Nigeria Security Tracker maintained by the Council on Foreign Relations.

Isokpan and Durojaye (2016) submitted that armed conflict affects the entire populace but it makes a special impact on children as a vulnerable group. They are made to pay the price for a war that is not of their making, hence losing out on the beauty of childhood as they to grow up



among families and communities torn apart by armed conflicts, or even partake in the conflicts as child soldiers. They are exposed to human rights violations as the conflict affects the provision of services, including food, health, education and infrastructure, and also affects adults who are significant to the children, such as fathers, mothers and siblings. Often children are separated from families and loved ones, left to face the harsh effects of conflict as refugees or internally displaced persons, and suffer from hunger and disease as a result of the tactics of the combatants to disrupt the supply of food.

Afinotan et al, (2016) posits that in recent times, through the Boko Haram insecurity challenge, Africa seems to have entered the mainstream of global terrorism. “From the activities of the Al Qaeda in the Levant and the Islamic Maghreb, to the clearly desperate drive to acquire territory by the ISIS, in the Levant and in diverse parts of Africa as far south as Mali, terrorism seems to have arrived in black Africa, In recent times, terrorism has taken a new and indeed frightening dimension, particularly through the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The deadly terrorist activities in the North-East region of Nigeria which range from kidnapping, wanton destructions, bombings, various forms of mindless violence and killings, to outright military confrontation with security agencies in a desperate bid to acquire territory in northern Nigeria, have caused the Nigerian armed forces great losses in human and material resources.

According to Tremblay (2015), children in Nigeria have experienced their fair share of the insurgency ravaging the north-eastern part of the country. Some children have been killed, abducted, forcefully recruited, and internally displaced; while others have sought refuge in neighboring countries. Throughout 2014 the armed conflict in north-eastern Nigeria was one of the world's deadliest for children. Education was profoundly affected as a result of the targeted attacks on school children, teachers, schools and other education facilities. The beginning of 2015 brought relentless violence with the appalling suicide bombing committed by a girl allegedly as young as ten, killing several people in a market in Maiduguri, as well as what some organizations have termed as Boko Harams deadliest attack in Baga. Leila Zerrougui, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, at the end of a weeklong visit in Nigeria.



According to Aghedo & Osumah, (2014) the Niger Delta militancy and Boko Haram insurgency poses the greatest security threat to Nigeria since the end of the civil war in 1970. It argues that, though spatially and ideologically differentiated, both insurgencies are products of the dysfunctional character of the Nigerian state. Owing to poor governance, the state relies essentially on repression and the military option in managing challenges to its legitimacy, leading to the radicalization of violent non-state actors. The African Watch (May 2014) points out that despite finding over 1,000 other hostages during military operations against Boko Haram camps, government security forces have not yet rescued the remaining Chibok and Dapchi schoolgirls. In December 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari said that the government has no reliable information or intelligence on the whereabouts of the missing schoolgirls. To date, the government has given no reason for not making public a report by a presidential fact-finding committee on the abduction of Chibok schoolgirls. The President also reached out to neighboring Lake Chad basin countries, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, and, despite the army's structural weaknesses, mobilized a more powerful military campaign against Boko Haram. The regional effort seems to have put the movement on the defensive, but it still holds some ground, launches deadly attacks on civilians and security forces and has deep roots in certain communities. The Borno state political class under the leadership of Governor Kashim Shettima enthusiastically backs the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF).

The Crisis Group Africa Report (2016) there is much ex-captive testimony about insurgents trying to obtain allegiance through a mixture of threats, preaching and enticements. In so doing, Boko Haram seems to follow a pre-colonial Lake Chad-area pattern of raiding and enslavement, whereby women and children are captured and integrated into the victorious group. With the state-sponsored emergence from 2013 of civilian vigilante groups to fight Boko Haram in all communities, the jihadists turned on both Christian and Muslim communities, killing men and capturing women, including Muslim women. For instance, when they captured Kareto, Borno state, in 2015, they treated Muslim women harshly because they had taken part, under military pressure, in desecrating the bodies of killed comrades.



Insurgency and Internally Displaced Women and Children in North East Nigeria

According to Crisis Group Africa Report (2016) a government crackdown after violent confrontations in June and July 2009 in Maiduguri and several other cities led to the extrajudicial execution of Yusuf by the Nigerian police, as well as the killing of a number of other sect leaders and at least 1,000 supporters. Many members fled to rural areas and neighboring counties, where they reorganized and began to engage in revenge terror and guerrilla attacks, led by Abubakar Shekau, a Yusuf deputy. Boko Haram recruited women and men, primarily from Maiduguri and other urban areas, with a mixture of coercion and incentives. In 2013, the security forces and civilian vigilantes (the Civilian Joint Task Force, CJTF) forced it out of Maiduguri, but as its insurgency spread to rural areas, more women were recruited or forced to join from villages, cutting across classes.

IBON Foundation, (2006) posit that women and children are the major victims of violent conflicts. They are vulnerable in conflict on account of their size and strength. Children in particular are more vulnerable because they are physically weaker than adults, are still in the process of developing their own competencies, and are usually dependent on adults. Boko Haram began to specifically attack women and children in the northeast only in 2013. That situation has progressively worsened from 2014 to date. In recent times, women and children have been the target of terrorist attacks in the northeast Nigeria. In April 2014, 276 girls were abducted from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno State while on July 7, 2013, over 42 students and a teacher of the Government Secondary School, Mamudo village in Yobe state were killed by suspected terrorists. These are just two examples out of the myriad of experiences that women and children have faced in the current insurgency facing Nigeria. Ajibola, (2014) wrote that, while women and children are often victims of violent conflict, in the current insurgency, they have also become perpetrators of violence. They have become actively involved in the crisis as they have been caught with arms strapped to their bodies and as suicide bombers in recent Boko Haram attacks. The real motives for their involvement are not known although there are suspicions of coercion or/ and indoctrination,

According to Crisis Group Africa Report (2016) Boko Haram's rise and insurgency have dramatically changed the lives of thousands of women and girls, often casting them voluntarily



or by force into new roles outside the domestic sphere. Some joined to escape their social conditions; others were abducted and enslaved. Seven years of war have caused gender-specific suffering. While men have disproportionately been killed, women are an overwhelming majority among the estimated 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the North East. As former wives, slaves or fighters, many bear the stigma of association with the insurgents and are barred from reintroduction into their communities, in part because the lines between militant, sympathizers and forced accomplice are blurred. After the 2009 crackdown, some women already loyal to Boko Haram left Maiduguri, following their husbands to other towns or the Sambisa Forest, a large savanna area south of Maiduguri where Boko Haram has bases. Cases of girls who were victims of rape and sometimes quite young by local standards being pressured to marry fighters seemed more frequent after captives. Others stayed behind to care for families or clandestinely support husbands. Yet others continued to join Boko Haram willingly. The management of marriageable women and girls, including widows, appears to have been a prerogative of leaders and a contentious issue within the sect.

In a 2016 recording, Mamman Nur, a Boko Haram splinter faction leader, criticized Shekau for betraying his promise to marry the Chibok girls to sect members, Crisis Group Africa Report No 242, (5 December 2016:9). Boko Haram seems to have distinguished between slaves and wives based on religion, protecting the latter more from abuse. But even that has been controversial, with Nur criticizing Shekau for enslaving Muslim women he deemed unfaithful to his version of Islam. Captured women have generally been kept under surveillance, required to wear the *niqab* and often compelled to listen to sermons and Quranic education. Eventually, they could be put to work, for instance as carriers, including in attacks, or cooks. While the sects claim to moral reason may have given captive women some protection from sexual violence, as seems to have been the case for several Chibok girls, there have been reports of clandestine, extra-marital rapes in Boko Haram camps.

It was further reported that in Boko Haram controlled areas; marriage could bring a measure of security and well-being for women and their extended family. Oriola, (2016) stated that in a village near Kerenowa in the Local Government Area (LGA) of Marte, Borno state, insurgents married 80 girls, offering dowries of 15,000 naira (about \$70 in 2014), a considerable sum in a



war-torn rural area. Some fathers gave their daughters to fighters under pressure from Boko Haram, and at times women chose such marriages against family wishes. A woman from Walasa, a Kanuri village near Banki, Bama LGA, was said to have divorced her husband and married the Boko Haram naqib of Banki. She however said her new husband looked after her better and gave her a higher stipend than her first husband. She further lamented losing the money she had saved when the military took back her village, burned their house and arrested her. In 2014, Kanuri elders and officials in Niger became increasingly worried about a small but increasing number of single women leaving the Diffa region for Boko Haram-controlled areas in search of business opportunities or a lucrative marriage.

Insurgency and Internally Displaced Women and Children in Teachers' Village and Bakassi in Borno State

According to Campbell (2014), the insurgency has displaced over two million people within Nigeria, with Borno State being the most affected. Teachers Village and Bakassi IDP camps are characterized by severe overcrowding. The camps, initially designed to accommodate fewer people, have seen their populations swell beyond capacity due to continuous influxes of displaced persons (NRC, 2016). Overcrowding exacerbates the strain on basic amenities such as water, sanitation, and health services. Reports by Médecins Sans Frontières (2018) highlight that many IDPs lack access to clean water and adequate sanitation facilities, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. The shelters in these camps are often makeshift and inadequate, offering little protection from the elements. A study by Zenn (2014) indicates that temporary shelters do not meet the basic standards for safe and dignified living. The inadequacy of housing exposes residents to harsh weather conditions, further compounding their vulnerability. Women and girls face unique challenges in the IDP camps, including heightened risks of gender-based violence (GBV).

According to a report by Amnesty International (2018), sexual violence, including rape and exploitation, is rampant in these camps. The report notes that women and girls often resort to transactional sex to obtain food and other necessities, due to inadequate humanitarian assistance. Healthcare access for women, particularly maternal and reproductive health services, is severely



limited. The World Health Organization (2019) reports that the lack of adequate healthcare facilities and services in the camps contributes to high maternal and infant mortality rates. Pregnant women often have to travel long distances to access the nearest health facilities, which are usually overwhelmed and under-resourced. The psychological impact of displacement on women is profound. Many women suffer from trauma due to violence experienced before and during displacement.

A study by Oyeniyi (2015) found high levels of depression and anxiety among displaced women, exacerbated by the constant threat of violence and the uncertainty of their situation. Children's access to education in Teachers Village and Bakassi IDP camps is critically compromised. Schools in the camps are often overcrowded and under-resourced. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2017) reports that many children are out of school, and missing critical years of education. The lack of educational opportunities limits their future prospects and perpetuates the cycle of poverty and displacement. Child protection is another significant concern. Many children in the camps have been orphaned or separated from their families due to the conflict. These children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and recruitment by armed groups. A report by the International Crisis Group (2016) highlights the recruitment of child soldiers by Boko Haram, which often targets unaccompanied minors in IDP camps. The health and nutrition status of children in these camps is alarmingly poor. Malnutrition is widespread, with many children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

According to a report by Save the Children (2019), the lack of adequate food and healthcare services contributes to high morbidity and mortality rates among children. The displacement has disrupted traditional livelihoods and economic activities. Many IDPs were farmers, traders, or artisans before displacement, but have lost their means of livelihood due to the conflict. A study by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2018) indicates that economic opportunities within the camps are scarce, forcing many to depend entirely on humanitarian aid. The influx of IDPs has also affected social integration and community dynamics within the camps. There is often tension between long-term residents and newer arrivals, particularly when resources are scarce.



The Nigerian government's response has included the establishment of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) to coordinate efforts. Despite these initiatives, implementation has been hampered by corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and inadequate funding (Human Rights Watch, 2017). There is a need for more robust and transparent policies to effectively address the needs of IDPs. Achieving durable solutions for IDPs involves a combination of voluntary return, local integration, and resettlement.

Theoretical Framework

This research employs the TR Gur Relative Deprivation Theory and Johan Galtung's peace and conflict theory as a guide. TR Gur Relative Deprivation theory is relevant in understanding why human beings revolt against constituted authority. The reason why people feel aggrieved when they do not get what they feel that they are entitled for in comparison to their counterparts. When people in one community compare what the government provides to them against what the other community are given. The theory also explains how the aggrieved individuals will join a violent group or civil right groups to protest for their rights. This theory gave bight to freedom of black Americans from segregation during the agitation movement by Human Right Activist, Martin Luther King Jn. The theory can also be seen at play when the Nigerian Labour Congress agitate for wage increment for civil servants because the take home pay can no longer purchase food and luxury items in comparison to what the politicians have. So also, is the feeling of deprivation by the poor people of Borno State which lead them to take up arms or join the Boko Haram sect in protest.

Johan Galtung's Peace Theory is relevant in understanding the Nigeria state and the current violence that bedeviled the country. This theory is very important in the investigation of the relationship between the escalating violence in the country and violence inherent in the structure of the society. This structural violence in Nigerian political system is responsible for various forms of crisis experienced in Nigeria because many ethnic groups feel left out in the plan of this country. This is because some citizen's potential at various levels is greater than what they actually get thereby creating a sense of dissatisfaction among the people and a sense of apathy.



This is evident in the growing number of unemployed graduates, poverty and different types of crimes experienced presently in Nigeria coupled with Boko Haram, bandits, herdsmen/farmers clash and kidnappings. Therefore, to reverse this endemic crisis of insurgency, the Nigerian government has to structurally reorient/revamp the Nigerian society to give dividend of citizenship to the people to sooth and invariantly heal the decades wound of dissatisfaction and alienation felt by the people.

Research Methodology

This study adopts an exploratory research design in order to gain in-depth understanding of insurgency and internal displacement, particularly as they affect women and children in Borno State. An exploratory design is appropriate because the subject involves complex humanitarian, social, and security dimensions that require careful examination of existing evidence and documented experiences. Rather than testing predetermined hypotheses, the approach allows the researcher to investigate patterns, relationships, and underlying factors surrounding the activities of Boko Haram and their impact on vulnerable populations.

Data for the study were collected exclusively from secondary sources, including academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, policy documents, government publications, and reports from reputable international organizations. These documentary materials provided comprehensive insights into the scale of displacement, the conditions in IDP camps, and the rehabilitation efforts undertaken by relevant stakeholders. The population of interest comprised internally displaced persons residing in Teachers Village and Bakassi IDP camps, with a combined population of 44,623 persons, thereby offering a substantial contextual basis for analysis.

Data presentation and analysis were conducted using thematic and content analysis. Relevant documents were carefully reviewed, categorized, and interpreted according to recurring themes such as causes of insurgency, patterns of displacement, gender-based vulnerabilities, rehabilitation interventions, and implementation challenges. Through systematic coding and interpretation of documentary evidence, the study was able to identify dominant trends and draw informed conclusions regarding the condition of internally displaced women and children and the effectiveness of ongoing rehabilitation efforts.



Data Presentation and Analysis

Objective one: The causes and consequences of the insurgency on vulnerable populations

The insurgency led by Boko Haram in North-Eastern Nigeria has been attributed to a complex interplay of socio-economic, political, and ideological factors. Scholars such as Mohammed (2014) and Agbiboa (2013) argue that chronic poverty, unemployment, youth marginalization, and weak state institutions in the region created fertile ground for radicalization. The North-East, particularly Borno State, has historically recorded some of the highest poverty and illiteracy rates in Nigeria, conditions that facilitated recruitment into extremist movements. In addition, governance deficits, corruption, and perceived political exclusion deepened distrust between citizens and the state, enabling extremist narratives to gain legitimacy among disaffected populations. Religious extremism and the manipulation of doctrinal interpretations further strengthened the insurgency's ideological appeal, transforming local grievances into organized violent resistance.

Another major cause identified in secondary literature is the heavy-handed response of security forces in the early stages of the conflict. Reports by Human Rights Watch (2012) and Amnesty International (2015) documented allegations of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and destruction of property, which reportedly fueled resentment and contributed to cycles of violence. The death of Boko Haram's founder, Mohammed Yusuf, in police custody in 2009 marked a turning point, escalating the group's operations into full-scale insurgency. These dynamics illustrate how structural inequalities and security mismanagement combined to intensify instability, ultimately worsening the humanitarian crisis in the region.

The consequences of the insurgency on vulnerable populations, especially women and children, have been devastating. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2021), millions of people have been displaced internally and across borders due to persistent violence in North-Eastern Nigeria. Women and children constitute the majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs), facing disproportionate risks of gender-based violence, exploitation, and deprivation. The UNICEF (2017) reported that more than a million children were displaced



at the height of the crisis, many of whom lost access to education and basic healthcare. The destruction of schools and abduction of students further entrenched fear and educational disruption, limiting long-term human capital development in the region.

Economically, the insurgency has destroyed livelihoods and weakened local economies. Agricultural activities, which form the backbone of rural communities in Borno State, were severely disrupted due to insecurity, landmines, and forced migration. The World Bank (2020) estimated billions of dollars in damages to infrastructure, housing, and public services in the North-East, deepening poverty levels. Women, many of whom depended on farming, petty trading, or informal enterprises, lost their primary sources of income. This economic disempowerment increased dependency on humanitarian assistance and, in some cases, exposed women and girls to survival strategies such as transactional sex, heightening their vulnerability to abuse.

Psychologically and socially, the insurgency has left profound trauma among affected populations. Exposure to killings, abductions, sexual violence, and forced recruitment has generated widespread post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety disorders. The World Health Organization (2019) emphasizes that conflict-affected populations often experience long-term mental health consequences that, if unaddressed, hinder social reintegration and community rebuilding. Children who witnessed violence or were forcibly recruited face stigmatization and difficulties in resuming normal social life. Collectively, these consequences highlight that the insurgency is not only a security crisis but also a profound humanitarian and developmental challenge that continues to undermine the wellbeing of vulnerable populations in Borno State and the broader North-East region.

Objective Two: The rehabilitation efforts undertaken by government and other stakeholders

The Federal Government of Nigeria has implemented several rehabilitation initiatives to address the humanitarian consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency, particularly in Borno State. One of the major institutional responses was the establishment of the North East Development



Commission (NEDC) in 2017 to coordinate reconstruction, resettlement, and reintegration programs in the conflict-affected North-East. The Commission has overseen projects involving housing reconstruction, educational infrastructure, healthcare delivery, and livelihood restoration. In addition, the Presidential Committee on the North-East Initiative (PCNI), which preceded the NEDC, mobilized emergency relief materials and developed strategic frameworks for stabilization and recovery. These efforts reflect attempts by the government to move beyond immediate humanitarian relief toward long-term rehabilitation and development.

At the state level, the Borno State Government has undertaken measures aimed at camp management, psychosocial support, and reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Through collaboration with security agencies and humanitarian partners, the government has facilitated the gradual resettlement of displaced families into relatively secure communities. Skills acquisition programs, vocational training, and small-scale business grants have been introduced to economically empower women who lost their livelihoods due to insurgency. Furthermore, education-focused interventions, such as rebuilding schools and integrating displaced children into formal learning systems, have sought to address prolonged educational disruption caused by the conflict.

International organizations have played a crucial complementary role in rehabilitation efforts. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has supported shelter provision, protection services, and voluntary return programs for displaced persons. Similarly, UNICEF has focused on child protection, education in emergencies, nutrition services, and psychosocial support for conflict-affected children. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has contributed to displacement tracking, camp coordination, and community stabilization projects, providing reliable data to inform humanitarian planning. These organizations have also strengthened local institutional capacity to manage displacement more effectively.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups have further expanded rehabilitation interventions, particularly in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and mental health challenges. Organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières and International Rescue Committee have provided medical services, trauma counseling, reproductive healthcare, and safe



spaces for women and girls in IDP camps. Community-based programs promoting peacebuilding, social cohesion, and deradicalization have also been introduced to facilitate reintegration of formerly abducted women and children. Collectively, these efforts by government and other stakeholders demonstrate a multi-layered rehabilitation approach that combines emergency relief, psychosocial care, economic empowerment, and infrastructure reconstruction to restore dignity and stability to vulnerable populations in the North-East.

Objective Three: The operational, financial, institutional, and security challenges confronting the interventions.

Rehabilitation interventions in conflict-affected areas of Borno State face significant operational challenges that undermine their effectiveness. Humanitarian access to remote and insecure communities remains constrained due to damaged infrastructure, poor road networks, and intermittent attacks by insurgent elements linked to Boko Haram and its splinter factions. Aid agencies often encounter logistical bottlenecks in delivering food, medical supplies, and shelter materials to internally displaced persons (IDPs). Overcrowding in camps such as Teachers Village and Bakassi further complicates service delivery, stretching available facilities beyond capacity. Reports by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) highlight persistent gaps in camp coordination and data management, which limit accurate targeting of beneficiaries and monitoring of outcomes.

Financial constraints also pose serious obstacles to sustainable rehabilitation. Funding for humanitarian and reconstruction programs in North-Eastern Nigeria is heavily dependent on donor contributions, which are often inconsistent and insufficient relative to the scale of need. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has repeatedly reported funding shortfalls in Nigeria's Humanitarian Response Plans, resulting in reduced food rations, limited healthcare outreach, and delayed infrastructure projects. While agencies such as the North East Development Commission (NEDC) have mobilized domestic resources, bureaucratic delays, weak financial management systems, and allegations of corruption have further constrained the efficient utilization of funds. These financial limitations hinder long-term



recovery initiatives, particularly livelihood restoration and psychosocial support programs for women and children.

Institutional weaknesses constitute another major challenge confronting rehabilitation efforts. Fragmentation among federal, state, and local authorities often leads to duplication of roles, policy inconsistencies, and inadequate coordination with international partners. Limited technical capacity within local institutions affects planning, implementation, and monitoring of reintegration programs. Additionally, weak social welfare systems and inadequate mental health infrastructure restrict the provision of specialized services required by survivors of trauma, sexual violence, and forced recruitment. The absence of reliable baseline data in some areas further complicates impact assessment and evidence-based policymaking.

Security challenges remain perhaps the most persistent barrier to effective intervention. Despite military operations aimed at stabilizing the region, sporadic attacks, suicide bombings, and kidnappings continue to threaten both civilians and humanitarian workers. The presence of unexploded ordnance and landmines in rural communities discourages safe return and agricultural resumption. According to assessments by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, insecurity has slowed voluntary repatriation and reintegration efforts, as many displaced persons fear renewed violence. This volatile security environment not only disrupts service delivery but also undermines trust in government-led resettlement initiatives, thereby prolonging displacement and deepening the vulnerability of women and children in Borno State.

Discussion of Major Findings

The major findings of this study reveal that the insurgency orchestrated by Boko Haram has had profound and multidimensional effects on vulnerable populations in Borno State, particularly women and children. The research established that the root causes of the insurgency are deeply embedded in structural socio-economic inequalities, youth unemployment, poverty, weak governance, and religious extremism. These pre-existing vulnerabilities created fertile ground for radicalization and prolonged instability. The consequences have been devastating, including mass displacement, destruction of livelihoods, disruption of education, exposure to gender-based



violence, and severe psychological trauma. Women and children were found to bear a disproportionate burden of the crisis due to loss of family breadwinners, limited access to resources, and heightened exposure to abuse and exploitation.

The findings further indicate that significant rehabilitation efforts have been undertaken by government institutions and humanitarian actors to mitigate the impact of displacement. Agencies such as the North East Development Commission, in collaboration with international organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF, have implemented programs focused on shelter provision, psychosocial support, education, healthcare services, and livelihood restoration. However, while these interventions have provided temporary relief and improved access to essential services within IDP camps, the study found that they have not fully addressed the long-term physical, emotional, and socio-economic needs of displaced women and children. Reintegration into host communities remains fragile, and sustainable economic empowerment is still limited.

Finally, the study identified persistent operational, financial, institutional, and security challenges that constrain the effectiveness of rehabilitation initiatives. Insecurity in certain areas continues to hinder safe return and service delivery, while funding gaps and administrative inefficiencies slow project implementation. Institutional coordination gaps between federal, state, and humanitarian actors further reduce program impact. As a result, many internally displaced women and children remain in protracted displacement conditions, facing uncertainty about their future. These findings underscore the need for more integrated, adequately funded, and security-sensitive rehabilitation strategies that prioritize durable solutions and long-term community resilience in Borno State.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the insurgency driven by Boko Haram has fundamentally altered the social, economic, and security landscape of Borno State, with women and children bearing the heaviest burden of its consequences. The study established that structural factors such as poverty, unemployment, weak governance, and ideological extremism contributed significantly to the



emergence and persistence of the conflict. The resulting violence has led to mass displacement, widespread destruction of infrastructure, loss of livelihoods, educational disruption, and deep psychological trauma among vulnerable populations. Although the Federal Government, the Borno State Government, and international partners have implemented various rehabilitation and reintegration programs, these interventions have largely focused on short-term humanitarian relief rather than comprehensive long-term recovery. Persistent security threats, financial limitations, institutional weaknesses, and coordination gaps continue to undermine the sustainability of these efforts. Consequently, many internally displaced women and children remain in conditions of protracted vulnerability, struggling with limited economic opportunities and unresolved psychosocial challenges. Ultimately, sustainable peace and recovery in Borno State require a holistic approach that integrates security stabilization, economic empowerment, psychosocial healing, institutional strengthening, and community-based reintegration. Addressing the root causes of insurgency while prioritizing the protection, dignity, and empowerment of women and children is essential for breaking the cycle of violence and displacement and for fostering inclusive national development in Nigeria's North-East region.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of the study, the following were made:

- i. The government should expand youth employment schemes, vocational training, and access to quality education in conflict-prone communities to reduce vulnerability to radicalization by groups such as Boko Haram.
- ii. Agencies such as the North East Development Commission should prioritize livelihood restoration through microcredit schemes, agricultural support, skills acquisition, and small enterprise grants specifically targeted at internally displaced women.
- iii. There is a need to improve coordination among federal, state, and humanitarian actors to eliminate duplication and ensure efficient resource utilization. Transparent financial management and regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be institutionalized to enhance accountability in rehabilitation programs.



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