

# Humanitarian Crises in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Camps in Benue State, Nigeria: A Comprehensive Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Benue state, Nigeria face an escalating humanitarian crisis, marked by persistent conflict, forced displacement, and inadequate living conditions. This study examined the humanitarian crises in IDPs' (internally displaced persons) camps in Benue state, Nigeria based on the persistent herdsman-farmers conflict resulting to displacement of people to camps. The study examined the multifaceted challenges experienced by IDPs in Benue state, Nigeria, addressing the root causes, prevailing conditions, and the response mechanisms in place. A total of 12 IDPs camps were selected from Six (6) affected local government (Guma, Makurdi, Gwer-west, Agatu, Logo and Kwande). Within the IDPs camps, a purposive sampling procedure was adopted to select 240 respondents from the selected 12 IDPs camps. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean and presented in frequency distribution tables, charts and graphs. The findings of the study revealed that, overcrowding and inadequate shelter, food and water insecurity, health challenges and inadequate medical services, protection and security concerns in camps are the major humanitarian crises in the IDPs camps. Although, there are humanitarian response efforts by government, NGOs, international organisations and well-meaning individuals, however it is grossly inadequate. The study concluded that there is urgent need for a comprehensive and sustainable approach to address the humanitarian crisis, involving collaborative efforts from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the international community. Also understanding the complexities of this crisis is crucial to developing effective strategies aimed at alleviating the suffering and rebuilding the lives of the displaced population in Benue state, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Humanitarian crisis, Herdsmen-farmers conflict, IDPs, Humanitarian response

## INTRODUCTION

The global landscape is marred by persistent challenges emanating from armed conflicts, disasters, and violence, collectively contributing to a substantial annual displacement of populations. As revealed by the Global Peace Index (2021), approximately 18% of the world's population is affected by violent conflict, leading to a more than 60 million displaced persons globally (International Organisation for Migration [IOM], 2021; The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2015). These displacements are not solely a consequence of armed conflicts but are also a response to various forced migration triggers, including natural disasters. The statistics from the Global Peace Index (2021), IOM (2021), Global Displacement Forecast (2023), and UNHCR (2015) indicates that one out of every 100 people is compelled to assume refugee status, seek asylum, or become internally displaced due to a forced migration triggers, such as conflicts, floods, famine, or other natural occurrences.

Herdsman-Farmers conflicts, insurgencies and their associated crises, which include widespread displacement,

invariably give rise to significant protection needs, posing a formidable humanitarian challenge across diverse regions. As noted by Ban Ki-moon in 2014, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) globally has surpassed 30 million, highlighting the negative impact of conflicts on communities worldwide. The consequences of these conflicts extend far beyond the immediate displacement and disorder, permeating into the realms of short and long-term development and economic growth. Akanle and Omobowale (2015) revealed that violent conflicts, terrorism, and banditry have severe effects on the developmental trajectory of societies. Moreover, the consequences are not limited to economic aspects but also extend to the progressive functioning of human societies (Fayehun and Akanle, 2022). In essence, the prevalence of armed conflicts, disasters, and violence on a global scale underscores the urgent need for concerted international efforts to address the root causes, mitigate the impacts, and provide effective humanitarian assistance to the displaced populations. Only through a comprehensive and collaborative approach can the international community hope to alleviate the suffering of those affected and work towards creating a more peaceful and resilient world.

The African continent has been grappling with the enduring and complex challenges of intra-state violence, armed conflicts, and ethno-religious tensions, resulting in a large number of internally displaced people (IDPs). As indicated by Akanle (2018) and Crisp (2010), the region is confronted with a formidable issue, with a record of approximately 15 million IDPs. This statistics firmly establishes Africa as a focal point for conflicts and human displacement. The prevalence of conflict and insecurity has become a hallmark of the African narrative, contributing to a symbolic attribution of the continent. As noted by Chabal (2005), the trends and patterns of violence have woven themselves into the fabric of the region, creating a complex and challenging environment. The implication of these conflicts resonate across borders, affecting communities, economies, and political landscapes. The roots of this conflict can be traced back to historical struggles for national independence and economic strength during both pre and post-colonial eras (Akanle, Fayehun, and Oyelakin. 2021). Many African nations have undergone riotous periods characterized by resistance movements, civil wars, and ideological clashes, all of which have left indelible marks on the social, economic, and political structures of these countries.

In the face of conflict, communities become displaced, their lives disrupted, and their futures uncertain. The humanitarian impact is profound, with millions facing displacement, loss of livelihoods, and the breakdown of social structures. The challenge for African nations lies not only in addressing the immediate consequences of conflict but also in fostering long-term stability and reconciliation. Efforts to address these issues necessitate a multifaceted approach. Diplomatic interventions, peacekeeping missions, and conflict resolution initiatives play crucial roles in mitigating the impacts of violence. Additionally, addressing the root causes of conflict, such as economic disparities, ethnic tensions, and governance issues, is essential for building sustainable peace.

The Nigerian situation presents a serious concern, characterized by an array of persistent complications, fragile state apparatuses, and extensive humanitarian crises, each aggravating the consequences of the other. As the most populous country in Africa, with a population exceeding 200 million people, Nigeria grapples with a complex web of challenges stemming from conflicts, insurgency, banditry, and political violence. The consequences of these multifaceted issues are disturbingly weighty, resulting in a myriad of distressing outcomes such as mass displacement, loss of lives, destruction of livelihoods, and damage to properties. The scale of these conflicts is alarming, creating an environment where millions of individuals find themselves forcibly displaced from their homes. Compounding these challenges is the persistent absence of reliable and valid data, as highlighted by Danlami and Idowu (2019). This data deficiency significantly hampers effective humanitarian response efforts, making it difficult to accurately assess the extent of the conflicts, identify the most vulnerable populations, and allocate resources appropriately. The lack of comprehensive and up-to-date data impedes the formulation of targeted strategies to address the pressing needs of the affected communities.

Despite the existence of global guiding principles on internal displacement (UNOCHA, 2001, UNOCHA, 2017, 2018), Nigeria faces a substantial gap in successfully incorporating and implementing these principles into its domestic policies and practices. This deficiency contributes to a continuous upward trajectory in the numbers of displaced persons, as noted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2021) and Crisp (2010). The failure to translate international standards into effective local measures underscores the challenges in mitigating

the impact of displacement and providing adequate support to those affected. In light of these circumstances, it becomes imperative for Nigeria to prioritize the collection of accurate and timely data across various dimensions, including demographic changes, health needs, water, sanitation, and hygiene requirements, food needs, and security concerns. A concerted effort in this direction will not only facilitate a better understanding of the crises but also pave the way for informed decision-making and the implementation of targeted interventions. Additionally, there is a pressing need for the Nigerian government to strengthen its commitment to domesticating and effectively implementing global principles on internal displacement (OCHA, 2001), thereby fostering a more resilient and responsive system to address the complex humanitarian challenges the country faces.

In Benue State of Nigeria, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are confronting an increasingly dire humanitarian crisis characterized by ongoing conflict, forced displacement, and substandard living conditions (Bassey & Effiong, 2022; Ukase. and Jato, 2020, Isaac, 2021). This complex situation demands a thorough examination to comprehend the multifaceted challenges faced by the affected population. The escalation of the conflict can be attributed to a combination of factors, including persisting conflict dynamics, which continue to force individuals and communities to flee their homes. The state of forced displacement in Benue is a serious concern. This involuntary migration not only disrupts the lives of the affected population but also intensifies their vulnerability, exposing them to various risks and hardships.

The living conditions for IDPs in Benue State remain inadequate, adding another layer of complexity to the crisis (Isaac, 2021). Issues such as insufficient shelter, limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and inadequate healthcare services further compound the challenges faced by these displaced individuals. This dire situation emphasises the urgent need for comprehensive humanitarian interventions aimed at addressing the immediate needs of the IDPs and laying the groundwork for sustainable solutions. Efforts to address the humanitarian crisis in Benue State should draw on a wealth of academic and research resources. Relevant studies on conflict dynamics, forced displacement, and the impact on living conditions in similar contexts can provide valuable insights.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study Area

Benue state, with a land area of 30,955sq kilometre is located between Latitudes  $6^{\circ}25^1$  and  $8^{\circ}08^1N$ , and Longitude  $7^{\circ}47^1$  and  $10^{\circ}00^1E$ , on the eastern side of the middle belt of Nigeria. It is surrounded by five states, namely: Nassarawa to the north, Taraba to the northeast, Cross River to the south, Enugu to the south-west and Kogi to the west. There is also short international boundary between the state and the republic of Cameroun along Nigeria's southeast border (Fig. 1)

Benue State, which is located in the North Central region of Nigeria, has a total population of 4,253,641 in 2006 census (NPC, 2006), 2023 projected population of 6,141,300 people, with an average population density of 199.5 persons per km<sup>2</sup> and 2.3% Annual Population Change. This makes Benue the 9th most populous state in Nigeria. However, the distribution of the population according to Local government areas shows marked duality.

Benue State is home to a diverse array of ethnic groups, with prominent ethnic groups including the Tiv, Idoma, Igede, Etulo, Abakpa, Jukun, NyIfon, and Akweya. Among these, the Tiv stand out as the major ethnic group, inhabiting approximately 14 local government areas. Meanwhile, the Etulo and Jukun share this region with the Tiv. The remaining nine local government areas are occupied by the Idoma, Igede, Akweya, Nyifon, and other ethnic groups. In this rich landscape of cultural diversity, Benue State is not only a melting pot for indigenous groups but also plays host to migrants from various parts of Nigeria, such as the Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, and several other minor tribes who have seamlessly integrated into the social fabric of the state. This harmonious coexistence fosters a unique blend of traditions, languages, and customs, making Benue State a microcosm of Nigeria's cultural mosaic.

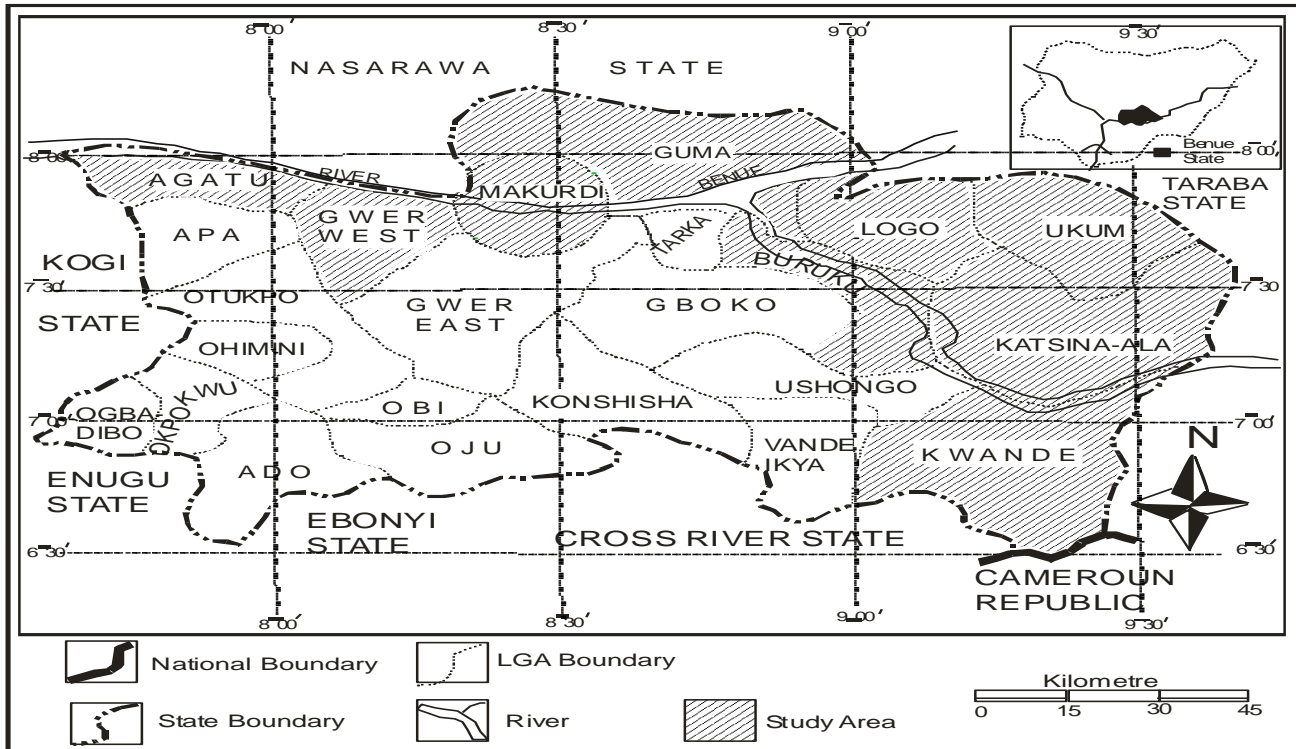


Figure 2: Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict affected areas in Benue State

**Methods**

In the specified study area, the population is primarily comprised of individuals residing in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and those who have been displaced within the region. This displacement is particularly prominent in the local government areas that have been severely affected by conflict, natural disasters, and insurgency. The local government areas prominently affected by these challenges include Agatu, Gwer-west, Makurdi, Guma, Buruku, Logo, Ukum, Katsina-Ala, and Kwande. Within these areas, the population faces the challenge of displacement, often having to leave their homes and communities due to the adverse conditions. IDP camps serve as temporary shelters for those who have been forced to evacuate, providing a semblance of refuge and assistance. Displaced persons in these regions may have experienced the disruption of their lives, livelihoods, and social structures, leading to a range of challenges including access to basic necessities, healthcare, education, and economic opportunities.

Understanding the dynamics of this displaced population in the specified local government areas is crucial for developing effective strategies to address their immediate needs and plan for long-term recovery and sustainable development. It requires a comprehensive examination of the factors contributing to displacement, the living conditions in IDP camps, and the social and economic impact on the affected individuals and communities. Additionally, efforts to provide humanitarian aid, promote community resilience, and facilitate the return and reintegration of displaced persons into their original communities should be central to any intervention or policy initiative in these areas.

**The date required for this research include:**

**Demographic Change:** Demographic data provides insights into the population's composition, age distribution, gender balance, and migration patterns. Understanding demographic changes helps in anticipating future needs and tailoring services to the evolving characteristics of the community.

**Health Needs:** - Health data is fundamental for assessing the prevalence of diseases, healthcare infrastructure, and the overall well-being of the population. Identifying prevalent health issues enables the development of targeted healthcare programs and facilitates the allocation of resources to specific health interventions.



**WASH Needs (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene):** WASH data is critical for evaluating access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene practices within the community. Assessing WASH needs allows for the implementation of initiatives that improve water quality, sanitation infrastructure, and promote hygienic practices, consequently enhancing public health.

**Food Needs:** Food data includes information about food security, nutritional status, and dietary habits of the population. Analysing food needs assists in designing sustainable food programs, ensuring adequate nutrition, and addressing issues of food insecurity within the community.

**Security Needs:** Security data involves understanding the safety and security challenges faced by the community, including crime rates and vulnerabilities. Identifying security needs is essential for implementing measures to enhance community safety, ranging from law enforcement initiatives to community engagement programs.

By meticulously collecting and analysing data in these areas, decision-makers can develop targeted interventions and policies that address the unique challenges faced by the community. This comprehensive approach ensures a holistic understanding of the community's dynamics, promoting the development of sustainable and effective solutions for a better quality of life.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select displaced persons living in IDP camps. A sample size of 240 respondents comprising of displace persons in IDP camps, camp officials, health care providers. A structured questionnaire was administered in 12 Internally Displaced Persons camps within 6 affected local government areas.

Data collected from the respondents were coded and summarised using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20 software. The analytical tools that were used for data analysis is descriptive statistic which was employed to have a summarised description of the data that was collected. This involves the use of central tendency such as percentages, frequencies distribution, and means.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents were analysed and presented considering the following specific variables such as sex, age, educational attainment, and period of stay in the IDP camp.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	97	40.4
	Female	143	59.6
Age	Below 20-35	36	15.0
	36-45	154	64.2
	45-55	45	18.8
	56 and above	5	2.1
Educational qualification	No formal education	113	47.1
	Primary	105	43.8

	Secondary	5	2.1
	Tertiary	17	7.1
Period of stay at IDP camp			
	1-2 years	92	38.3
	3-4years	35	14.6
	5-6years	47	19.6
	6 years and above	66	27.5

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of respondents in the IDP camps under consideration for this study. It is noteworthy that the distribution of genders in the camps is not evenly balanced, with a significant majority of female respondents, constituting 59.6%, compared to their male counterparts, who make up 40.4% of the population. On the age distribution, the data reveals that a substantial portion of the respondents, accounting for 64.2%, fall within the age range of 36 to 45 years old. This age group appears to be the most prevalent among the IDP camp population. Examining the educational background of the IDPs, the majority, comprising 47.1% of the respondents, have received no formal education. Additionally, a significant portion, constituting 43.8%, has completed primary education. This information sheds light on the educational landscape within the IDP camps, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address the educational needs of this population.

Further on the duration of stay in the IDP camps indicates that a considerable proportion of respondents, representing 38.3%, have been residing in the camps for a period ranging between 1 year and 2 years. However, 27.5% of the respondents have endured an extended stay of more than 6 years in the IDP camps. This insight into the duration of displacement emphasizes the long-term challenges faced by a notable portion of the IDP community, emphasizing the importance of sustained support and rehabilitation efforts.

**Status of population at the IDPs camp**

The population dynamics of the identified IDP camps in the area is presented in Table 2 which underscores a concerning trend within the IDP camps, revealing a continuous rise in population.

Table 2: population change in the IDP camps

Population change	Frequency	Percent
Population increasing	183	76.3
Population decreasing	40	16.7
Population still the same	17	7.1
Total	240	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 shows that, 76.3% of the respondents express their observation that the population in these camps is consistently increasing. This prevailing growth trend raises significant implications for the already challenging conditions within the camps, emphasizing the need for responsive and sustainable solutions to address the escalating population dynamics. Contrastingly, a minority, comprising only 16.7% of the respondents, report a decrease in population within the IDP camps. This subset of observations draws attention to further investigation to discern the factors contributing to a decline in numbers, as it may carry implications for resource allocation,

infrastructure planning, and humanitarian assistance strategies. The existence of both increasing and decreasing population trends within the camps underscores the dynamic nature of the challenges faced by displaced individuals and emphasizes the necessity for adaptive approaches in managing the evolving circumstances of the IDP community.

### Health concerns in the IDP camps

Table 3 offers a comprehensive glimpse into the primary health concerns prevailing within the IDP camps, with a particular focus on the responses of the surveyed population

Table 3: Disease prevalence in IDP camps

Health concerns	Frequency	Percent
Measles	42	17.5
Malaria	121	50.4
Diarrhoea	20	8.3
Acute respiratory system	15	6.3
Cholera	32	13.3
Injuries	3	1.3
Pregnancy related condition	7	2.9
Total	240	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The data shows that a significant majority of respondents, constituting 50.4%, identified Malaria as the predominant health issue afflicting the people in IDP camps. This high percentage emphasizes the pervasive nature of Malaria in the IDP community, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions and preventive measures to address this prevalent health challenge. Following closely behind Malaria, 17.5% of respondents expressed concern about measles as a prominent health issue within the IDP camps. The acknowledgment of measles as a significant health concern underscores the vulnerability of the displaced population to infectious diseases, necessitating robust vaccination programmes and healthcare initiatives to mitigate the impact.

Furthermore, the data reveals that 13.3% of respondents identified cholera as another health concern in the IDP camps. The presence of cholera as a considerable health risk emphasizes the importance of ensuring access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene practices within the camps to prevent the outbreak and spread of waterborne diseases. These findings collectively shed light on the multifaceted health challenges faced by the IDP community, emphasizing the imperative for a comprehensive and integrated healthcare approach to address the prevalent issues and enhance the overall health and well-being of the displaced population.

### Number health concerns, reported by health professionals or clinic records

Table 4 provides a detailed account of the health concerns reported within the IDP camps over the past 7 days, shedding light on the prevailing medical challenges faced by the displaced population.

Table 4: No. of reported health concerns in the IDP camps

Disease	No. of cases in last 7days	%	No of deaths in the last 7 days	%
Measles	16	8.1	0	0.0
Malaria	71	35.9	2	25.0

Diarrhoeal diseases	1	<1.0	1	12.5
Acute Respiratory Infections	0	0.0	1	12.5
Cholera	24	12.1	2	25.0
Injuries	24	12.1	1	12.5
Pregnancy-related conditions	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other health conditions	62	31.3	1	12.5
Total	198	100	8	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

A thorough analysis of the data reveals that Malaria has emerged as a predominant health issue, with a noteworthy 71 recorded cases during this period. This alarming figure represents 35.9% of the total number of health concerns documented within the IDP camps, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions to address and mitigate the impact of Malaria in this vulnerable community. Following closely is Cholera identified as another significant health concern within the IDP camps, with 24 reported cases, constituting 12.1% of the overall health concerns recorded. The incidence of Cholera highlights the susceptibility of the population to waterborne diseases, signalling a critical area for immediate public health attention and intervention.

Tragically, the data also reveals the loss of lives within the IDP camps, with two reported deaths attributed to Malaria and two to Cholera within the last 7 days. These figures underscore the severity of the health challenges faced by the displaced population, emphasizing the critical need for prompt and effective medical responses to prevent further loss of life and alleviate the suffering of those affected. In light of these findings, it becomes imperative for stakeholders, including healthcare providers, humanitarian organizations, and policymakers, to collaborate and implement targeted strategies for disease prevention, treatment, and health education within the IDP camps, ensuring the well-being and resilience of the displaced community.

### Health Needs in IDP Camps

Table 5 offers a detailed information of the healthcare dynamics within the IDP camps considered for this study. An overwhelming 92.8% of the respondents acknowledged the existence of reported cases of unusual illnesses and rumours of outbreaks of a strange disease, highlighting the vulnerability of the displaced population to health-related challenges. Focusing on maternal health, the data indicates that 86.5% of those in the IDP camps reported between 1 and 10 births within the last 7 days. This statistic underscores the ongoing need for comprehensive maternal and neonatal healthcare services within these camps to ensure the well-being of mothers and infants.

Table 5: Health needs in IDP camps

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Reported unusual illness or rumour of outbreak of any disease	Yes	223	92.9
	No	17	7.1
No. of births in the IDP camps	Below 6	148	61.7
	6-10	60	25.0
	11-15	18	7.5
	16-20	12	5.0



	20 and above	2	.8
Health facility within or close to the IDP camp			
	Mobile clinic	229	95.4
	Primary health care facility	11	4.6
Services at the facility provided at a cost			
	Yes	173	72.1
	No	67	27.9
the IDPs use the services at the facility			
	Yes	178	74.17
	No	62	25.83
Reasons for not using the facilities			
	They cannot pay	3	4.2
	Facility is too far	4	6.7
	Inadequate medicine/ equipment	24	38.3
	Health facility is damaged or non-functional	22	35.4
	Staff/ personnel not available	9	15.4
health care providers in the camp			
	Nurse	60	25.0
	Medical doctor	18	7.5
	Community health officer	90	37.5
	Community health extension worker	30	12.5
	Mid wife	28	11.7
	Lab technician	14	5.8
challenges of health care services in the facility			
	Inadequate trained personnel	88	36.7
	Inadequate drugs	35	42.1
	No health facilities	101	14.6
	Cost of medical facilities	16	6.7

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

In terms of healthcare infrastructure, 95.4% of the respondents affirmed the presence of mobile clinics, indicating a crucial resource for delivering medical services to the displaced community. Additionally, a significant

majority, 74.17%, utilize the available health services within the camp, reflecting a reliance on these essential facilities. However, a noteworthy 25.83% of IDPs in the camps do not avail themselves of the existing health facilities. The primary reason, as indicated by 80.1% of this subset, is the perceived lack of availability of drugs and medical personnel. This insight emphasizes the critical importance of addressing these shortages to improve healthcare utilization within the IDP camps. Further insights into healthcare provision reveal that community health workers and nurses are the primary healthcare providers in the IDP camps, as affirmed by 62.5% of the respondents. This information underscores the vital role played by these frontline workers in delivering essential healthcare services to the displaced population.

Challenges in healthcare service delivery within the IDP camps are also evident. Inadequate availability of drugs is reported by 42.1% of the respondents, indicating a pressing need for improved pharmaceutical support. Additionally, 36.7% of respondents cite a lack of adequately trained medical personnel as a significant challenge, emphasizing the importance of addressing staffing gaps to enhance the overall quality of healthcare services in the IDP camps.

### Educational Needs in IDP Camps

Table 6 provides crucial insights into the educational needs of individuals residing in IDP camps, shedding light on the challenges faced by this vulnerable population.

Table 6: Educational needs in IDP camps

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Are school aged children attending school	Yes	66	27.5
	No	174	72.5
why are children not going to school	There is no school	138	57.5
	There are no teachers	80	33.3
	There are no school materials	12	5.0
	The community is afraid of taking children to school	10	4.2
greatest needs for education	To establish learning spaces and or repair classrooms	133	55.4
	provide teaching and Learning materials	99	41.3
	deploy teachers to facilitate teaching	3	1.3
	Ask the parents to send the children to school	5	2.1
	Total		240

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The data reveals a substantial educational gap, particularly for school-aged children within the camps, as

highlighted by the majority of respondents, comprising 72.5%, who confirmed that these children are not currently attending school. This concerning situation can be attributed to several factors, as outlined by the respondents. A staggering 57.5% of them indicated that the absence of schools is a significant barrier to education within the IDP camps. Additionally, 33.3% reported that even in cases where schools are present, the lack of qualified teachers poses a considerable obstacle to effective learning. This dual challenge of inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of qualified educators underscores the urgent need for comprehensive interventions in the educational domain within the IDP camps.

To address these issues, the respondents emphasized the importance of establishing learning spaces or repairing existing classrooms, with 55.4% expressing this as a critical requirement. The dilapidated state of current educational facilities in the IDP camps is a clear impediment to providing a conducive learning environment. Moreover, 41.3% of respondents stressed the necessity of providing teaching and learning materials. This underscores the need for resources such as textbooks, writing materials, and other educational tools to enhance the quality of education within the IDP camps. In light of these findings, it is evident that immediate and targeted efforts are required to address the educational needs of those living in IDP camps. The establishment of schools, recruitment of qualified teachers, and the provision of necessary infrastructure and materials are essential steps towards ensuring that the right to education is upheld for all in IDP camps in the area.

### Food Needs in IDP Camps

Table 7 shows the share of affirmative responses relating to each question in order to evaluate the sequence of severity of food needs in the IDP camps in the state.

Table 7: Food security status of IDPs

S/N	HFIAS Items	No		Rarely		Sometimes		Often	
		F	%	f	%	F	%	F	%
1	Worry about food	0	0.0	48	20	80	33.3	112	46.7
2	Unable to eat preferred food	11	4.6	48	20	96	40.0	96	40.0
3	Eat just few kinds of food	2	0.8	48	20	70	29.2	122	50.8
4	Eat foods they really do not want to eat	5	2.1	30	12.5	73	30.4	137	57.1
5	Eat a smaller meal	0	0.0	54	22.5	89	37.1	97	40.4
6	Eat fewer meals in a day	0	0.0	108	45.0	66	27.5	66	27.5
7	No food of any kind in the household	1	0.4	72	30.0	96	40.0	72	30.0
8	Go to sleep hungry	0	0.0	54	22.5	104	43.3	82	34.2
9	Go a whole day and night without eating	8	3.3	66	27.5	67	27.9	107	44.6

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The findings from the survey highlight a distressing reality for a significant portion of the sampled population, shedding light on the severe challenges they face in terms of food security and basic nutritional needs. The highest share, encompassing a staggering 100% of the surveyed individuals, expressed deep concerns about food, reporting instances of consuming smaller meals, reducing the frequency of meals, and going to bed hungry.

This stark revelation underscores the pervasive nature of food-related anxieties and inadequacies within this demographic.

Close on the heels of this worrisome trend, a substantial 94% of respondents indicated that they had experienced a situation where there was 'no food of any kind in the house.' This distressing statistic highlights a critical issue of food scarcity that significantly impacts the daily lives and well-being of a significant portion of the surveyed population.

Furthermore, a noteworthy 95% of the respondents disclosed that they often find themselves compelled to eat any available food, regardless of personal preferences or nutritional value. This compromise in dietary choices emphasizes the urgency of addressing not only the quantity but also the quality of food available to the population in question. Disturbingly, the data reveals that the struggle for sustenance extends to sleep patterns, with 100% of the respondents admitting to going to bed hungry. Additionally, a substantial 92% reported the harrowing experience of going an entire day and night without consuming any food (See Fig. 2). These occurrences predominantly coincide with periods of food scarcity in the households, underscoring the direct link between food availability and the daily sustenance of the surveyed population.

This comprehensive picture of food insecurity, inadequate nutrition, and the associated struggles for this population underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and comprehensive policies to address the root causes of these challenges and ensure access to sufficient, nutritious food for all members of the community.

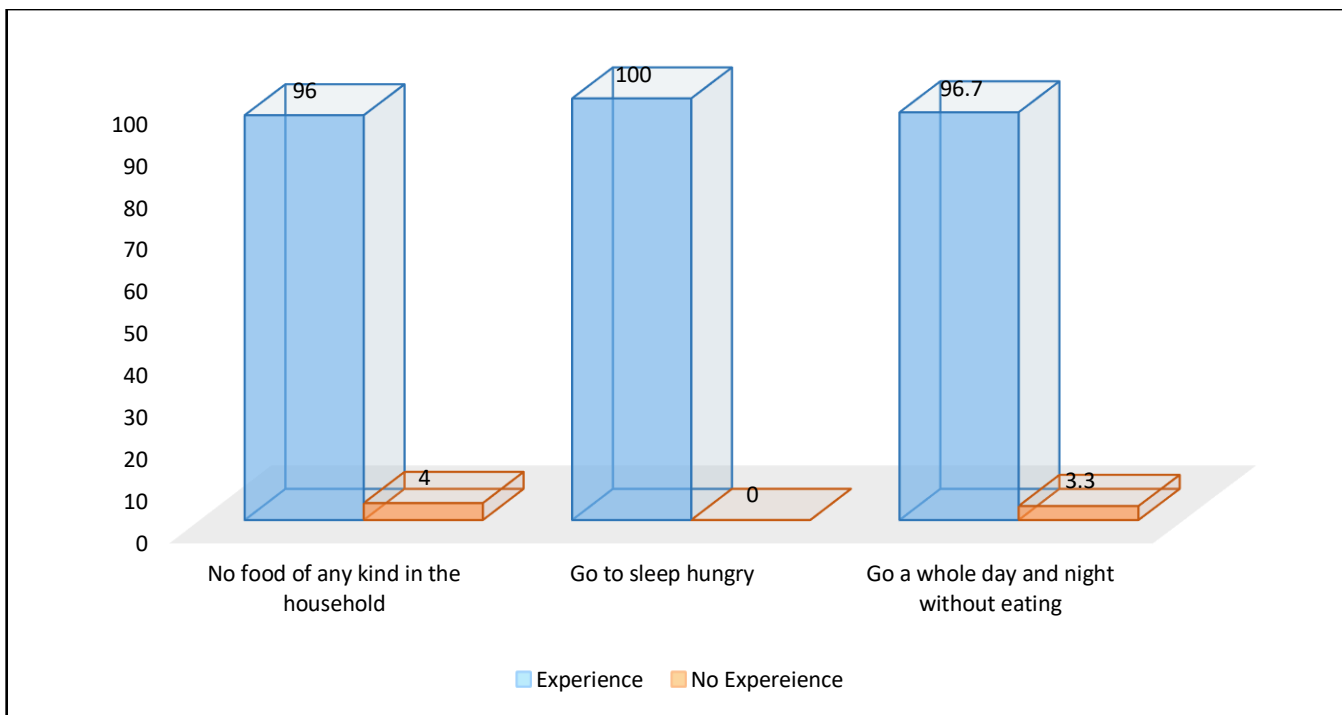


Fig. 2: Food security status of IDPs in Benue State

Figure 2 shows that the responses to each of the last 3 questions indicating 99.6% had no food of any kind in the household, 100% indicated that they had nothing to eat, followed by those who went to bed hungry represented by 97.3%. These three conditions as indicated by the respondents either occurred sometimes or often. For the situation of “no food of any kind in the house occurred sometimes (40%) or often (30%). “Go to sleep hungry” occurred sometimes (43.3%) or often (33.3%) while, “go a whole day and night without eating occurred sometimes (27.9%) or often (44.6%). On the whole, the IDPs who are food insecure in terms of access to quantity and quality food supply. This echoes the conclusions drawn by Hammond (2018) on forced migration and hunger. Hammond posits that the factors compelling farmers to move not only disrupt their ability to cultivate but also impede their access to food. The intricate relationship between forced migration and the compromised nutritional well-being of displaced populations is laid bare, as farmers find themselves unable to produce the sustenance necessary for survival or generate income to procure essential food items. This convergence of

challenges paints a distressing picture of the intertwined nature of displacement, food insecurity, and the pressing need for comprehensive interventions to address these multifaceted issues.

### WASH Needs in IDP Camps

The data presented in Table 8 underscores the alarming awareness among respondents regarding the imminent risk of water scarcity, with a staggering 95.4% affirming the presence of a significant threat in the upcoming months. The reliance on hand-dug wells (44.2%) and river/stream water sources (33.8%) reflects the limited options available to the affected population in securing their water supply.

Table 8: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Needs in the camps

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Risk of significant water scarcity in the next month			
	Yes	229	95.4
	No	11	4.6
Available source of water in the IDP camp			
	Protected hand dug well	42	17.5
	Unprotected hand dug well	106	44.2
	Stream/ river	81	33.8
	Surface water/ seasonal pond	6	2.5
	Piped water system	4	1.7
	Rain water tank	1	.4
Place people in the camp defecate			
	Bush	54	22.5
	Designated open areas	169	70.4
	Pit latrines	17	7.1
Evidence of faecal contamination in the following areas			
	Along the roads	103	42.9
	Along foot paths	45	18.8
	Near the water source	50	20.8
	Outside the house/ shelter	42	17.5
hygiene condition of adult women			
	Needs improvement	70	29.2
	Bad	121	77.6
hygiene condition of adult men			
	Needs improvement	67	27.9
	Bad	173	72.1



hygiene condition of young girls			
	Needs improvement	105	43.8
	Bad	135	56.3
hygiene condition of young boys			
	Needs improvement	59	24.6
	Bad	181	75.4

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

In terms of sanitation practices, 70.4% of individuals in the camp resort to open defecation in designated areas, while 22.5% choose the bush as their disposal site. While, 7.1% of internally displaced persons (IDPs) utilize pit latrines, emphasizing the inadequate sanitation infrastructure in the area. The evidence of faecal contamination is particularly disturbing, with 42.9% of contamination occurring along roads and 20.8% near water sources. These findings highlight the urgency of addressing not only water scarcity but also the prevailing sanitation challenges to mitigate the risk of waterborne diseases.

Furthermore, the hygiene conditions of the camp's inhabitants, broken down by gender and age groups, revealed that, 79.6% women face compromised hygiene, closely followed by men at 72.1%. Even more alarming is the situation for girls (56.3%) and boys (75.4%), signifying the vulnerability of the younger population to health risks associated with poor sanitation and water quality. The data highlights the critical need for immediate interventions to improve water access, enhance sanitation facilities, and elevate hygiene standards in the camp. Addressing these challenges is crucial not only for preventing waterborne diseases but also for safeguarding the overall health and well-being of the displaced population in IDP camps in the area.

### Shelter Needs in IDP Camps

Table 9 provides a comprehensive overview of the types of shelter available in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps within the region. Majority of the respondents, representing 57.5%, affirmed that the prevalent shelter in these camps predominantly consists of self-made or makeshift structures. This indicates a significant reliance on the resourcefulness and adaptability of the displaced population, highlighting their ability to create shelter using available materials in challenging circumstances.

Table 9: Shelter needs in the IDP camps

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self-made shelter/ makeshift	138	57.5
Tents	71	29.6
Community Buildings	25	10.4
Schools	6	2.5
Total	240	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Furthermore, the data from Table 9 indicate the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other entities in addressing the housing needs of the IDP community. About 29.6% of the respondents reported

that shelters and tents constructed by NGOs and various organizations are a prevalent form of accommodation in the IDP camps. This suggests a coordinated effort from external entities to provide more structured and possibly more durable housing solutions for the displaced population. The coexistence of self-made/makeshift shelters and NGO-constructed tents highlights the multifaceted nature of the shelter landscape in these IDP camps. While the resilience and initiative of the displaced individuals play a crucial role in addressing their immediate housing needs, the support and intervention of external organizations contribute to a more systematic and organized approach in providing shelter.

### Security Needs in IDP Camps

The information provided in Table 10 reveals the critical role of security provision in the identified Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps within the area. According to the data, local authorities and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) emerge as the primary security service providers, collectively accounting for 67.9% of the security coverage in these camps

Table 10: Security in the IDP camps

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
safety from crime and violence in this area			
	Local authorities	108	45.0
	CJTF	55	22.9
	Livestock guard	15	6.3
	Community leaders	52	21.7
	None	10	4.2
lighting in site or public places such as WASH facilities, pathways			
	There is adequate lighting at night	48	20.0
	No lighting	45	18.8
	Yes there is but is not adequate	125	52.1
	others	22	9.2

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Examining the security infrastructure within the camps, it is noteworthy that lighting around essential facilities plays a pivotal role in enhancing safety, with 52.1% of the respondents reporting its availability. Adequate lighting is crucial for various reasons, such as deterring criminal activities, ensuring the well-being of residents, and facilitating emergency response efforts during night-time.

However, the data also reveals a concerning aspect, as 20% of the camps report inadequacies in their security infrastructure. This raises alarms about the vulnerability of these camps and the potential risks faced by the displaced population residing within them. Insufficient security measures could expose residents to various

threats, compromising their safety and well-being.

Addressing the inadequacy in security infrastructure becomes imperative to create a more secure living environment for the displaced individuals. This might involve increased collaboration between local authorities, the CJTF, and other relevant stakeholders to bolster security measures. Additionally, there should be a concerted effort to address the specific challenges contributing to the perceived inadequacy, whether they be financial constraints, resource limitations, or other factors hindering the implementation of robust security measures.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of the humanitarian crises within Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Benue State, Nigeria unveils a distressing reality marked by persistent conflict, forced displacement, and dire living conditions. The intricate web of challenges faced by this vulnerable population demands immediate attention and concerted efforts from local authorities, humanitarian organizations, and the international community. The findings underscore the urgent need for multifaceted interventions that go beyond short-term relief efforts. The pervasive impact of conflict on displacement has not only disrupted lives but has also heightened vulnerabilities, exposing IDPs to various risks. The inadequacy of living conditions, as evidenced by the lack of shelter, clean water, and sanitation facilities, exacerbates the plight of those already grappling with the consequences of displacement.

Of particular concern is the alarming state of food insecurity among the IDPs, as revealed by the comprehensive analysis. The high percentages of respondents experiencing the absence of food, going without meals, and enduring hunger paint a bleak picture of the nutritional challenges faced by this population. Addressing these issues requires not only immediate food assistance but also sustainable strategies to enhance food security within the camps. As we navigate the path forward, it is imperative to recognize the collaborative nature of effective response. Coordinated efforts between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners are crucial to implementing comprehensive solutions. Addressing the humanitarian crises in IDP camps necessitates not only emergency relief measures but also long-term strategies for conflict resolution, infrastructure development, and community empowerment.

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