



GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP) CAMPS IN PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT

The aged, women and children represent the bulk of the inhabitants in many Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Plateau State, Nigeria. Even though women constitute the majority population in these camps, they rarely play any administrative or authoritative roles within the camps. As such, many gender-sensitive issues about women are being overlooked or ignored in the setup and running of these facilities. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study sets out to analyze the administration of three IDP camps in Plateau State to investigate the gender considerations in the administrative setup and overall running of these camps as well as how these considerations can be mainstreamed to meet the objectives of the camps. This study was able to establish that women are hardly involved in the running or administration of the IDP camps under investigation. In the few instances where they are, they were mere figureheads with no real power to make decisions and effect change. This negates the planning process and expectations. The patriarchal structure of the traditional society seems to impede the potential that gender considerations could add to the structure, design and efficacy of IDP camps. The study therefore based on empirical evidence highlighted the need to mainstream gender considerations in the administration, structure and design of IDP camps.

Keywords: IDPs, Women, Gender considerations, Administration, Plateau State

INTRODUCTION

Internal displacement is a global phenomenon that has ravaged societies for ages. Whether it happens from natural disasters, environmental degradation, political fiat or conflict, forced displacement is a tragedy for all who experience it. This has necessitated diverse multidimensional approaches at every level to manage bouts of displacements that occur whether internally or externally. The management of displaced persons has been a focal point and has taken precedence over other rebuilding, restructuring and reintegrating processes or initiatives in contemporary international discourse.

Nigeria has witnessed diverse disasters, from floods, drought, and desertification, to several reoccurring conflicts such as Boko haram, farmer/herders, banditry and ethno-religious clashes.



These disasters have collectively desolated entire settlements, communities, villages, towns and cities leading to the displacement of millions from their homes, livelihoods and ancestral roots (Gencianos, 2022; Adewale, 2016). Internal displacements are always a major concern at the onset and aftermath of every conflict for all the stakeholders involved (government, humanitarian agencies, civil society organisations amongst others). Displaced communities encounter a range of challenges and insecurities as they face a whole new milieu where their old, familiar systems of social protection are gone due to forced evacuation. Regaining access to traditional livelihoods is often difficult in situations of forced migration. This is true for some Plateau communities facing intermittent violent conflicts; many of whom have now settled permanently in areas that are quite far removed from their original settlements or sources of livelihood (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center [IDMC], 2021). Several others have also fled violence and terrorism from the North-Eastern regions of Nigeria to Plateau State as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (Global Internally Displaced Persons [IDPs], 2005).

Men, children and women are affected differently during humanitarian disasters. For instance, men suffer more fatalities as they make up most front liners (whether as soldiers, emergency responders or even targets). Women (and children), on the other hand, constitute the majority of the victims in armed conflicts, civil unrest, or natural disasters. These often leave them without basic needs or facilities, making them susceptible and exposing them to all sorts of violence and sexual exploitation. As such most IDPs have a high concentration of women and girls seeking refuge (Ajayi, 2020; IDMC, 2023). However, the patriarchal structuring and domination of leadership roles have led to the disregard of many gender-sensitive issues in these camps like hygiene, sanitation, lack of privacy, sexual exploitation and many such grievances (Amodu et al, 2021; Enwereji, 2016). These issues could easily be avoided or minimized if women were involved in the initial setup, administrative process and day-to-day decision-making processes of the camps. This has grossly hampered the achievement of certain germane objectives that originally necessitated the setting up of such camps. Personal, gender and collective human security is therefore being comprised in such situations.

The paper is thus poised to carefully examine the implications and mainstreaming of gender considerations on IDP administration in Plateau State. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative instruments via Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KII), and other secondary sources from journals, books, databases, websites and reports to collect data. The study covered IDP camps (one each) in Riyom, Jos South and Barkin-Ladi Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Plateau State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The United Nations describes IDPs as a group of persons who have been forced to flee their place of residence either to avoid or because of armed conflict, generalized violence, abuse of human rights, natural or man-made disasters and who have not crossed internationally recognized borders (Macklin 2008). IDPs are persons who have remained within the borders of their countries when faced with a man-made or natural disaster. This peculiarity makes them different from refugees despite other shared characteristics such as loss of livelihood, loved ones and access to basic social or physical amenities prior to displacement. Notably, refugees usually enjoy the protection from



international agreements and frameworks which provide them with special entitlements. IDPs on the other hand, depend on their national governments for protection, welfare and to safeguard their rights (Rajbangshi et al, 2022, p. 269). Tajudeen and Adebayo (2013) and Weiss (2003) make this distinction, while outlining the specific international laws, conventions and other additional protocols reserved for refugees, they note that no specific international legislation is devoted to IDPs. This according to Macklin (2008) may justify the unwillingness and inability of states to respond effectively to the varied challenges IDPs constitute.

However, the UN has a guiding principle for IDPs which lists several points in relation to displaced women and girls both directly and indirectly. Macklin (2008, pp. 24-25) highlights some of these principles to include:

- “Equality and non-discrimination among IDPs in the application of the guiding principles; equality not violated by differential protection and assistance to vulnerable groups (including pregnant women, mothers with young children and women head of households”) [Principle 4].
- “Right to dignity and physical, mental and moral integrity, including protection against gender-based violence, forced prostitution, indecent assault, slavery, sale into marriage, acts of violence intended to spread terror” [Principle 11].
- “Special attention to the health needs of women including access to female healthcare providers and services (and) reproductive healthcare, and appropriate counselling for victims of sexual and other abuses” [Principle 19.2], and “to the prevention of communicable diseases, including the HIV” [Principle 19.3].
- “Special efforts to enable women and girls to exercise their rights to educational and training programs and facilities as soon as conditions permit” [Principle 23].

The guiding principles also acknowledge that certain groups of IDPs may require specific attention. These constitute “unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, female heads of household, persons with disabilities and elderly persons (Tajudeen & Adebayo, 2013, p.7).”

According to the IDMC (2019), between January to December of 2018, the sub-Saharan region experienced 7.4 million displacements which is more than any other region of the world. In Nigeria alone, the IDMC’s Global Report on Internal Displacements [GRID] reported that within the same timeframe over “541,000 displacements” were caused by conflict and violence while flooding added a further “600,000 new displacements” to the list (IDMC, 2019, p. 18). The GRID report also stated that out of these, only 311,000 are reported to have returned to their homes meaning that a lot more had been left displaced. A 2021 report by the IDMC puts the number of displaced persons in Nigeria at 3,228,000 of which 107,000 were staying in IDP camps across the country (IDMC, 2022a). Another report by the IDMC highlights that between 2008-2021, over 6.1 million Nigerians have been displaced by natural disasters (especially floods and storms) while over 4.4 million have been displaced by conflict within the same time frame (IDMC, 2022b).

In Nigeria, between 2009 to 2016 over “79 percent” of the “2.5 million” people displaced by the Boko Haram conflicts in North-East were women and children (Ajayi, 2020, p. 174). This was



further confirmed by Iweze (2022, p. 1) stating that the Boko Haram conflict has been responsible for the highest level of displacement in Nigeria caused by violence with over “2 million” people displaced and have been resettled in 22 IDP camps in other North-Eastern states and the others resettled in camps in Plateau State and Abuja. Nigeria is said to have the highest number of displaced persons in Africa and is followed only by Syria and Colombia in the world (Vigaud-Walsh as cited in Iweze, 2022).

Women and children constitute the majority of the internally displaced and thus the most prevalent in IDP camps. In 2019, women represented more than half of the global displacement which was estimated at 50.8 million (Rajbangshi et al, 2022, p. 269). Studies have shown that women bear the brunt of these displacements. This is owing already to the unequal and disadvantaged status that the traditional society places on women in an otherwise peaceful setting (before crisis and corresponding displacement) (Ajayi, 2020). According to the UN 2002 report on “women, peace and security” these women already come from a culture of violence and discrimination which only becomes further exacerbated by conflict and displacement (United Nations Security Council [UNSC], 2002a). Logie and Daniel (2016) similarly observed that because of these patriarchal norms, internally displaced women are vulnerable to violence even from intimate partners. They argued that these gendered power relations are often showcased in IDP camps through physical and sexual abuse against women. This is often accentuated by the silence culture over such ‘taboo’ and ‘shameful’ issues which often never get discussed or made public. As such, women continue to suffer these issues in silence. Killion et al. (2018) made similar assertions with regards to displaced women and older teenage girls in Haiti where they shared experiences of increased gender-based violence which they also attributed to cultural gendered narratives.

Displacements presents women with vulnerabilities that render them insecure from several natural and man-made vices as they grapple with the realities they are faced with as IDPs. These IDP camps are characterized by deplorable living conditions such as inadequate basic infrastructure, unavailability of safe drinking water, poor sanitations, food shortages, poor toilet conditions and the spread of diseases among many others (Ekoh et al., 2022). Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2020) cited a lack of privacy as one of the challenges prevailing on women and girls in IDP camps.

This is why the “landmark resolution on women, peace and security” (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women [OSAGI], 2000) adopted by the United Nations Resolution 1325 is particularly very important in mainstreaming the role that women play today especially in post-conflict situations. The resolution states the

Important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from



gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. (OSAGI, 2004, para. 1)

In addition to the implementation of Resolution 1325, several recommendations were made that included keen attention to gender perspectives at the field level in humanitarian responses. This entailed utilizing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a guiding framework in responding to post-conflict situations, analyzing the obstacles to increased women representation in humanitarian responses and developing recruitment strategies aimed at increasing the number of women in decision-making positions (OSAGI, 2004). The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well in their regional action plan set out modalities for the implementation of Resolution 1325 which they adopted on the 14th of September 2010 in Dakar, Senegal (*Regional Action Plan: ECOWAS*, 2019, para. 1). One of the key pillars adopted by the ECOWAS action plan was the protection of women and girls against sexual and gender-based violence during and post-conflict aiming to create and strengthen existing measures to punish perpetrators (para. 4).

Nigeria is a signatory to many of these UN resolutions and several other conventions that border around human rights and displacement. For instance, Nigeria is a signatory to the Kampala convention which specifically outlines that IDPs especially pregnant women, children, and old and disabled people should be provided with adequate humanitarian assistance such as food, water, shelter, medical care, sanitation, education and other social services (Adewale, 2016). Adewale goes on to state that all these humanitarian rights are guaranteed under the Nigerian constitution for everyone who has been displaced within the country.

Challenges of Women and Girls in IDP Camps

Dybdahl and Pasagic (2007) argue that nearly all displaced women have suffered the loss of a loved one, suffered violence and are experiencing mental health impairment. These have opened them up to more vulnerabilities and challenges. “During conflict, women and girls are vulnerable to all forms of violence (particularly sexual violence and exploitation), including torture, rape, mass rape, forced pregnancy, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution and trafficking” (UNSC, 2002a, p. 1). Some of these acts were even meted out by those responsible for the protection of these women and other male IDPs. According to the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women [OSAGI] (2004), a lot of women and girls in IDP camps have become victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Their security is continually threatened by the administrative and security ecosystem that subsists in the IDP camps. Many of these violations and abuses of the rights of women have gone unreported and undocumented (Global IDP Council [Norwegian Refugee Council], 2005). Other forms of gender-based violence include all forms of discrimination against women and girls that have the potential to limit or withhold their rights and freedoms relative to men.

Most disturbing is that these cases of violence against women during displacement and while in IDP camps often remain unreported or underreported (Ajayi, 2020). Ajayi further asserts that the violence is not restricted to unmarried or young girls but even displaced married women living with their husbands also face bouts of domestic violence. This can be attributed to the frustration



the man experiences from being unable to provide for his family and a relative self-perception of his fading masculinity. Displaced women are equally susceptible to unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions, violence and sexually transmitted infections because of rape or survival sex (Rajbangshi et al., 2022; Ajayi, 2020). Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2020) also made a similar assertion stating that there are some scenarios where women in IDP camps were subjected to prostitution and sex for food often accusing “male security agents, camp officials and male IDPs” as culprits.

For Musa and Hamid (2010) this justifies the display of non-psychotic psychiatric symptoms by women in IDP camps. In their study of displaced women in the Darfur region, they discovered that 72 per cent of women in their sample study had cases of non-psychotic psychiatry. They proposed that the living conditions in these camps be improved, and done to ensure adequate security. Furthermore, they note that female inhabitants were more akin to higher somatic symptoms compared to men in the three IDP camps studied. Similarly, a study on IDP camps in the northeast of Nigeria reported that many women suffer from mental health challenges like PTSD and are more likely to descend into depression (Ajayi, 2020). According to Dhillon (2021, para. 3), there are an estimated "14.4 million IDPs" living with PTSD and depression as of 2021 owing to "exposure to traumatic events, food insecurity, and the length of displacement".

Many of the IDPs have lost their livelihood making them dependent on the goodwill of camp officials and donors. Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2020) state that unemployment was one of the biggest challenges IDPs are faced with. People displaced from smaller towns or villages, often gravitate towards cities, especially state capitals further exacerbating their plight in trying to find a means of sustenance whilst in displacement. This impedes the possibility of achieving durable solutions and increases the risk of them becoming trapped in protracted, repeated or cyclical displacements (IDMC, 2018, p. 2). Women and children are affected most as they lack the skills to compete in such environments limiting them to mostly hawking or selling goods in the markets, cleaning and other menial jobs to survive (IDMC, 2021; Desai, 2018). This expands the plethora of challenges when it comes to accessing food for themselves and their children. Adewale (2016) pointed out that women in IDP camps do not usually receive their share of food items that have been donated or distributed. He pointed out that male criminals would usually overpower the women leaving them with nothing as was the case in Durumi camp in the capital city of Abuja, Nigeria.

Ajayi (2020) noted that there was also an overwhelming reliance on humanitarian aid. From her study, female representatives in IDP camps in the North-East of Nigeria explained that the food they received was barely enough to sustain and usually involved long delays between supplies. This is partly due to endemic corruption in the distribution process. These challenges impede the basic nutrition of a lot of displaced women and children. Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2020) further cited several cases of corruption by the Presidential Initiative for the North East [PINE]. PINE was accused of unaccountability for \$7.9 million budgeted for IDPs; the claim of unitizing \$646,000 for cutting weeds around IDP camps; giving \$318,000 to NGOs to organize conferences; spending \$372,000 on building temporary shelters which were never found amongst many other accusations of corruption (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020: 1483).

Education for children, especially the girl child has also been impacted negatively. Okeke-Ihejirika et al.'s (2020) research confirms this stating that some IDPs expressed frustrations of lacking access



to basic amenities like education, especially for their children in the IDP camps. They also alluded to the financial constraints which further limit their ability to access education for their wards outside the camps (IDMC, 2021).

Even though IDPs are susceptible to numerous health challenges in IDP camps, women have more peculiar health challenges, particularly about sexual health owing to bad sanitation, toilet facilities and waste disposal. During menstrual periods, women are likely to use unhygienic materials because of a lack of access to suitable sanitary pads (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020). Amodu et al. (2021) argue that humanitarian responses from both governmental and non-governmental bodies often neglect the needs of displaced women bordering on access to health services, especially reproductive health. They note a lack of synergy between governments and the funds released with actual implementation in a way that will benefit displaced women, especially at the level of primary health care centres. Rajbangshi et al. (2022, p. 268) asserted that “internally displaced women are under-served by health schemes and policies”. Ajayi’s (2020) contribution to this assertion avers that because of limited access to reproductive health and medical care, women are exposed to fistula.

Interrogating the access to health services for IDPs in the Lake Chad Basin, Oginni et al. (2021) assert that communities in the region (part of North-Eastern Nigeria) had pre-existing health services challenges like inadequate facilities and professionals, which was only worsened by the displacements. A lot of IDPs also faced resettlement issues due to delayed reconstruction and the absence of structures (Ekoh et al., 2022). This meant extending their stay longer in these camps. However, many were afraid to return home because of pervading insecurity (Global IDP Council [Norwegian Refugee Council], 2005). Ekoh et al. (2022) citing several sources declares that there is no existing policy framework for the resettlement of IDPs in Nigeria and therefore the reason behind the lack of coordination when it comes to the issue of resettlement of IDPs.

Ajayi (2020) noted the challenges to include the inconsistencies in policy and humanitarian responses to the plight of IDPs in camps which has rendered these women powerless in their unfortunate realities. She also notes that the humanitarian aids received always seem insufficient to the needs. Rajbangshi et al. (2022) argue that there is generally inadequate legislation in countries covering the peculiarities of displaced persons leaving the IDPs more vulnerable. Enwereji (2008) pointed out that in Nigeria, the government and other stakeholders have failed to create the structures to fully cater to the needs of IDPs, hence portraying a lack of support. He found that the IDPs on an ad hoc basis receive food, clothing and money from non-state organizations.

It has become very imperative for IDP camps to have at its core the protection and the promotion of the human rights of women and girls (OSAGI, 2004) from all possible insecurities that can be experienced in these IDP camps. The right structures must be put in place in camps to monitor and respond to cases of discrimination, abuse and violence against women and girls (UNSC, 2002b).

Gender Mainstreaming in Policy Making

Since the inception of the UN Resolution 1325, many member countries have devised structures and strategies to improve gender balance and the representation of women in both civilian and



uniformed services as well as in the furtherance of peace and security pre-, during and post-conflict. Resolution 1325 has asked all stakeholders to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, especially considering the needs of women and girls in the design process (UNSC, 2002b). The resolution also goes on to state that the varying experiences and contributions of women (and men) should be harnessed in the planning and implementation process. It is also imperative that displaced women should be placed in decision-making positions, and they should be involved in the camp design and management. The UNSC report suggested that all these should be complemented with adequate skills-building and support for these women which is a prerequisite to their success in contributing significantly to the process. Training on gender issues has become imperative in all sectors and sections of peace and security for men as well as women (UNSC, 2002b).

It is particularly important that women should participate in the decision-making process in the matters that concern them after displacement (UNSC, 2002a). The UN IDP guiding principle highlights that governmental authorities and other stakeholders need to “recognize and respect women agency” (Macklin, 2008, p. 25). "Principle 3(d) advises authorities to involve women in the planning and implementation of relocation" and Principle 18.3 also advises the authorities to "make special efforts to ensure women's participation in the planning and distribution of food, shelter, clothing and medicine" (Macklin, 2008, p. 25). Macklin argues that institutionalizing the participation of women in these processes will help in mainstreaming the displacement, relocation and camp design processes as they impact the security of women. She believes that involving women will greatly decrease the risk of male relief workers, security personnel and IDPs using basic supplies to exploit female IDPs because of unequal access during distribution.

It is also observed that displaced women in conflict-ridden areas can experience empowerment as leadership opportunities emerge for them in these new communities. This allows women to challenge stereotypes and act against socio-economic oppression instituted against them over time (Roe, 1992). Consequently, it was discovered that IDP camps that embraced democratic systems, demonstrated more inclusivity, with women leaders duly elected to represent the interests of women in the camps (Okeke-Ihejirika et al, 2020, p.1486).

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN IDP CAMPS IN PLATEAU STATE

Plateau state has experienced several internal displacements either by intermitted ethno-religious conflicts across the state, terrorist attacks (bandits/herdsmen) or natural disasters like floods. Yet, it has also served as a refuge or haven for IDPs escaping disasters from other parts of the country. Data shows that in 2021, 77,000 persons have been confirmed IDPs in Plateau State of which communal violence within Jos accounts for 12,000 of these. Barkin Ladi, Riyom and Jos South LGAs, collectively accounted for about 38,051 IDPs in 2019, spread across 31 camps in the state. In Jos South LGA, there were a total of 9,661 IDPs in Geoscience Camps A and B, while in Riyom LGA, a total of 2,772 persons were distributed in four camps.” Government presence was notably absent in the running, security and management of the camps.

Structure of IDP Camps Administration in Plateau State



Quantitative Analysis from the data gathered at Stefanos Foundation in Jos South LGA revealed, 76% of the respondents strongly agreed that gender considerations were factored into the design process and operations of the IDP camps, while 20% agreed that the camp organization considered gender in the design process and operation of the camp, only 4% of respondents were undecided. Further analysis of the data shows that there are three males and four females who managed the camp. From observation, the priority given to women in the leadership structure of the camp may be responsible for the gender considerations that were effectively implemented as well as the camp being supervised directly by the Non-Governmental Organization that established it. This demonstrated that beyond the supervision of the camp by the foundation, the possibility of effective administration of the camp is very high with women at the helm of affairs. This also served to confirm the assertions that, women and children make up most of the displaced persons in camps and that they understand the needs of children particularly the girl child more than their male counterparts.

In Riyom LGA however, 32% of respondents strongly agreed that gender consideration was not demonstrated in the design structure and operation of the displaced persons camp, while 11% agreed same, majority of the percentage which is 51% are undecided. Further analysis of the pattern of responses by the Riyom IDPs showed there was an expected pattern for the submission of the female gender to the male authority as was observed not only in the Riyom camp but also the other camps as will be highlighted below. For instance, despite having two women and five men that administer the IDP camps, women were marginalized in terms of managing displacement to which they constituted the majority. A respondent (Respondent A, personal communication, July 24, 2019) confirmed “our men are the ones providing for us, sometimes they go out and do paid jobs for our feeding and many at times when individuals and other non-state actors brings intervention, it is our men that collect them and allocate some to the affected victims”. Another respondent (Respondent B, personal communication, July 24, 2019) added that “our job as women is to see to the cooking and taking care of our children”.

In Geoscience IDP camp, there are five women and four men in the leadership structure. However, the women do not feel empowered to exercise authority in the critical decisions on resource mobilization and allocation. They attributed this largely to the government absence in the camp. Hence, their reliance on the men. This was corroborated by one of the camp administrators, he noted that the camp solely depended on personal efforts, donations from individuals and other non-state actors. Interestingly, all the male administrators in the camp are not displaced persons, although, they negotiated for the Geoscience building to host the displaced persons and they are also partly saddled with the responsibility of providing for the needs of the victims. During one of the focus group discussions, the camp administrative officer of Geoscience, told the research team that most times, they used their personal incomes to provide essentials for the camp. This invariably justified their leadership and decision making positions except for errand and cooking roles assigned to the women. It was also noted that, restrictions were put in place that denied men access to the women area from 6pm daily. This was in efforts to minimize the risk of sexual and gender-based violence in the camp.



On gender consideration in the design process of the structure and camps administration, the data analyzed from the questionnaire indicates that women were not adequately considered in the design structure of most of the IDP camps. However, in terms of administration, women constituted the highest number of the camp administration. This was further corroborated by the interview with one of the camp administrators in Geoscience, who confirmed women as the majority administrators in Geoscience IDP camp (constituting five out of nine). Although women are the majority of camp administrators, one of the respondents from the focus group section admitted that numerical majority in administration was merely ceremonial, as the men are the decision-makers. She further noted that female camp administrators are merely the errand persons.

Generally, the data analyzed from the questionnaire indicated that there is little involvement of women in the decision and allocating processes in Riyom and Geoscience IDP camps. A respondent in Riyom stated that “our culture forbids women and children from taking critical decisions that involves men and women...as men equally double as heads of the families” (Respondent D, personal communication, July 26, 2019). Ironically, women comprise the highest number in the other camp administration of Geoscience at Vom Junction. However, they are restricted to purchasing, cooking and sanitary roles, but don’t wield relative power as men in critical decision making. In contrast, most male respondents considered themselves ‘decision makers’; this was corroborated by others, who identified men as the principal decision makers in their households. Women only took decisions in the absence or demise of their husbands. These limitations were argued to be foundational as the design process of the camps (except for Stefanos) were not gender sensitive from inception.

Gender consideration in the IDP administration of the study area negates the planning process. The IDPs camps were not properly planned in terms of structure and operation with gender sensitivity in mind. There were no provisions for toilets at the initial stage of preparing the camp to host the IDPs. In the camps, women where only few members of the camp administration from the inception, the number of women in some camps only increased after some male camp administrators resigned and some walked away.

INFLUENCE OF GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN IDP ADMINISTRATION IN PLATEAU STATE

As seen above, even where women constituted the majority of camp administrators, they did not feel the sense of involvement in critical decision-making. In another instance, women were not only under-represented in the administrative structure, but they appeared more confused and lacked the orientation of their roles in administering camp situations.

In Riyom particularly, women were not only under-represented in the camp administration, but the few submitted their roles solely to their men. This therefore has undermined their level of influence in the IDP administration. They have the feeling that male administrators know everything and can make better use of their position to influence any intervention or distribution of intervention coming to the camp.

Furthermore, the patriarchal structuring of African society has undermined the involvement of women in camp-like administration, more worrisome is, that the women do not feel any sense of



relegation as most of them were proud that their culture gave their male counterparts enormous power to decide on the overall welfare of women and the protection and upbringing of their children, especially the girl child. Going forward, there is a prospect in Stefanos Foundation, that women in the administrative cadre are largely represented and weigh serious influences on whatever happens in the camp, maybe this is one of the reasons why the camp is more organized and efficient in taking care of the displaced persons.

While women in Geosciences seem to understand the degree of influence they can wield on the male administrators, they were incapacitated by a lack of resources and opportunities to contribute materials or money to providing for some urgent needs, especially children and the aged. This lack of material resources coupled with the poor or inadequate attention to the displaced persons by state actors has further undermined the degree to which women could have influenced resource mobilization and allocation and to equally provided functional suggestions that could improve the overall condition of the displaced persons.

Data gathered showed that safe water is scarce in the camps. According to 65% of respondents, the primary source of water in the camps or communities is rainwater. This finding was confirmed in a focus group section and by qualitative discussions; respondents also stated that where water from wells is insufficient it can cause community conflict and it is time-consuming for women to stand in a queue (personal communication, July August 2, 2019).

From the data gathered, only 34% of respondents said that facilities for solid waste disposal were available in their camps/communities; a situation which increased the risk of preventable water-borne diseases. There have been cases of cholera outbreaks in the Riyom and geoscience sites and host communities surveyed.

On average, 34% of women, girls, boys and men interviewed said that they had access to latrines and bathing facilities. The conclusion is that a large percentage of the population in both sites and communities is practising open defecation; this was confirmed also in the focus group section. There is a lack of separate and well-lit latrines that are lockable from the inside for women and girls, especially in Riyom. About 38% of women and girls said that they did not have access to safe latrines, exposing them to the risk of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Over 90% of the respondents claimed that ensuring the availability of clean water for camp consumption was the role of women, meaning that the lack of WASH facilities falls most heavily on women. Access to menstrual hygiene products for women and girls is only partially being met. Among women and female respondents, 41 per cent did not have access to sanitary towels and indicated that these were not always included in non-food item packages.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN IDP ADMINISTRATION IN PLATEAU STATE

Gender mainstreaming can include but is not limited to the implementation of resolution 1325 of the United Nations resolution on gender and other relevant national legislation that deals essentially with women's involvement and active participation in the affairs that affect them directly such as displacement crisis. Secondly, by institutionalizing gender considerations through



supporting the implementation of the National Gender Policy and other key national policies. This can be achieved through engagement with the National Gender Coordination Forum.

Furthermore, state government can set up permanent crisis and emergency committees comprised of both male and female genders, so that in terms of humanitarian crises like displacement, women should be properly factored into the design process of the camp administration since they understand the problem of female gender than their male counterpart. Again, Plateau state should mainstream effective GBV referral systems in all programming, provide psychosocial support and implement prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse policies in the state. This should also include strategies for targeting men and boys for GBV and women's rights initiatives. The existence of this institutional framework can easily be deployed in managing camp like situations in terms of emergency or humanitarian disasters in IDP camps. State and non-state actors should use gender-appropriate public information and awareness-raising channels.

CONCLUSION

Gender consideration in the IDP administration has often negated the planning process. Of course, the study was designed to fill in the gap. In the course of the study, however, the researchers realized that the IDP camps understudied were not properly planned in terms of gendered structures and operations. There were no provisions for toilets at the initial stage of preparing the camp to host the internally displaced persons. In both camps, women were only a few members of the camp administration from the inception, the number of women in some camps only increased after some male camp administrators resigned and some walked away.

In one instance, where women are the majority of camp administrators, they did not feel a sense of involvement in critical decision-making. In another instance, women were not only grossly underrepresented in the administrative structure, but they appeared more confused and lacked the orientation of their roles in administering camp situations. Furthermore, the patriarchal structuring of the African society has undermined the involvement of women in camp-like administration. More worrisome is, that the women did not feel any sense of relegation as most of them were proud that their culture gave their male counterparts enormous powers to decide on the overall welfare of women and the protection and upbringing of their children, especially the girl child. Understanding their context however should not limit the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the design, structuring and running of the camps.

The study unravelled several ways in which gender consideration can be mainstreamed into the administration of IDP camps. This includes but is not limited to the implementation of resolution 1325 of the United Nations resolution on gender and other relevant national legislation that deals essentially with women's involvement and active participation in the affairs that affect them directly such as displacement crisis. Institutionalizing gender considerations through supporting the implementation of the National Gender Policy and other key national policies. This can be achieved through engagement with the National Gender Coordination Forum. As in the case of Plateau State, the state needs to do more in catering to the needs of IDPs and more importantly, the peculiar needs of women and children in IDP camps to ensure they are socially protected and enjoy the relevant human security and dignity displaced people deserve.



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