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# Internally Displaced Persons and Socioeconomic Wellbeing in North Central States of Nigeria

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***Abstract***

*This study explores the intricate relationship between internally displaced persons and the socioeconomic well-being of people in North Central Nigeria examining the detrimental impacts of these displacements and shedding light on the adverse socio-economic consequences stemming from these displacements was what motivated the researchers to embark on this study. The broad objective was to assess the effect of internal displacement on socioeconomic well-being in North central Nigeria. Its specific objectives were to evaluate the effect of destruction of properties on access to social amenities and to ascertain the effect of violence on access to healthcare services in North central Nigeria. The methodology adopted for the study was survey design on a population of 122,000 internally displaced persons, a sample of 360 was obtained using Bill Gordon sample size determination formula. A structured questionnaire was administered on the sample. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman's ranked correlation coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that, destruction of properties significantly affected access to social amenities of internally displaced persons (rho =0.940 sig = 0.01< 0.05) and that violence significantly affected access to healthcare services of internally displaced persons (rho= 0.893 sig = 0.01< 0.05). The study recommended that: Government should implement targeted livelihood support programs tailored to the specific needs of IDPs in North Central Nigeria. These programs could include skills training, vocational education; and there is need to conduct a thorough assessment to determine the specific health needs and challenges faced by internally displaced persons.*

***Keywords*****:** *Internally displaced, socioeconomic & wellbeing.*

## Introduction

The persistent level of social unrest and ethno-religious conflict are all recent problems that North Central people face which has increased number of Internally Displaced Persons in the region. Internally displaced persons IDPs as a concept is all encompassing as it includes displaced people from all works of life such as agro entrepreneurs, priest and religious leaders, medical practitioners, patients, teachers, students, businessmen, farmers, politicians, traders, aged people and children. Whenever attacks take place all the afore mentioned categories of people are affected in one way or the other as, they are victims who are displaced at homes, religious centres, businesses, workplaces and farms.

As rightly observed by UN (1998), individuals or groups compelled to leave their usual residences because of conflict, violence, natural disasters, or human rights violations are referred to as internally displaced persons (IDPs). IDPs are defined as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced

or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as well as workplaces, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border" by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. However, this is only a descriptive definition and does not grant IDPs a specific legal status. The definition of IDPs is widely recognized and guided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, established by the United Nations (UN) in 1998.

The indiscriminate attacks that have caused unrest in the North Central States of Nigeria have had far-reaching psychological and economic repercussions on internally displaced persons. For instance, the recent decrease in farm production has led to food security crises, increased numbers of internally displaced people in the area, decreased business activity in the area, and made life inhospitable for those who survived the attacks regarding nutrition, means of livelihood, healthcare, and education (Daniel, 2013). The majority of this violence is attributed to the government's inability to protect people and their property, unemployment, poverty, corruption, a significant income disparity between the rich and the poor, and social injustice, among other things.

Socioeconomic well-being of people is one of the sustainable developments goal, to comprehend the notion of socio-economic well-being, it is crucial to define well-being. Generally, well-being refers to a state of health, contentment, and potential prosperity, where individuals transition from unfavourable circumstances to favourable ones. Well-being also encompasses enhancements in people's way of life, including better education, increased incomes, improved nutrition, enhanced access to healthcare, and harmonious coexistence (Ortindi, 2021). This advancement stems from societal and economic shifts influenced by environmental and cultural factors. Thus, the process of attaining equilibrium between social and economic aspects within a society is termed socio-economic well-being. Evaluation involves life expectancy, literacy, and satisfactory housing (Okonjo-Iweala & Osafo-Kwaako, 2008).

The country's socioeconomic health depends on the tolerance of its various religious believers, and this need is still present now. Since there can be no genuine progress without peace, all levels of government should work together to reduce ethnic and religious tensions in the nation to the absolute minimum. The fact is that effective governance and accountability are sacred due to their positive effects on citizens' socioeconomic well-being. To comprehend the situation of internally displaced individuals in North Central Nigeria, it is widely acknowledged that socio-economic well-being is a multidimensional concept demanding evaluation across various indicators. The persistent level of social unrest and ethno-religious conflict are all recent problems that North Central people face which has increased number of IDPs in the region.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are individuals or groups who have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, natural disasters, or human rights violations, but remain within the borders of their own country. In North Central Nigeria, a region often plagued by inter-communal violence, insurgency, and resource conflicts, there has been a significant presence of IDPs.

The socioeconomic wellbeing of IDPs in North Central Nigeria is a multifaceted issue. Displacement often leads to the loss of livelihoods, disruption of education, and limited access to basic services such as healthcare, clean water, and sanitation. Additionally, IDPs may face discrimination, marginalization, and stigmatization, further exacerbating their vulnerability.

The North Central region, known for its agricultural potential, has seen many IDPs from rural areas, especially farmers and pastoralists, whose displacement disrupts not only their lives but also agricultural activities crucial for the region's economy.

Efforts to address the socioeconomic wellbeing of IDPs in North Central Nigeria require a comprehensive approach. This includes providing humanitarian assistance such as shelter, food, and healthcare, as well as facilitating durable solutions such as safe return, resettlement, or integration into host communities. Additionally, initiatives focusing on livelihood support, education, psychosocial support, and community reconciliation are essential for restoring stability and fostering resilience in the region.

### 1.2 Statement of the problem

In the past 10 years, several forms of displacements have occurred in North central Nigeria due to inability to properly manage ethnic and religious diversities. Internal displacements have led to various negative consequences for the displaced population resulting in the displacement of a significant portion of the population. This reoccurring problem has raised concerns about the overall socioeconomic well-being of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are often forced to leave their homes, workplaces, businesses and communities due to these conflicts that pose a multifaceted challenge that directly impacts the livelihoods, social cohesion, and overall well-being of the affected individuals and communities.

More worrisome is the fact that the North-Central states of Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa have at present experienced internal displacement that led to thousands of deaths as a result of attacks, triggering losses in properties, access to health care facilities, decent shelter, mal-nutrition and low quality of life that throw thousands into untold hardship and depression that has reduced their human dignity and socio-economic well- being.

However, researchers in the past never deemed it fit to examine how these displacements affect the socio-economic well-being of people in the region. It is against this backdrop that, this study intends to examine the effect of IDPs on socio-economic well-being in North Central Nigeria and suggest better ways of solving the menace and, if possible, eliminating the research gap by carrying out this study.

### 1.3 Objectives of the study

This research investigates internally displaced persons and the socio-economic well-being in North Central region of Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i) Ascertain the effect of the destruction of properties on access to social amenities by internally displaced persons.
ii) Determine the effect of violence on access to health care services by internally displaced persons in north-central Nigeria.

### 1.4 Research questions

From the preceding, the study will answer the following questions to enable the researchers to achieve the objectives of the study:

i) What is the effect of the destruction of properties on access to social amenities by internally displaced persons?
ii) What is the effect of violence on access to health care services of internally displaced persons in north central Nigeria?

## 2.0 Review of related literature

### 2.0.1. Internally displaced persons

Individuals or groups compelled to leave their usual residences because of conflict, violence, natural disasters, or human rights violations are referred to as internally displaced persons (IDPs). IDPs are defined as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border" by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. However, this is only a descriptive definition and does not grant IDPs a specific legal status. The definition of IDPs is widely recognized and guided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, established by the United Nations (UN) in 1998.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide a comprehensive framework for the protection and assistance of IDPs, emphasizing the responsibility of national authorities to ensure the well-being and rights of internally displaced populations. Additionally, several international organizations, including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), work to provide support and advocacy for IDPs worldwide. Overall, the definition of IDPs revolves around the notion of forced displacement within a country's borders due to various factors, requiring specific attention and protection to address their needs and rights.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) face inherent exposure to hardship and protection risks due to their enforced displacement, encompassing challenges like limited access to essential services, separation from family, violence against women and girls, trafficking, discrimination, and harassment. The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement strive to ensure that IDPs, as citizens or regular inhabitants of their nation, uphold the same rights and liberties enshrined in international and domestic law, considering their vulnerabilities and distinct needs. This encompasses the right to move freely and choose their residence. Moreover, IDPs retain the right to seek safety in different parts of their country or even seek asylum elsewhere. Notably, the critical components of the IDP definition involve involuntary movement within national boundaries.

IDPs are distinguishable from individuals who voluntarily leave their abode without compulsion and can remain securely in their residence. Likewise, IDPs differ from refugees as they have not crossed internationally recognized borders, eliminating the need for a distinct legal status due to their location

beyond their nation's protection. As elucidated, IDPs are entitled to the full rights and safeguards afforded to their homeland's citizens and other habitual inhabitants (UNHCR, 2022).

The term "internal displacement" (IDP) also refers to events that cause internal displacement, such as war, widespread violence, abuse of human rights, and natural or artificial calamities. The words "in particular" suggest this is not an exhaustive list. The statement "as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of" also acknowledges the possibility of internal displacement following or anticipating the repercussions of coercion. The IDP definition allows particular groups, such as indigenous communities or pastoralists, to be displaced because violence, landmines, or instability obstructed their migration routes. Although homeless people and members of underprivileged urban communities frequently face marginalization, deprivation, and human rights abuses where they live, these groups are not inherently regarded as IDPs.

Similarly, the IDP criteria do not include those who relocate for economic reasons. Irregular migrants or third-country nationals in situations similar to IDPs are entitled to protection and assistance under international humanitarian and human rights law. As already explained, refugees have a special legal status because they are outside their country of origin and thus without their country's protection.

Despite the lack of legal status, a person can be considered an IDP until s/he finds a durable solution, which is reached when the person's needs for assistance and protection are no longer directly related to their displacement, and they can exercise their human rights without facing any discrimination because of it. International humanitarian and development players are complementary in providing IDPs with long-term solutions, with national authorities bearing the primary duty. A durable solution is furthermore achieved when an individual is sustainably (re)integrated with i) an area where s/he has taken refuge (local settlement), ii) another area of her/his country (settlement elsewhere in the country), or iii) her/his place of origin (sustainable return).

### 2.0.2 Socio-economic well-being

To comprehend the notion of socio-economic well-being, it is crucial to define well-being. Generally, well-being refers to a state of health, contentment, and potential prosperity, where individuals transition from unfavourable circumstances to favourable ones. Well-being also encompasses enhancements in people's way of life, including better education, increased incomes, improved nutrition, enhanced access to healthcare, and harmonious coexistence (Ortindi, 2021). This advancement stems from societal and economic shifts influenced by environmental and cultural factors. Thus, the process of attaining equilibrium between social and economic aspects within a society is termed socio-economic well-being. Evaluation involves life expectancy, literacy, and satisfactory housing (Okonjo-Iweala & Osafo-Kwaako, 2008).

The country's socioeconomic health depends on the tolerance of its various religious believers, and this need is still present now. Since there can be no genuine progress without peace, all levels of government should work together to reduce ethnic and religious tensions in the nation to the absolute minimum. The fact is that effective governance and accountability are sacred due to their positive effects on citizens' socioeconomic well-being. To comprehend the situation of internally displaced individuals in North Central Nigeria, it is widely acknowledged that socio-economic well-being is a multidimensional concept demanding evaluation across various indicators. The United Nations Development Programme's human development index incorporates indicators like longevity, health, productivity in an equitable, sustainable context, and income level. An inclusive society, sustainable

livelihoods, employment prospects, primary service access, and education accessibility are crucial facets in tandem with personal development. The assessment of social exclusion, economic marginalization, and civic participation neglect encapsulates the three dimensions in the social exclusion index designed to measure the extent of inclusivity. Each dimension includes several metrics that show how persons living in camps for internally displaced people cannot access the labour market, healthcare, education, and social networks. Therefore, if a person cannot access at least the indicators mentioned earlier, they are considered socially excluded, meaning that to be considered socially included, they must have access to at least 4 of the dimensions mentioned earlier (Medygyesi et al., 2017).

The UNDP Deprivation Indices employ the concept of deprivation concerning small, remote, and inland communities rather than urban areas. This approach encompasses seven dimensions or spheres: income, employment, health, education, crime, access to services, and the living environment. The primary objective is to pinpoint unmet requirements within these aspects that result from the ethno-religious conflict in North Central Nigeria. Examples of recent determinants influencing socio-economic well-being encompass metrics such as the count of adults and children receiving income aid, unemployment rates, standardized health measures based on age and gender, rates of depression among adults under 60, the percentage of children leaving school after 16, housing overcrowding levels, and the prevalence of homicides.

Socioeconomic well-being also refers to the overall state of individuals and communities regarding their economic and social conditions. It encompasses income, employment, education, health, access to essential services, food security, social mobility, and overall quality of life. Socioeconomic well-being is crucial for individuals to meet their basic needs, achieve upward mobility, and live fulfilling lives, UNDP, (2021).

According to UNDP (2021), several key aspects contribute to socioeconomic well-being, which include:

i) Income and Employment: Adequate and stable employment are fundamental for socioeconomic well-being. A higher income allows individuals to afford necessities, access education and healthcare, and participate in economic and social activities. Employment opportunities provide financial stability, social integration, and a sense of purpose. High unemployment rates and low wages can hinder socioeconomic well-being.
ii) Education and Skills: Access to quality education and skills development are crucial for socioeconomic well-being. Education equips individuals with the knowledge, critical thinking abilities, and skills necessary to participate in the labour market, contribute to economic growth, and improve their social standing. Education also promotes social mobility and reduces income inequality.
iii) Health and Healthcare: Good health and access to healthcare services are vital components of socioeconomic well-being. Adequate healthcare ensures disease prevention, treatment, and management, allowing individuals to lead productive lives. Health disparities and lack of healthcare access can negatively impact individuals' socioeconomic outcomes.
iv) Social Protection: Social protection programs, such as social security, unemployment benefits, and healthcare coverage, contribute to socioeconomic well-being by providing a safety net during times of vulnerability. These programs mitigate the risks of poverty,

unemployment, and adverse life events, helping individuals maintain a basic standard of living and promoting social inclusion.

v) Infrastructure and Basic Services: Access to basic infrastructure, including transportation, water, sanitation, and electricity, is essential for socioeconomic well-being. Infrastructure development facilitates economic activities, enhances productivity, and improves the overall quality of life. Lack of access to essential services can hinder socioeconomic progress.

These measures are lacking in North Central Nigeria due to persistence ethno-religious conflicts, even where they were before, these conflicts have shattered virtually everything that is perceived to be of help to the communities by invaders who often destroy everything where ever the attack take place. It is expected that for quality of life of internally displaced persons in the region to be to be improved, attention must be given to the a fore mentioned indices of quality of life that transcends to socioeconomic well-being.

### 2.0.3 Destruction of properties and access to social amenities

It is expressly prohibited "to damage or seize the enemy's property unless such destruction or seizure is imperatively needed by the requirements of war," according to Article 23(g) of the 1907 Hague Regulations. The 1949 Geneva Convention IV's Article 53, on the other hand, states that any destruction of real or personal property by the occupying Power that private individuals individually or collectively own, the State, other public authorities, or social or cooperative organizations are forbidden unless military operations require such destruction. Idealistically, these serve as the global benchmark for property damage, but in North Central Nigeria, the opposite is the case.

Despite the large population displacements caused by pastoralist-farmer conflicts in North Central Nigeria, narratives on wars and population displacements in Nigeria unfairly concentrate on Boko Haram and the North East (Adewale,2016, Jacob; 2016; Eke, 2019; Ajodo- Adebanjoko. 2019; Ajayi, 2020). Academics have connected conflicts between farmers and herders to security issues in Nigeria, namely separatist activities (Lenshie et al., 2020; Chukwuma, 2020). The Nigerian government has disregarded scholars' analyses of the connection between herder-farmer conflicts and population displacement, despite studies connecting forced migration in the north-central to long-standing ethnic and religious tensions, bandit attacks, kidnapping, armed robberies, and herders' attacks (International Organization for Migration, 2021; 2022). Mbah and others (2012). North Nigerian ethnoreligious strife, as opines by Kellenber. Conflicts like these and property destruction jeopardised recent development advancements (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020). Fulani herders, who are nomadic cattle grazers but are infamous for their excessively militant actions in their host communities, and the Boko Haram group, which is made up of Islamic fundamentalist militants, are primarily responsible for the ongoing killing and destruction of property as a result of ethnic and religious clashes in Nigeria (Ngwoke & Ituma, 2020). According to estimations made throughout time by community leaders in the State, Benue State's governor, Ortom, "the insurgency has contributed to the deaths of approximately 120,000 persons over the years" (Tukur 2018:1). One would concur with the governor of Benue State's assertion that herdsmen are carrying genocide on people of Benue state.

On the other hand, access to social amenities is constrained when communities may be uprooted from their homes or have significant infrastructural damage during ethno-religious conflicts. Access to social amenities, including schools, hospitals, water and sanitation facilities, and transportation networks, may be hampered by this relocation and destruction. Infrastructure and services disruption:

During conflicts, infrastructure like roads, bridges, and electricity grids may sustain damage or even be destroyed. The provision of social amenities may be hampered by this interruption, making it difficult for people to access services like clean water, healthcare, and education, Lenshie et al., 2020).

Additionally, ethno-religious disputes frequently take money away from investments and social development. Governments and organizations may prioritise military spending or efforts to resolve conflicts, allocating fewer funds for enhancing social amenities. This diversion may worsen inequality and make receiving social services more difficult. Deep-seated divides and mistrust amongst communities can also result from ethnic and religious strife. This division may make it challenging to work together and cooperatively to provide social amenities. It can result in the construction of exclusive facilities for various racial or religious communities, escalating disparities and preventing access to high-quality services.

Rebuilding infrastructure, encouraging inclusivity, combating discrimination, and fostering trust and reconciliation are crucial steps in ensuring equitable access to education, healthcare, water and sanitation, and other social services for all communities affected by such conflicts. Addressing ethno-religious conflicts and promoting peacebuilding efforts are crucial in north-central Nigeria for improving access to social amenities. Additionally, it fosters a climate of dread and insecurity that makes it difficult for people to utilize social facilities. Because of the possibility of encountering violence or discrimination, some people may be reluctant to leave their homes or visit particular locations and, therefore, be unable to access essential services like healthcare, education, and transportation because of their fear of the unknown.

### 2.0.4 Violence and access to healthcare services

Several definitions of violence refer to using significant physical force, frequently accompanied by weapons, to coerce, threaten, or seriously damage another person to obtain their possessions or even their lives. Intentional use of physical force or power against oneself, another person, a group of people, or a community that results in or has a high potential of ending in injury, death, psychological distress, mal-development, or deprivation is referred to as violence by the World Health Organization. This indicates that any action, physical or otherwise, by an individual or organization that has the potential to hurt or impede the pursuits of others in life is prohibited. It also means that any behaviour on the part of people that could cause hurt or devastation to humans and their peaceful coexistence. Violence is a universal occurrence that occurs everywhere. It exists in different ways and takes different forms depending on the country. Recent times have seen severe instances of ethno-religious violence in North Central Nigeria; these violent acts include kidnapping, religious conflicts, communal conflicts, Boko Haram crises, militia conflicts, farmer herders' conflicts, and others that pose a threat to the region's ability to live in peace, (WHO, 2021).

Of course, there are different sorts of violence in North Central, but this research focuses on physical violence even though North Central has recently seen practically all the above-mentioned types. According to historical records, ethnic, religious, intertribal, and communal crises have resulted in violent incidents in the north-central region. It is a fact that there is some level of violence in practically every part of the nation, including Boko Haram, armed banditry, kidnapping, and violence between herders and farmers. This violence has resulted in thousands of deaths, millions of displaced people, the loss of property, and the collapse of regional economic activity, with North Central

Nigeria being the worst hit as it has increased the level of aggression and exacerbated the level of untold hardship of internally displaced persons, (UNHCR, 2022).

Ethno-religious conflicts have far-reaching effects and significant impacts on access to healthcare services in the following ways:

i) **Destruction of healthcare infrastructure**: Healthcare institutions, including hospitals, clinics, and health centers, may be purposefully targeted during conflicts or suffer security damage. Infrastructure destruction makes it difficult for people to receive necessary medical care because fewer healthcare providers are available in the impacted areas. On the other hand, internally displaced individuals lose their means of support and cannot cover their medical expenses when necessary. People in the north-central states have experienced this as their homes are frequently destroyed along with their agricultural output, leaving them in a terrible situation when meeting their financial commitments, including their inability to pay their medical expenses when necessary.

ii) **Disruption of healthcare delivery:** Conflicts between ethnic groups and religions frequently prevent healthcare systems from operating normally. Due to violence or insecurity, healthcare personnel may be forced to leave their facilities or cease operations. They may also be afraid to enter camps housing internally displaced people for fear of being attacked by herders or terrorists. Due to this interruption, access to healthcare services may be restricted due to a lack of medical staff, medical equipment and prescriptions, and the closure of healthcare institutions. This is particularly clear in the north-central states, where most primary healthcare facilities have been abandoned due to frequent attacks on the nearby villages. Due to this destruction, many medical professionals who flee such attacks must run for their lives.

iii) **Insecurity and fear:** People find it challenging to get healthcare services because of the fear and uncertainty that ethnic and religious disputes breed. Due to the possibility of violence, people may be reluctant to visit healthcare services. Medical care may not be as readily available in conflict-affected areas due to healthcare professionals' reluctance to deliver services there. This concern has resulted in a shortage of services, including immunization programs, as these services are typically only provided in urban areas, where they are most required. It is believed that such health workers will be provided with security personnel, but this expectation has proven to be a fantasy because the security personnel also flee when the marauding assailants invade.

iv) **Displacement and migration:** Communities are frequently displaced due to ethnoreligious disputes, which force individuals to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere. This displacement interrupts access to healthcare services because people may no longer have access to their regular healthcare providers or facilities. Even if they exist, their services are always skeletal, limiting access to health care services. Displacement camps or temporary settlements may also lack necessary healthcare infrastructure and resources, restricting access to medical care.

v) **Segregation and discrimination:** Conflicts between religions and races can result in segregation and prejudice. Different groups may have unequal access to healthcare services due to discrimination or a lack of healthcare facilities in some regions, so getting access to

healthcare may be difficult. Because so many ethnic nationalities in the north-central region have designated some ethnic nationalities as adversaries, they cannot cooperate freely and openly without harbouring resentments and grudges.

vi) **Diversion of healthcare resources:** During conflicts, funds that may be used to provide healthcare services may instead be used to pay for military expenses or urgent emergency requirements. Due to this diversion, healthcare services may not be as readily available, and patients may have less access to treatment options. This describes the current state of North Central.

Improving access to healthcare services requires addressing ethnoreligious tensions and supporting peacebuilding initiatives. Necessary steps toward ensuring equitable access to healthcare for all communities impacted by such conflicts include rebuilding healthcare infrastructure, ensuring the security and safety of healthcare facilities and personnel, providing healthcare services to displaced populations, and combating discrimination (WHO, 2021).

These attacks necessitated research done by Nextier SPD's experts, Aghedo, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Political Science, University of Benin, Edo State, and Nwokolo, Managing Partner and Chief Executive, who noted that the availability of ungoverned forest spaces, easy access to lethal weapons, and the use of military tactic of hit-and-run have all contributed to the proliferation of weapons and ammunition into the hands of terrorists who attack and flee.

The group stated, "For the federal and state governments to cultivate and use these forests for large-scale agribusiness is one approach to curb the proliferation of armaments in these forests. Security agencies must rely on cutting-edge intelligence to find the sources and routes of illegal weapons. Security services must use an eradication plan to combat terrorism rather than a hit-and-run tactic. In order for the state to prevail against the jihadists who frequently unleash terror on unarmed populations, it was further said that "all these factors promoting the rise of terrorism need to be swiftly addressed" for incessant attacks to be checkmated (Agbakwuru, 2023).

Ojewale (2021) identified several mutually reinforcing factors that aid violence in North Central Nigeria, including the following:

**Government's inability to protect citizens against violent crime:** It is expected that the government should increase its efforts in providing artificial intelligence logistics to help the security forces detect and apprehend the perpetrators of this heinous act. As most attacks use roads that will make it difficult for security forces to block the invaders and, if possible, trail them when such attacks occur, the inability to appropriately protect the region's people has triggered incessant attacks.

**Hate Speech:** More than any other aspect, hate speech is speech that disparages or insults an individual or group of individuals based on origin, race, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, is used in interpersonal and group communication causing attack as a result of such provocative speeches.

**Proliferation of small arms and light weapons:** Most violence and threats in the area occur in an environment marked by extreme poverty, rising unemployment, and drug usage. The poverty rate in the area is 42.7%. Additionally, 10% of Nigeria's drug users reside in these areas, where a gun-running business has become a source of livelihood. According to Ojewale (2021), the spread of

small arms and light weapons, especially those made locally, is a factor in drug consumption. In the plateau states of Benue and Nigeria, locally produced weapons were utilized in around 50% of the crimes.

Additionally, reports indicate that herders have attacked settlements in north-central Nigeria using a variety of ammunition from several countries. Politicians were accused of bringing in terrorists from other nations to help them rig elections through ballot box snatching and intimidation of political rivals. After the elections, these militia and thugs allegedly kept the weapons they had been given and began using them to further their criminal activities.

## 2.2. Theoretical review

### 2.2.1 Primordialism theory by Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz (1975)

Primordialism is associated with Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz 1957. According to primordialism, ethnic identities are inherited from nature and passed down to the present generations of people from their predecessors. They were either biologically determined in the past, or individuals in the distant past manufactured them. In either case, each person is a member of a single ethnic group, which, once chosen, cannot be changed throughout time. According to this view, primal attachments like shared lineage, history, and cultural traditions are the foundation for ethno-religious identities. It implies that these identities are organic and long-lasting, impacting intergroup connections and determining people's sense of belonging. The ideas put forth by ancient intellectuals can be linked to the primordial theory. For example, German primordial thinkers in the past held that ethnicities stayed constant across time because the distinctive identities and circumstances of each ethnic group were ingrained in their spoken language. In other words, these primitive philosophers held that as humans spread out geographically and formed many tribes and nations, these groupings evolved their languages that accurately reflected the particular circumstances of their lives (Dawisha 2017). Therefore, just as the ethnic group's language was passed down through the years, so was the group's ethnic spirit to the younger generations. Ethnic wars, according to primordialists, are a natural occurrence brought on by cultural disparities.

To put it another way, because ethnicity is a relational term, having an in-group also entails having an out-group. Extending this to internal displacement can take place by one ethnic group displacing the other as a result of disagreement or competition over resources; as it is only natural for two different ethnic groups to compete with one another to attain their divergent objectives (Jesse and Williams, 2010). According to primordialists, ethnic conflicts arise from "memories of previous horrors, " making violence and displacement "impossible to avoid."

### 2.2.2 Human development theory by Erik Erikson (1950)

Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq invented the human development theory, which looks at welfare in a broader context than merely economic metrics. It highlights the value of developing people's capacities and increasing their options and freedoms. To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of development, this theory examines numerous aspects of socio-economic wellbeing, such as health, education, gender equality, political engagement, and social inclusion.

A framework known as "human development theory" aims to comprehend and clarify the various stages and processes of individual and societal human growth from various angles. Erik Erikson, a psychologist and philosopher, is one well-known name connected to the human development hypothesis.

It is important to note that many different academics and disciplines have contributed to the topic of human development theory. Lev Vygotsky, Lawrence Kohlberg, Urie Bronfenbrenner, and numerous other prominent pioneers in this discipline have contributed original viewpoints on various facets of human development which form the crux of socio-economic wellbeing.

### 2.3. Empirical review

Chingle, Mancha and Gukas (2016) examined the effect of conflict on socio-economic development in Nigeria and noted that conflict affects people's Economic incentives. Understanding how conflict affects the economy is crucial to comprehend structural issues in emerging nations and devise suitable post-conflict reconstruction programs. The fact is that whenever conflict arises, society's progress is typically negatively impacted. The analysis reveals the staggering consequences of conflicts in Nigeria in terms of harm to social infrastructure loss of lives, and property. While many variables contribute to violence, their study argues that conflicts in Nigeria are caused mainly by poverty, entrenched political corruption, weak states, and weak institutions, all of which have a terrible influence on the development of Nigerians. The discussion above implies that there seems to be a connection. This present study intends to view ethno-religious conflict as it affects socio-economic well-being in north-central states, not Nigeria.

Alegbeleye (2014) conducted a study titled ethno-religious crises and socio-economic development in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and the way forward and examined the consequences of conflict and understanding how conflict affects the economy is crucial for identifying structural issues in developing nations and devising effective post-conflict reconstruction strategies since it has an impact on people's economic motivations. The fact is that whenever conflict arises, society's progress is typically negatively impacted. The analysis reveals the staggering consequences of conflicts in Nigeria in terms of harm to social infrastructure loss of lives, and property. While many variables might lead to war, according to his analysis, Nigerian conflicts are primarily caused by poverty, political corruption, and weak states and institutions, which greatly influence the country's growth. The discussion above implies that if corruption and poverty are not dealt with appropriately, it will be difficult to stern the menace. This study is similar to the present study as both share the same dependent variable, but it differs stern from its geographical coverage, which is more than the present study.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Research design

The survey design was employed for this study. This method is appropriate because of its suitability for the use of individual views and experiences on the subject matter under investigation. It provides respondents opinions and behaviours that can be used to make important decisions.

### 3.2 Area of study

The area of study entails geographical location covered by the researchers, in this study it is the location or territorial land mass within which people who are displaced as a result ethno-religious conflicts can be found within the North Central region of Nigeria. These include Benus State, Nassarawa State and Plateau State; other states such as Niger and Kogi did not make up the list due to fact that their IDP camps were mostly for people who are displaced as a result of floods, not ethno-religious conflict. This means the researchers only covered IDPs in the three states as all their camps are heavily over crowded with victims of ethno-religious conflicts in the region.

### 3.4 Population of the study

The population of this study comprised 122,000 internally displaced persons in IDPs in three states of north-central Nigeria: Benue, Nassarawa and Plateau. These three selected states have internally displaced people's camps where the researchers, through random sampling, obtained whatever information that was needed for the study. These states were chosen since they have IDP camps for displaced people due to ethno-religious conflicts.

**Table 3.1: Breakdown of the Population of Internally Displaced Persons Camps Per State**

| S/N | State | No Displaced persons |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Benue | 80,000 |
| 2 | Nassarawa | 4,000 |
| 3 | Plateau | 38,000 |
| Total | 3 | 122,000 |

Source: State Emergency Management Agencies of the above States 2023

### 3.5 Sample size determination

To maximize the statistical precision of the study while controlling costs, a unique parametric statistical formula was applied to obtain a sample size which was considered appropriate for this study, a sample size calculation provided by Bill Godden (2004) sample size determination formula for finite populations was utilized. Given the internally displaced persons' population of 122,000, as was obtained from the state's emergency management agencies of the three states, a sample size was determined as shown below.

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 \times P(1-p)}{M^2}$$

Where:
SS= Sample size
Z= 1.96 at 95 confidence level
P= Population proportion assumed to be 0.5 (50%).
M= error margin

Therefore: $\frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2}$

$SS = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025}$

$SS = 384.16$ app.385

Therefore, the above was used to determine the sample size using the population of this study. The percentage of the population prevalence of ethno-religious conflicts is estimated at 50% (as the population proportion).

Our new Sample will be = SS÷ (1+ SS-1) ÷ N
= 385 ÷ (1 + 385- 1) ÷ 122,000
= 385÷ 1+ 384 ÷ 122,000
= 385÷ 1 + 0.00315
=385÷ 1.00315
= 383.7 app. 384
Sample size, therefore, = 384.
Thus, the sample size of 384 will be proportionally allocated to the IDPs in the three states.

### 3.6 Sampling technique

The researchers gave a fair representation of the states selected for the study in the ratio each state bears to the overall population using the quota sampling technique to allocate their sample size. Given this, the researchers adopted proportion allocational statistical technique to administer the quota of questionnaires for the IDPs. The sample size determination formula is denoted as:

**Q= A/N x n/1**

Where:

Q = Number of IDPs selected for study
A = Population of each state
N = Total population of the Study
n estimated sample size
1 = statistical constant

Table 3.2 Table for sampling estimation

| S/No | State | No Displaced persons | Sample Size Determination | Sample Size for each State IDPs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Benue | 80,000 | 80,000x384÷122,000 | 252 |
| 2 | Nassarawa | 4,000 | 4,000x 384÷122,000 | 13 |
| 3 | Plateau | 38,000 | 38,000x384÷122,000 | 120 |
| Total | | 122,000 | | 385 |

Source: Researchers' sample size determination 2024

The above depict the number of questionnaires that were administered to each state emergency management agencies, where the officials of the respective States emergency management agencies adopted a simple random sampling to administer the questionnaires to the respondents in their respective IDPs camps.

### 3.8 Validity of the research instrument

This shows the authenticity or genuineness of the instrument used. It is a test or measuring instrument's most important characteristic. It is the degree to which a test deals with what it is thought to measure and permits the correct interpretation of scores (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). According to Bryman & Bell (2011), validity denotes whether a measure of a concept essentially measures that concept. Content validity is the most common means of validity testing, particularly after developing a new measurement. Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin (2010) pointed out that content validity is a subjective evaluation and mainly involves using a panel of experts. It involves operationalising concepts or constructs needed to carry out the translations. The **"content validity"** was used, essentially checking the operationalisation against the relevant content domain for the constructs. This approach assumes you have a detailed description of the content domain (Trochim, 2006). Facial validation was also used to validate the content and construct of the research instrument, which was done by three research experts from the Management Department of the University of Nigeria and two from Benue State emergency management agency employees to reaffirm the appropriateness of the instrument. In the end, the corrections of the experts were reflected in the construct to produce the best result for the analysis.

### 3.9 Reliability of the Research Instrument

This shows the quality of a measurement, indicating the degree to which the measure is consistent or the extent to which the responses obtained through each of the items on the instrument are internally consistent (Onodugo, et al 2010). As Bryman & Bell (2011) outlined, reliability is the degree of consistency in measuring a concept. When assessing the reliability of a measurement instrument in quantitative research, two fundamental aspects must be considered. The first aspect is the stability of the measure, which focuses on the consistency of the measurement over time. This can be evaluated by administering the questionnaire again to observe if respondents provide somewhat similar answers on both occasions, resulting in a high correlation between the two sets of responses (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Zikmund, et al 2010). The second aspect involves establishing the internal reliability of a measurement instrument. This pertains to examining how well the questionnaire items align with the operationalized indicators of the construct they are intended to measure. The most convenient method for testing internal consistency was the Cronbach's Alpha. This is computed using the formula below:

$$\alpha = \frac{Nr}{1+r\,(N-1)}$$

where:
α = Chronbach Alpha
N = the number of items in the scale
, r = the mean inter-item correlation
The reliability coefficient is a numerical value that ranges from zero to one. For research purposes, tests ranging from 0.7 and above are considered reliable.

The reliability coefficient was determined using the Cronbach Alpha formula through the use of statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 as presented below.

**Table 3.3: Reliability Statistics**

| **Inter items reliability test** | **Cronbach's Alpha** | **Number of Items** |
|---|---|---|
| Respondents bio-data | 0.974 | 5 |
| Forced displacement | 0.982 | 6 |
| Destruction of properties | 0.973 | 6 |
| **Total No of items** | | **17** |

**Source:** *SPSS V 20.0*

A reliability test was conducted using Cronbach Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the variables used in the study. The choice of Cronbach Alpha was because the study makes use of a multi-scale questionnaire. The individual internal consistency level for each variable was as follows: forced displacement 0.982, destruction of properties 0.973 and violence 0.981. The overall Cronbach's Alpha statistic value was 0.966 which falls above the acceptable level of 0.70. A Cronbach's Alpha statistics of 0.70 is considered adequate and reliable. Hence, the instrument for the study is reliable.

### 3.10 Method of Data Analyses

The data collected for the study was analysed using inferential statistics. Percentage analysis was for analysing the responses from the questionnaire, while Spearman's rank correlation was employed to

test the hypotheses to ascertain the extent of the effect between the dependent and the independent variables. These were carried out using SPSS Version 20.0.

### 3.11 Decision Rule

The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was to reject the null hypotheses if the P-value in any of the results was less than 0.05, do not reject if otherwise.

## 4.0 Data presentation analysis and result

This research work assesses the effect of ethno-religious conflict on socioeconomic well-being of internally displaced persons in North Central Nigeria. Data collection was primarily relied on a questionnaire designed on a 5-point Likert scale and addressed structured questions aligned with the study objectives. In administering the questionnaire, the researchers employed a quota sampling technique using simple random sampling within internally displaced persons camps across the selected three states for this study. The presentation is based on fully filled and returned questionnaires, out of 385 distributed questionnaires, only 360 were fully filled and returned.

**Table 4.1 Objective one: to determine whether incessant attacks affect food security**

| **Effect of Incessant Attacks** | **Food security ratings** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **SA** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **SD** | **Total** |
| 1 | Destruction of properties affect access to education of internally displaced persons | 154 | 145 | 20 | 30 | 25 | 360 |
| 2 | Frequent crises affect business activities in North Central Nigeria | 152 | 156 | 0 | 22 | 30 | 360 |
| 3 | Destruction of properties affect availability of basic services to IDPs | 126 | 144 | 12 | 32 | 46 | 360 |
| 4 | Destruction of properties increased economic losses of IDPs in North Central | 140 | 145 | 20 | 30 | 25 | 360 |
| 5 | Destruction of properties propels hikes in prices of goods to IDPs in North Central Nigeria | 154 | 120 | 0 | 56 | 30 | 360 |
| 6 | Non-affordability of food by IDPs has increased as a result of destruction of properties | 160 | 144 | 11 | 27 | 18 | 360 |
| | **Average total** | **147** | **142** | **10** | **32** | **29** | **360** |

Source: Fieldwork 2024

The result suggest that more respondents strongly agreed and agreed that destruction of properties affect access to social amenities of IDPs in North Central Nigeria. The table shows that the cluster of mean of items for destruction of properties is 3.91 above the cut point of 3.0 (5+4+3+2+1 = 15/5 = 3 for a five- point summation Likert scale). Based on the objective, respondents agreed and strongly agreed that destruction of properties affect access to social amenities of IDPs in North Central Nigeria. This implies that destruction of properties affects educational services and increased the number of out of school children in the region, due to increased poverty of IDPs, thus affecting their pursuit of qualitative education elsewhere.

### Test of hypothesis one

$H_0$ Destruction of properties has no significant effect on access to social amenities of internally displaced persons

$H_1$ Destruction of properties significantly affect access to social amenities of internally displaced persons

**Table 4.3.4a: Descriptive statistics**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Destruction of properties affect access to education of internally displaced persons. | 4.29 | .828 | 360 |
| Access to social amenities by IDPs is affected by frequent attacks. | 4.07 | .988 | 360 |

Source: SPSS version 20.0

**Table 4.3.4b: Correlations**

| | | | Destruction of properties affect access to education of internally displaced persons | Access to social amenities by IDPs is affected by frequent attacks. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Destruction of properties affect access to education of internally displaced persons in North Central Nigeria. | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .893** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | | N | 360 | 360 |
| | Access to social amenities by IDPs is affected by frequent attacks. | Correlation Coefficient | .895** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 360 | 360 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
R = 0.895
Sig = 0.0001

## Interpretation

Table 4.3.4a shows the descriptive statistics of the relationship between destruction of properties and access to social amenities of internally displaced persons has a mean 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.826, on the other hand access to social amenities has a mean score of 4.07 with a standard deviation of 0.988. The cluster of mean of items for destruction of properties and access to social amenities is 4.29 and 4.07 above the cut point of 3.0 (5+4+3+2+1 = 15/5 = 3.0 for a five-point summation Likert scale). An observation of the standard deviation values reveals that there is almost the same variation of data points amongst the dependent and independent variables. This implied that destruction of properties constitutes about the same percentage of variables that significantly affect access to social amenities of internally displaced persons in North Central Nigeria.

Table 4.3.4b is the Spearman ranked correlation coefficient matrix of the extent of effect between destruction of properties and access to social amenities which has a value of (0.895) indicates that correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). This implied that there is strong positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Thus, destruction of properties to a large extent affect access to social amenities of internally displaced persons in North Central Nigeria. The destruction of properties to access to social amenities in North Central Nigeria which is statistically significant with (0.01) is less than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis should be rejected.

**Table 4.3 Objective two: to determine whether forced displacement affect decent shelter**

| **Effect of forced displacement** | **Decent shelter ratings** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **SA** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **SD** | **Total** |
| 1 | Violence affect provision of healthcare services to IDPs in North Central Nigeria. | 123 | 155 | 0 | 38 | 44 | 360 |
| 2 | Violence reduced life expectancy of IDPs in North Central Nigeria. | 162 | 125 | 0 | 33 | 40 | 360 |
| 3 | Access to healthcare services by IDPs are disrupted as a result of displacements | 145 | 125 | 10 | 32 | 48 | 360 |
| 4 | Access to health care insurance to IDPs is lacking as a result of displacements | 128 | 126 | 04 | 62 | 40 | 360 |
| 5 | Violence increases human rights violation of IDPs in North Central Nigeria. | 136 | 126 | 14 | 50 | 34 | 360 |
| 6 | Access to healthcare services is affected as a result of fear by health workers | 118 | 138 | 24 | 25 | 55 | 360 |
| | **Average total** | **135** | **132.5** | **8.6** | **40** | **43.5** | **360** |

Source: Fieldwork 2023

The above suggest that more respondents agreed and strongly agreed that violence affect healthcare of IDPs in North Central Nigeria. The table shows that the cluster of mean of items for violence is 3.96 above the cut point of 3.0 (5+4+3+2+1 = 15/5 = 3 for a five- point summation Likert scale). Based on the objective, respondents strongly agreed that violence affects healthcare services of IDPs in North Central Nigeria. This implies that violence increased number of people without basic primary healthcare in the IDPs camps and affect their life expectancy as well as exposes more IDPs in the region to diseases.

## Test of hypothesis two

$H_0$ Violence has no significant effect on access to healthcare services of internally displaced persons
$H_1$ Violence has a significant effect on access to healthcare services of internally displaced persons

**Table 4.3.5a: Descriptive statistics**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Violence affects provision of healthcare services to IDPs in North Central Nigeria | 4.11 | 1.065 | 360 |
| Access to healthcare of IDPs are disrupted due to conflict in North Central Nigeria | 4.15 | 0.983 | 360 |

Source: SPSS version 20.0

**Table 4.3.5b: Correlations**

| | | | Access to healthcare services by IDPs are disrupted due to conflicts in North Central Nigeria. | Violence affects provision of healthcare services to IDPs in North Central Nigeria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Access to healthcare services by IDPs are disrupted due to conflicts in North Central Nigeria. | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .898** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | | N | 360 | 360 |
| | Violence affects provision of healthcare services to IDPs in North Central Nigeria | Correlation Coefficient | -.898** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 360 | 360 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**R = -0.898**
**Sig = .0001**

## Interpretation

Table 4.3.5a shows the descriptive statistics of the relationship between violence and access to healthcare services of internally displaced persons has a mean 4.11 with a standard deviation of 1.065, on the other hand access to healthcare services has a mean score of 4.15 with a standard deviation of 0.983. The cluster of mean of items for violence and access to healthcare services is 4.11 and 4.15 above the cut point of 3.0 (5+4+3+2+1 = 15/5 = 3.0 for a five-point summation Likert scale). An observation of the standard deviation values reveals that there is almost the same variation of data points amongst the dependent and independent variables. This implied that violence constitutes about the same percentage of variables that significantly affect access to healthcare services of internally displaced persons in North Central Nigeria.

Table 4.3.4b is the Spearman ranked correlation coefficient matrix of the extent of effect between violence and access to healthcare services which has a value of (-0.898) indicates that correlation is significant at 0.0001 level (2-tailed). This implied that there is strong negative correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Thus, violence to a large extent negatively affect access to healthcare services of internally displaced persons in North Central Nigeria. The violence to access to healthcare services of IDPs in North Central Nigeria which is statistically significant with (0.01) is less than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis should be rejected.

## 4.3 Discussion of findings

**4.3.1 to examine the effect of destruction of properties on access to social amenities of internally displaced persons:** As presented in table 4.2.24 in order to determine whether destruction of properties affect access to social amenities by internally displaced persons, respondents' views were inquired; it was found that, destruction of properties increased economic losses and access to social amenities is affected by destruction of properties; it was also found that conflict disrupt access to social amenities. IOM (2022); Lenshie, et al (2020); Chukwuma, (2020) all analysed the connection between herder- farmer conflicts has been attributed to violent destruction that has taken place in

North Central Nigeria to long standing ethnic and religious tensions, bandits attacks, kidnapping, and herders attacks. They noted that conflicts and property destruction like these jeopardized recent development advancement as well as hinder peoples' access to social amenities. This finding is in accordance to Salawu, (2010), Ukiwo, (2003); Ousman and Ouzden, (2020) who revealed that ethno-religious hostilities affect social order and result to destruction of lives and properties. This can further be supported by Erik Erikson theory of human development (1950). This theory posits that, the value of developing peoples' capacities by examining numerous aspects of welfare such as health, education and social inclusion helps reduce destruction of lives and properties which affect access to health, education and other welfare services.

**4.3.2 to determine the effect of violence on access to health care services of internally displaced persons:** As presented in table 4.2. 25 in order to determine whether violence affect access to healthcare services, respondents' views were inquired; it was found out that, violence affect provision of healthcare services in IDPs, and that, healthcare services are often disrupted due to violent conflicts and violence reduced life expectancy level of IDPs, it was also found out that, violence increase human rights violation. WHO (2021) ethno-religious violence pose threat to the regions' ability to live in peace, access healthcare and obstruct seamless provision of healthcare services to the communities in the region as vices such as destruction of health care infrastructure, disrupt health care delivery as well as displacement and migration affect access to healthcare services? This is in tandem with Ojewale, (2021), Madueke, (2018), Salawu, (2010) and Mutala, Ismail and Ayegba, (2020) who noted that, ethnic violence engenders peace and harmony leading to violence disruptions that affect provision of healthcare services which lead to reduced life expectancy and increased human rights violation. This finding can further be supported by Kimberle, (1981) identity politics theory which focus on the contribution of ethnic and religious identities to political engagement. He posits that, people and organisations organize and fight for their rights and interest based on their ethnic or religious affiliations hoping to overthrow established power structures through violent means leading to distortion of peace and order thereby obstructing provision and access of healthcare services to displaced persons.

## 5.0 Conclusion

This study on internally displaced persons and socioeconomic wellbeing in North Central Nigeria is very timely and unequivocally crucial, as ensuring a peaceful coexistence that is free from forced displacement, destruction of properties and violence will enable the displaced persons to go back to their ancestral homes, businesses, worship of their respective religion, farming, school children will return to classes and normalcy will be restored. This will impact positively on their quality of life, decent shelter, access to basic social amenities and overall socioeconomic well-being. This can be possible if genuine reconciliation is reached, it will transcend into members of the different ethnic and religious groups to imbibe tolerance among themselves to allow their government to formulate and implement policies that will bring about development that have eluded them for a long time due to ethno-religious conflicts.

## 5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings and result of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be urgent reconstruction and rehabilitation of destroyed public schools in the affected states to enable children of school age to get enrolled when normalcy will be restored.

2. Government should implement targeted livelihood support programs tailored to the specific needs of IDPs in North Central Nigeria. These programs could include skills training, vocational education, and access to microfinance opportunities to empower IDPs to rebuild their lives and generate income.
3. There is need to conduct a thorough assessment to determine the specific health needs and challenges faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in North Central Nigeria as a result of violence. This assessment should encompass physical, mental, and psychosocial health dimensions and consider factors such as geographic accessibility, availability of healthcare facilities, affordability of services, and cultural barriers to accessing care. By understanding the unique healthcare needs and barriers encountered by IDPs, policymakers and humanitarian organizations can develop targeted interventions to improve access to healthcare services.
4. Government should implement measures to strengthen health systems and services in areas hosting IDPs in North Central Nigeria. This could involve increasing the capacity of existing healthcare facilities to accommodate the growing population of IDPs, ensuring the availability of essential medicines and medical supplies, deploying mobile health clinics to reach underserved areas, and training healthcare workers to address the specific health needs of IDPs, including trauma care and mental health support.

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