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Seeing the End From the Beginning: The Plights of Children's Education in the Conflict Affected Areas in Katsina State, Nigeria

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Keywords	Abstract
Child Development Conflict Education Early Plights	<p>A qualitative study examined children's educational and health well-being in areas affected by armed violence. Coordinated attacks on some villages and communities in Katsina State had rendered thousands of people homeless while some infants became orphans. The study was carried out in some designated Internally Displaced Camps in the seven most affected Local Government Areas in Katsina State. The researchers explored three qualitative data collection techniques in the study and elicited data from the field. Key Informant Interviews were conducted with camp officials, In-Depth Interviews were conducted with parents of the children aged 0-8 years taking refuge in the camps, and a non-participant observation method was used to observe the behaviour of the targeted children. The study revealed that children uprooted from their various villages were in dire need of assistance, particularly food, shelter, and medical attention. Also, there was no provision for temporary early childhood education services for the children who were supposed to be in school. Children traumatized by the gravity of the armed violence exhibit some elements of psychological disorder and difficulty in integrating with other displaced persons in the Camps and outsiders. The study concluded that children left without education at the most critical stage of life might become threats to society because they will grow without the requisite formal education that would enable them to become valuable members of their society.</p>
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Introduction

Some African countries have protracted armed violence with different triggers and causal factors. From 2016 to 2019, Nigeria faced a new dimension of armed violence, which began as a conflict between farmers and herders over land for farming, grazing livestock, and cattle routes. However, cattle rustling among the Fulani herders was hitherto a usual practice without the use of lethal weapons and ransacking communities. But it has now involved the use of sophisticated weapons in some states in Northern Nigeria with a frequent outbreak of violence. In addition to cattle rustling, kidnapping people for ransom, a phenomenon prevalent in the oil-producing region of Niger Delta, has become prevalent in the Northern part of the country. Kidnappers, armed bandits, and cattle rustlers have displaced many villages in States like Kaduna, Zamfara Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, and recently Niger State. The armed violence has become more intense in Katsina, Zamfara, and the Sokoto States, with properties destroyed and people kidnapped and killed in the years reviewed (2016-2019). In the affected States, children and women were the significant casualties of the attacks, hence exposed to death or living in degradable displaced settlements provided by the government. The crisis has significantly impacted the educational system, leaving generations of children without access to education and even more vulnerable. 611 instructors have been killed, 19,000 have been homeless, 910 schools have been damaged or destroyed, and over 1,500 schools have been forced to close since the crisis began in 2009. As a result, an estimated 900,000 children have been denied access to education, with 75% of children in camps failing to attend school (EiE Working Group Strategy, Nigeria, 2020).

The violence in North-western Nigeria entered its third year in 2019, meaning a child born in the affected areas is experiencing his early childhood amid armed violence and traumatized condition, a critical period for child development, both socially and psychologically. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) made a similar observation that with many wars today lasting longer than the duration of a childhood, this means a country will lose out on an entire generation of education and skills amongst its young people (UNHCR 2017: 55). The children displaced as a result of the violence took refuge within the country or the Niger Republic, the closest country to Nigeria in the Northwest. In other parts of the world, children in early childhood constitute the most significant proportion of the age category whose education is disrupted. There were 162,085 children aged 0–6, early childhood and preschool age as asylum seekers in Germany in 2015 and 2016, uprooted from their home countries by armed violence (German National Contact Point 2017:36). The growth and development of the affected children are in jeopardy because some of them may end up without receiving early childhood healthcare, education and other emotional supports from the parents which are requisite for child development.

The disruption to families and community structure, as well as the acute shortage of resources, profoundly affect the physical and psychological well-being of all refugees, especially that of small children (Sara-Christine and Katie-Jay, 2017:3). Frequent exposure to stressful events in childhood, including nutritional deprivation, exposure to traumatic events, and violence, can produce high levels of stress for the child, delaying or damaging the brain and severely impeding development well into adulthood (UNICEF, 2012). In refugee contexts, adults also suffer greatly and focus on daily survival tasks such as collecting food rations and looking for work, preventing their ability to provide the necessities of life for their young children. If the Early Child Development program for children aged three to five years old is not addressed, and a generation of children will be at risk for irreversible long-term damages (Black, 2016; Hamidi, 2020). A study conducted on children 0-3

years in displaced person camps revealed that children who were raised in a violent environment are likely to behave violently later in life in turn, display behaviour such as aggression, delinquency, and violent crime, as well as child abuse (Dodge *et al.*, 1990).

Exposure to armed violence during early childhood leads to persistent effects on health, education, and labour productivity outcomes for the affected generation of children. A study on the effects of Burundi's civil war on health found that an extra month of exposure to the conflict reduced child height significantly (Akresh, Bundervoet, & Verwimp, 2009). Similarly, a study on the long-term impacts of the 1967–70 civil war in Biafra, Nigeria, which killed 1–3 million people, estimated that exposure to violence led to height reductions was an indication of poor health in both children and adolescents (Akresh, Bhalotra, Lene & Osili, 2012).

Similarly, a study in Chicago revealed that children exposed to homicide in their community perform worse on assessments of cognitive skills in school. They display impaired attention and impulse control compared with other children living in the same communities but are assessed at different times. Given the prevalence of homicides in Chicago's most violent neighbourhoods, the consequences for children's ability to learn and perform well in the classroom are potentially severe (Sharkey 2012:10). The study has established that exposure to even community violence which is less fatal and destructive compared to armed banditry and cattle rustling, has significantly compromised poor children's cognitive functioning and self-regulatory behaviour whose consequences have the potential to alter educational trajectories and a range of subsequent health and social outcomes of the affected children (Sharkey, 2012). Therefore, this study intends to examine the condition of children 0-3 years old displaced by armed violence. This study has examined whether there is provision for emergency educational facilities and explained the effects of exposure to violence and lack of early childhood education on the future of the targeted population.

Statement of the Research Problem

War and terrorism are acts of violence perpetrated by humans that have emotionally and psychologically affected generations of children and young people for the rest of their lives. One out of three children who live in war zones could be vulnerable to developing some form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), psychopathological symptoms, and lower psychosocial functioning levels during their lifetime, which points to the volatile and violent environment they are living in (Allwood, Bell-Dolan & Husain, 2002). Children who receive inadequate care, especially in the first year of life and often from mothers who were neglected or abused, are more sensitive to stress and display more behavioural problems than children who receive adequate care (Linda, 2016:108).

Jo, Jo, Feeny & Hart (2002) cited the finding of the United Nations some 20 million people have been killed in over 150 armed conflicts in developing countries since the Second World War, the majority being women and children. More than half of the world's 22.4 million displaced people are children and adolescents: one in every 230 persons is a child or adolescent forced to flee their home. The impacts on children may be direct and apparent, as in the case of death, wounding, family separation, or dislocation. Still, they are frequently far less noticeable, as with economic impoverishment, hazardous labour, early marriage, or the loss of opportunities for education and health.

The impoverishment of families impacts children in several ways. It increases the

pressures on the young to work, possibly at the expense of their schooling. It also leads to under-nourishment and malnutrition; to the inability of parents to pay for the necessities of school education, such as uniforms and writing materials; and to a child's withdrawal from religious, social, and cultural events, including temple festivals, for which some offering is necessary (Jo, Jo, Feeny & Hart, 2002:45). Aside from illness, the conflict impacts children's health through poor nutrition over long periods. This is notably the case with refugee populations kept artificially dependent on rations, such as the Rohingya in Myanmar and Bangladesh. While nutritional indicators across Bangladesh are generally considered very poor, child refugees in the camps appear to be at particular risk of malnutrition (Jo, Jo, Feeny & Hart, 2002). According to World Food Programme (WFP), over 50 percent of children born relatively healthy and without problems then exhibit wasting between 18 and 23 months old, indicating how severely and quickly camp conditions affect these new lives. Infants and toddlers who witnessed violence in their homes or community show excessive irritability, immature behaviour, sleep disturbances, emotional distress, fears of being alone, and regression in toileting and language (Osofsky, 1999). Exposure to trauma, especially violence in the family, interferes with a child's normal development of trust and later exploratory behaviours, leading to autonomy development. Therefore, the future of children within the target age cohort is in a dilemma if they do not receive proper medical attention, feeding, and formal education for lifelong development.

Review of Related Literature: Violence and Early Childhood Education

In one of the African countries affected by armed violence, Ivory Coast, Wayoro (2017) found that armed conflict in the country has significantly reduced the height-forage z-score of exposed children compared to their non-exposed counterparts. The study further established that children born before and during the war were affected. The study focused on armed violence that erupted in the country and its attendant effects on the early childhood development of the affected children. It also explained the health effects on vulnerable age cohorts (conception to 8 years) who need regular and quality medical care. The armed violence in Côte d'Ivoire has disrupted healthcare facilities and displaced health workers who were supposed to render such services to the children. This disruption and displacement, in turn, made the children vulnerable to life-threatening diseases and infections such as malaria, diarrhoea, cholera, and measles. It revealed that children were the most vulnerable category of people to collective assaults on health and well-being. The study has explicitly shown that armed violence affects their health and stops their children from attending school. However, the armed violence which displaced in some parts of Katsina where this was conducted is irregular violence different from the type of armed violence that happened in the Ivory Coast. Like in Ivory Coast, infants and their mothers taking shelter in classrooms are exposed to malaria and other infectious diseases in the IDPs camp. This put the children's life and their early education at risk.

Corroborating these findings, Wayoro (2017) observed that measles caused more than half the deaths of children in some places at the height of the conflict in Somalia. Diarrhoea is another common and often deadly disease. Cholera is a constant threat, as exemplified in refugee camps in Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Somalia, and Zaire. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that half the world's refugees may be infected with tuberculosis, as crowded conditions in refugee camps provide a breeding ground for infections. Malaria and acute respiratory infections,

including pneumonia, which also claims many lives (Wayoro, 2017).

Scientists have long understood that the vital neural pathways formed during the first 1,000 days of life, from conception to age 2, shape the rapidly developing brain. It is well established that these connections require adequate nutrition and stimulation. A study revealed that protection from violence is essential as well. Exposure to traumatic experiences can produce toxic stress, defined as prolonged, intense, or frequent adversity in which the body's stress-response system remains activated. This can alter the structure and functioning of the brain during the formative early years (Shonkoff, 2012). While violence is especially damaging during the first few years of life, it affects a child's physical safety and emotional and cognitive well-being at every stage. As they grow older, girls and boys begin interacting with various people outside the home, including peers, teachers, neighbours, and romantic partners. This broadening of a child's social world represents an opportunity to build capacities and life skills. Still, it also opens the door to new forms of violence, potentially irreversible or long-term consequences (UNICEF, 2017). The finding of UNICEF has not explicitly focused on any country, but it has itemized the mental problems children exposed to armed conflict are bound to face later in life. However, the armed violence in the area this study was conducted in Katsina is one-sided; the cattle rustlers and kidnappers displaced sedentary farmers and other village dwellers. The causality is from one side, the villagers' side. This is why the victims of the violence are from one side, unlike armed violence, where both victims come from both parties in the conflict. This study revealed a particular circumstance where the affected people are from one side of the divide. This made it easy for the researchers to observe the displaced children and interview caregivers and Camp officials at the IDPs camp in Batsari.

Early Childhood Education in Emergency

It has been observed that the provision of early childhood education for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is inadequate in conflict-ridden countries in Africa. In some instances, a small proportion of displaced children receive a proper education. Education is vital to the development of children, and it is recognized as a universal human right. Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child binds signatories to the Convention to fulfil their obligation in providing it. Being uprooted does not negate a child's right to education nor a state's responsibility to provide it. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees reaffirms in Article 22 the responsibility of the government of the country of asylum to provide education for refugees. The fact remains that most refugee children do not receive primary education. Some estimates put the number of refugee children receiving education at no more than 30 percent.

Similarly, UNCHR (2017) stated that many children and young people are displaced several times before they cross a border and become refugees. School is often the first place they start to regain normality, safety, friendship, order, and peace for children whose lives have been disrupted in this manner. Regardless of their nationality, legal status, or parents, children have the right to the academic and co-curricular activities that will enable them to prosper (UNHCR, 2017). UNICEF has identified what the children displaced in Katsina lacked. The absence of temporary education for the targeted children means their fundamental human rights are violated. The government and other partners providing relief materials for people in emergencies have neglected the children's educational aspect. Therefore, it could be deduced that apart from health and social challenges, the future development of the affected could be harmful due to some health defects and illiteracy, and they would become unproductive community members. This is because children who are less than eight years old, if they survive early childhood may become adults in a world driven by digital technology. Children without literacy and essential life skills learned in childhood may become a nuisance and threaten human security.

Similarly, Global Education Monitoring (2019) examined early childhood education at various refugee and IDP camps in countries with the highest number of refugees and IDPs. The findings showed that forcibly displaced children not enrolled in schools end up being illiterate in their later adulthood in Africa. Even though the report sampled children above the age classified or defined as early childhood, it has revealed the situation of the displaced children and its impact on their educational development later in life. In Chad, for example, among 6-14-year-old refugees from the Central African Republic, Nigeria, and Sudan, 30% were illiterate. Refugees from South Sudan in Uganda settled in the poor West Nile sub-region, where the secondary school enrolment net attendance rate was 9% in 2016, less than half the national rate (The Global Education Monitoring Report, 2019). These statistics were from protracted armed conflict in some parts of Africa. However, the violence in Katsina State is not protracted, but it has displaced hundreds of people from their homes. This study has unpacked the effects of unfamiliar armed violence such as kidnapping and armed banditry on children and their life chances in later adulthood. It is not only the educational pursuit of the children that would be affected, but other aspects of social life are at risk of not being realized.

Furthermore, UNICEF reported that in 2017, 61 percent of refugee children were enrolled in primary school, compared to 92 percent globally. At the secondary level, the figure was 23 percent, compared with a global rate of 84 percent. This means nearly two-thirds of refugee children who go to primary school do not make it to secondary school (UNHCR, 2017). Taken as a whole, therefore, refugee children and youth have far fewer educational opportunities than their peers. Of the entire population of refugees, 54 percent are out of school, compared to 10 percent of children globally at the primary or lower-secondary school level, meaning that refugees are five times more likely to be out of school at these levels. The statistics were markedly worse in low-income countries disproportionately affected by refugee movements. Developing regions hosted 92 percent of the world's school-age refugees in 2017. In low-income countries, less than half of primary-age refugee children attend school. At the secondary level, only 11 percent have the same opportunity (UNHCR, 2017). This is for children who have lived in the refugee camps for years. Still, in the case of Katsina, the displaced persons are in their second year in the IDPs camp without providing temporary educational facilities for the children. But considering the school enrolment system, which starts in September, children eligible to start early childhood education have lost the opportunity to be in school in 2018 and 2019. Also, those who are supposed to finish primary school and join high school are affected.

Additionally, a child's education at formative is significant because 85% percent of brain development occurs before the age of five. These first years of a child's life affect the brain significantly; yet, globally, ECD solutions are chronically underfunded and fragmented (Sara-Christine and Katie-Jay, 2017). Many international organizations are aware of the importance of the early years, and a range of ECD interventions exist. However, on a large scale, ECD is not made a priority, and too often, the solutions are inadequately funded and unimaginative. In 2016, within the global humanitarian education sector, over 60% of active humanitarian and refugee response plans and emergency appeals for financial assistance did not include comprehensive ECD services, early childhood development, or early childhood education (Their World 2016). In eastern Chad refugee camps, approximately 30% of the total refugee population were children under five years. Among children under five, only 34% attend preschool, and, before Little Ripples, no comprehensive education solution existed for this age group (UNHCR Tchad, 2017). The study presented a global portrait of the predicament children with violence face. Similar to the situation in Katsina, the management of the IDPs and government provides relief materials focused on first aid and other relief materials. At the same time, medical services for traumatized children and their education are neglected.

Corroborating the above discourse, research documented those educational opportunities are shaped long before a child enters a classroom, and when disrupted by armed violence, the opportunities are also shattered. This highlights that early childhood covers three main age periods, each with its characteristics and requirements: 0-3 (including the period of conception to birth), 3-6, and 6-8 years. All children up to 8 years need multi-sectoral Support

to enable their growth and development (Oddy, 2018). The work of Oddy has identified the age category of children targeted by this study in Katsina State. However, the affected children in Katsina have received support from government and humanitarian agencies, but most of it was for adults. This study revealed that some children have symptoms of mental illness, and leaving them out of school would be catastrophic. Substantiating further, young children in emergencies are prone to 'toxic stresses, a condition caused by extreme, prolonged adversity in the absence of a supportive network of adults, or by being in contact with deeply stressed or incapacitated caregivers. An accumulation of toxic stress becomes detrimental to a child's development, and evidence demonstrates that without interventions to mitigate the effects, children have a greater likelihood of starting school late, developing aggressive behaviour, and having lower achievement in school and at work, in addition to poor physical and mental health. For parents in crises, evidence suggests that parents and caregivers may find that they have conflicting priorities and stress and face a daily struggle to cover essential services, which in turn impacts their parenting practice (Oddy, 2018; Anggaunitakiranantika, 2021). Unlike the previous work, this revealed a situation where some children in the formative age live without caregivers. The caregivers were either killed or kidnapped for ransom. The children are faced with a double tragedy, the absence of caregivers, and the effects of a traumatic encounter with the armed bandits and kidnappers before they escaped to the IDPs camp. It has been observed that some of the children found it difficult to interact with fellow children and eat food frequently among strangers in the IDPs camp, Batsari. This depicts a psychological disorder resulting from the absence of parents or caregivers for some children. This could have adverse effects on their development and adulthood.

Similarly, even for the children in the IDP camp with their parents and caregivers, the parents lacked the financial means to cater to the needs of the children. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2017) found that when left without income and exhausted their savings, families are increasingly unable to meet their children's basic needs, including feeding them regularly, paying for transportation to school, and accessing healthcare. Financial constraints represent the most significant barrier to refugee children's enrolment in schools and the major determinant for school dropouts. Corroborating the above assertion, approximately 15,400 Syrian refugee children are not enrolled in formal education due to financial constraints, and 5,300 Syrian refugee children have been withdrawn from education since their arrival for the same reason (UNHCR, 2015). In 2016, at least 40% of refugee children in Jordan aged 12-17 were not attending education. Additionally, Syrian refugee children's access to early education has proved challenging. While there is a formal ECCD curriculum in Jordan, ECCD provision is predominately private, and expensive fees make these services out of reach for most Syrian families. Despite the growing interest in assisting children in an emergency about the benefits of investment in ECCD, and the involvement of International Non-Governmental Organizations, Local Non-Governmental Organizations, and civil society organizations, lack of funding, was the major problem in addressing the problems faced by children in emergencies (Oddy, 2018). Children aged 3-4: ECCD, Kindergarten, referrals (Target: 2,880). Children aged 5-6: Basic Learning, referrals, targeted 1,440.

The above findings presented the portrait of children in refugee camps in the urban centre, which is entirely different from Batsari, a rural area. In Jordan, private schools cater to the children's educational needs when the enrolment capacities of available public schools are overstretched. Therefore, this study's finding differs from those conducted in Syria and Jordan, where the refugees' camps are located in urban areas, and private schools are available for those who can afford them. They established that the displaced parents are from rural areas where poverty is prevalent, lacking money for feeding, let alone migrate to urban areas to enrol their children into private or public schools. These are the dilemmas faced by parents who escaped death and kidnapping while living in the IDPs camp Batsari. However, the findings of this study are similar to other studies in Jordan and Syria regarding the inability of the parents in the IDPs and refugee camps to shoulder the financial responsibilities of their children, especially school fees and other miscellaneous expenses. This further portrays the urban-rural dichotomy concerning educational opportunities and the influence of the parents' economic status and school enrolment.

Similarly, a study explained the developmental and psychological consequences of forced displacement. It shows how devastating violence and displacement can be in the first five years of the life of children. It affects the formation of intelligence, personality, social behaviour, and the capacity for later participation and productivity in their communities, workplaces, and societies (Nickerson, Aderka, Bryant, and Hofman, 2012). Children in refugee and IDP camps require special attention, but they are commonly forgotten (Shonkoff et al., 2016). They are invisible to those responsible for protecting them. Refugee youth, including unaccompanied minors who are the most vulnerable, face psychological distress, low performance in school, and issues in cultural and social integration (Sirin and Rogers-Sirin, 2015). These long-lasting effects could have been attenuated and even prevented by early intervention with Early Childhood Development (ECD) and education strategies (Pacione, Measham & Rousseau, 2013).

It could be deduced from the reviewed literature that ECD alleviates childhood trauma, toxic stress, and deprivation, creating the human and social capital needed for development and contributes to peace-building (Yale University & Mother-Child Education Foundation, 2012). Education is crucial because it helps break the intergenerational transmission of economic and education poverty. ECD has an especially significant benefit in the developing world, where most refugees are located, and more are on the verge of coming. The benefits to society are also substantial: increased parenting assistance and ECD lead to better outcomes in education and lower spending on social assistance and welfare, and reduced criminality, thereby increasing social and cultural cohesion (World Bank, 2015). ECD protects children from exploitation and helps them become productive youth with increased livelihood access (NGO Committee on Migration, 2016). The finding underscores the importance of early childhood education and its connection to shaping the future of children affected by armed violence. The causes of armed violence examined by the World Bank, Nickerson, Aderka, Bryant & Hofman; Shonkoff, and others were not kidnapping and cattle rustling which are irregular violence, unlike common causes of violence in other parts of Nigeria and Africa, which are political, economic, religious and ethnic factors. Further, Chehab (2016) found that education can save and sustain the lives of young children and their families, offering physical, cognitive, and psychosocial protection when delivered in safe, neutral spaces. Education restores children's routine and gives them hope for the future; it can also serve as a channel for meeting other basic humanitarian needs and communicating vital messages that promote safety and well-being.

Methodology

The study design adopted is participatory action research suitable for a study focusing on individual and group issues, especially their biological identity, socio-cultural, and experiences. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting respondents who participated in the study. The aim was to identify children who are supposed to be in school in the villages affected by armed violence. The study focused on children in their formative stage, defined as early childhood, from birth to 3 years, and their mothers. The researchers adopted non-participant observation of children in their early childhood and their parents, mainly because they spent more time with the children. The researchers, for five days, observed how the children in the Internally Displaced Camps (IDPs) behaved, played, and interacted with other children and their parents in the seven most affected Local Government Areas in Katsina State in Nigeria: Jibiya, Kankara, Faskari, Kurfi, Batsari, Safana and Dutsin-Ma. A roll call of targeted children was taken, and the researchers visited them in their makeshift tents and classrooms turned rooms in the morning and evening for fourteen days. Seven In-Depth Interviews were conducted with the mothers or caregivers of the children. This has enabled the researchers to obtain information regarding the psychological trauma faced by the children. The rationale behind relying on caregivers is that the children have not reached an age to discuss with the researchers. Therefore, caregivers who spend much of their time together are in a better position to narrate how the children behave and act. This helped them to notice their mood swings and abnormal behaviours in children compared to how they behaved before the displacement. Also, seven

Key Informant Interviews (KII) were held with the camps' overseers to obtain first-hand information from those involved in the administrative control of the camp. Cross-sectional research was adopted because it enables the researchers to collect data within a short period due to the nature of the targeted population and violence in the areas. The conflict in the affected areas is not protracted but an emergency created by the activities of the armed bandits, kidnapers, and cattle rustlers.

Similarly, secondary data were collected from the IDP officials to know the IDPs by age, sex, and location. The officials have a book where all IDPs are registered before they settle in the camp. This has enabled the researchers to know the age category of the displaced population. The aim, therefore, is not only to explain the condition of the children in IDPs camp, but also the effects of such conditions on various stages of human development: teenage, adolescence, and adulthood. These developmental stages are closely related to the health, behaviour, emotion, and attitude of children 0-3 years old because the brain is not fully developed at that age, their body system is vulnerable to diseases, and complete socialization has not taken place.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The study elicited data from fourteen interviews and observations in seven Local Government Areas in Katsina State. The parents' consent of the children was sought to observe them in their tents in the Internally Displaced Camps (IDPs). The data collected from the cross-sectional study were transcribed verbatim, analysed, and presented thematically based on the study's objectives. Non-participant observations were carried out at the displaced settlements provided by the Katsina State Government. Also, secondary data were sourced from the camp officials, which classified the IDPs based on age, sex, and village. The data aided the generalization of findings on the population of the targeted children for this study, the IDPs.

Children in Emergency Situation

The findings revealed three hundred and fifty 0-3 years children in the seven LGAs visited. For some of the children, their parents were either in captivity by kidnapers or killed by the armed bandits who invaded their villages in search of cattle and other livestock. Some infants who lost their mothers were left in the camps' care of lactating mothers. This has further complicated the condition of the already emaciated nursing mothers who suffered from malnutrition and hunger. The number of displaced children has been increasing daily as the armed bandits and kidnapers frequently ransack villages. The study further revealed the environment's poor sanitation for the children with their parents or foster parents in the IDPs settlement. In addition to poor nutrition due to inadequate provision of a balanced diet, the children live in some overcrowded classrooms in schools. This exposed them to infectious diseases because of their weak immune system at the formative age. Specifically, most infants suffer from malaria, cholera, and other childhood diseases. During the Key Informant Interview (KII) in Kankara Local Government Area, a caregiver in one of the displaced persons' settlements working with the Katsina Government stated that:

Since the attacks and raiding of villages by the armed bandits and kidnapers in 2018, more than one hundred children died of hunger, malaria, cholera, and malnutrition in this settlement. The Katsina State Government provides not do enough to feed the children and their mothers. As you can see, there are no trained medical personnel, medical facilities, and drugs to address the health needs of the most vulnerable group to infection and disease.

A nursing mother, during an In-Depth Interview (IDI) in Faskari LGA, revealed that:

We and our infant live in classrooms without doors and windows in this rainy season where Mosquitoes are too much here. There are no insecticide-treated nets for Mosquitoes and the First Aid Team here in the IDP Camp has not

had enough malaria drugs for infants and nursing mothers. Precisely, on 30th August 2019, three children 0-4 years died as a result of convulsion caused by acute malaria.

It could be deduced that children in the displaced settlements were exposed to different diseases. Some could be deadly, like malaria and cholera, while some can cause permanent impairment and disability in children like poliovirus and measles. This implies that the children who were supposed to be in their early childhood school were uprooted from their homes by the armed violence. Apart from being out of school, they were also susceptible to diseases that led to premature deaths.

A caregiver in an IDP settlement in Batsari, which has a total of twenty thousand registered displaced adults and children, encapsulated the health situation of infants in the camp and stated thus:

Our major challenge in this camp is to look after this vulnerable to infection' children, especially in the rainy season. as you can see, some of the children their mothers were killed or kidnapped by the bandits. There is no provision of special packages of either food or drugs for infants and nursing mothers. The infants at this early stage in life need protection from hazardous or harsh weather conditions especially rain and cold weather. The government and other do- nor agencies were more focused on the provision of foodstuff in the supply of relief materials to the displaced persons.

Similarly, a critical observation was made by a supervisor of an IDP in Jibiya LGA during KII. Even though there was no camp, there were places where the IDPs converged daily to collect food packages from the government. They recounted that:

The food given to the IDPs lacked nutritious content and may cause stunted growth in children and may affect the cognitive development of the children. The problems faced by the children, especially those at infant stage, are numerous, ranging from hunger, malnutrition, and non-provision of emergency healthcare services in the camp.

Similarly, observation showed that most children who lost their parents, especially mothers, refused to be integrated, interact and mingle with other children in the camp. There is no arrangement for the deployment of caregivers who can handle children who find integrating with other persons in the camp challenge. The absence of specialists trained to give infants emotional comfort has put the lives of the displaced children in danger apart from the catastrophe that forcibly sacked them from their respective villages.

Early Child Education and Development in Emergency Situation

There was no record of registered children in their early childhood in the IDP camps. The only available record of children was for infants who lost their mothers to death or were kidnapped for ransom. The available records in all the seven Local Government Areas showed 350 children who were supposed to be mothers receiving breastfeeding. The study found that this category of children in the age cohort defined as early childhood relied on the relief materials provided by the government for the adults. Children, specifically, 3- 8 years old whose villages were destroyed by the armed bandits were not enrolled in school, which in Nigeria it is called early child class or play class, which is a reflection of the overall low enrolment into formal education in Northern Nigeria; the region has the highest rate of out-of-school children in the country. Similarly, the findings further showed that Katsina Government had supplied relief materials to the IDPs, but it did not include makeshift Classes for children who are supposed to be in preschool are known as early childhood in Nigeria. A Government Official in one of the IPDs settlements in the Kankara Local Government Area recounted that:

Children who are supposed to be in early child class and primary schools are left without any temporary school here in the camp before normalcy is returned to their areas. We fear that nobody knows when the violence will end and if these children are left to grow up without education, their later life will be unpredictable and catastrophic.

Furthermore, a mother during IDI submitted that:

These children, especially those who will grow up without knowing their parents and no education would become nuisance and problems to society. The children will be faced with at least two problems in their adolescent and adult life: the traumatic experience of violence and illiteracy. The Government and other relief agencies pretend as if they are not aware of the number of children who by this September 2019 are expected to enrol in early child class or move to the next class for those who were already at the age of primary school.

Additionally, most displaced persons expressed concern over the psychological trauma experienced by infants who had an encounter with armed bandits or kidnappers in their respective villages. It was observed that some of the children who lost their parents were below eight years in the IDP settlements. They lived in isolation and refused to play or interact with their age mates. Most of them have difficulty speaking with either male or female strangers. A member of the First Aid team in the IDP Camp in Batsari during IDI revealed that:

With the absence of any support for the infants, either from the government or Non- Governmental Organizations, to take care of those who need breastfeeding, we have resorted to giving each nursing mother an additional child to feed. However, the children in need of breastfeeding have outnumbered the lactating mothers in the camps because they too have their children to feed. Another significant issue is food for the mothers that would supply nutritious milk for child development and strength because what the IDPs receive as a meal in the camp is not sufficient and healthy for a breastfeeding mother and the child.

Another respondent in Kurfi of the LGAs with a small population of IDPs observed that:

The children are scared of this environment because of the horrific experience which led to their displacement. Most of them often ask their mothers whether the killers will come and attack them at any moment. The children are afraid of going outside the settlement for fear of the assailants or kidnappers. For the infant whose parents are nowhere to be found, the children daily enquired about the whereabouts of their parents, especially mothers. Some do reject meals in demand for their parents. The condition of the children is quite pathetic because it is very difficult to handle children at this tender age.

The above findings depicted the conditions and situation of the visiting children in the IDP settlements. It has also revealed that the psychological trauma and emotional distress of the infants in the camps were due to the absence of one or both parents, particularly mothers who are the caregivers. Similarly, in addition to a psychosocial disturbance that impaired their relationship and interaction with peers and adults, they were left with no learning facility in the camp. This implies children who grow up in this situation and condition may develop a psychological disorder, accompanied by stunted cognitive development, which leads to learning difficulty in school in the subsequent stages of education and adulthood. Because there is a tendency they would stay in the camps beyond the age of early childhood education, they cannot catch up with their contemporaries in unaffected areas.

Discussion of Major Findings

The study could deduce that apart from the health and psychological effects of armed violence in children, lack of education for children has grave consequences. The armed violence in Katsina has further disrupted an unstable educational system in Nigeria and Northern Nigeria. Already Northern Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. This correlates with the findings of Turner, Adefeso-Olateju, and Outhred (2019), which stated Nigeria's commitment to free, compulsory, and universal primary education (UBE) under the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, primary education continues to suffer from low and inequitable access. There are 31 million children of primary school age and 25 million of secondary age, with a total of 82 million children under the age of 14. Nigeria, the largest country in Africa in terms of population, has approximately 20 percent of the total out-of-school children population in the world.

In this connection, if the children displaced by the armed violence had not enrolled in schools to revive their educational development, they would end up in the lower strata of society. They may not have good jobs with decent incomes that could enable them to live decent lives. This is in line with the submission of the United Nations Development Programme and Oxford Poverty (UNDP) and Human Development Initiative (2012), which examined the effects of educational deprivation on children. It shows a total of 436 million South Asians, one in four, live in a household in which no adult has completed six years of schooling. But children are bringing about change. Of those 436 million people, 135 million, just under a third, live with a child age 10–17 who has completed six years of schooling. As the only people in their households to have completed six years of schooling.

Similarly, it could be inferred that most children who developed some maladjusted behaviour due to armed violence can affect their cognitive development later in life. It has been observed that there were children who rejected the food and refused to interact with children and adults. Therefore, living without feeding could be destructive to the health and survival of children in their early childhood. This is correlated with Businge's (2016) findings, which demonstrate that under-nutrition can affect a primary schoolchild's behaviour: Even when a child misses one meal, behaviour and academic performances are affected. A hungry child has difficulty in learning. In a classroom setting, a single child's behaviour can affect the rest of the pupils, the teacher's attention, and the overall learning atmosphere. In this case, hunger disturbs the affected child's learning but the learning of others as well (Walthouse, 2014). However, the studies conducted by Businge & Walthouse did not focus on displaced children, but it has revealed the relationship between feeding, cognitive development, and children's education.

The study revealed how the armed violence in some Local Government Areas in Katsina State displaced thousands of people. Most displaced persons took refuge in the temporary camps in Primary Schools classes in the Local Government Headquarters, where armed security personnel were present to protect them against the marauding armed bandits and kidnapers for ransom. The findings revealed that infants and children below the age of 8 constitute the largest IDP population in the camps. This showed that children in their formative age 0-8 years were the age cohort most affected by the violence and their mothers. This correlates with the submission of UNICEF and the United Nations, which stated that conflict and adverse conditions have detrimental effects on multiple aspects of children's development, including child survival, gender equity, poverty reduction, and access to universal education (UNICEF Mission Statement, 2003; United Nations, 2007; United Nations. Peacebuilding Support Office 2010).

The study further established that children who are supposed to be in early childhood school for learning and other formative age training like their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria are left out of school. This has multiple effects on the children when they grow in addition to the horrendous experience of a violent encounter with the cattle rustlers, armed bandits, and kidnapers in their areas. The children may have difficulty integrating with other members of the society who received education and care in their early childhood age because it is the most fundamental stage in human development and learning. This is

in line with the findings of Mwamwenda (2014), which examined the significance of ECE. ECE plays a significant role in introducing basic learning skills, which are vital for their subsequent formal education at all levels. Children who have had ECE have the following advantages: less likely to repeat classes, drop out of school, and less likely to be assigned to special needs classes. ECE leads to higher achievement scores; higher completion rate in subsequent years of education; no correlation between such children and criminal activity.

The study further observed that most children uprooted from their homes displayed the effects of exposure to violence in their daily life in the camps. Most targeted children whose parents were either killed or kidnapped have developed adverse emotional reactions towards other people in the camps. This will adversely affect their cognitive development as they may develop aggressive behaviour towards people, they presumed failed to protect them and played a role in perpetuating the violence. Similarly, lack of education would also aggravate their developmental challenges as they will grow without learning basic skills and possess knowledge that a child is expected to have in childhood that future social and educational development would build on. Corroborating the findings UNESCO (2011) found that conflict undermines education in many ways. Only 79 percent of young people are literate in conflict-affected developing countries, compared with 93 percent in other developing countries (UNESCO, 2011). It was further substantiated that the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has pushed more than a million learners to flee their homes and places of education (UNESCO, 2016). Globally, 75 percent of refugees of secondary education age are not in school; in Bangladesh, Kenya, and Pakistan, the proportion is closer to 95 percent (UNESCO, 2016).

Similarly, a lack of early childcare and education affects their growth and developmental stages. This correlates with a study by Obdam (2015) in the Congo Democratic Republic of Congo. The study revealed that when access to primary education is denied to millions of children, a country's stability and economic prosperity are threatened. A lack of education has economic and social consequences beyond the child and their family, their communities, and the entire country. The horrors of growing up surrounded by armed conflict can have long-lasting effects on children's psychosocial well-being. Safe and quality education in emergencies can mitigate the harmful effects of adversity in several ways. The routine of attending education can instil a renewed sense of normalcy in an otherwise chaotic and unpredictable daily experience that lacks a structured routine (Ferris and Winthrop, 2010). Safe and positive interaction with peers and adults' builds on this and allows children to rebuild a sense of trust at a time when their trust in others may have been damaged through their conflict-related experiences. This is corroborated by research conducted in some areas displaced by Boko Haram insurgents in North-eastern Nigeria. Walker (2019) and Mashitah (2020) revealed that girls who experienced the violence unleashed by the insurgents expressed fear, sadness, feeling down and low (depression), hopelessness, being overwhelmed by life, worrying, or having no feeling, just wanting to sleep. Some girls could not sleep, staying the awake night after night, praying or hiding in corners of rooms; others said that they now slept all day and night and found it challenging to attend lessons in Science Village Gombe.

Conclusion

This study has focused on irregular violence, unlike ethnic, religious, and political violence, which were the recurring triggers of conflict and violence in Nigeria and some countries. Cattle rustlers and kidnapping were not known to displace people when carrying out their acts. However, in Katsina State, armed bandits and kidnappers have displayed hundreds of people from their abode. The displaced people, particularly children, are languishing in IDPs camp in Batsari without necessities, including school. The children in the camp have already lost two academic sessions, and there is a tendency of they are missing the 2019/2020 academic session. These out-of-school children may grow up without the requisite skills and knowledge to become reasonable members of society. This is education in developing countries, where employers give much consideration to paper qualifications; depending on the qualification, educational attainment could catalyse social mobility and

break the cycle of poverty.

The effects of armed violence on children in their formative age and early childhood education create many monumental problems. Education in emergencies, if provided, plays a vital role in mitigating the disruptive effects of the violence on the social and psychological growth and development of the children in conflict in the affected areas. But in developing countries like Nigeria, education in an emergency (EIM) rarely form part of the government response to violence in the Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) settlements. This deliberate negligence of the most vulnerable group of people and an essential aspect of human development-education, further complicates the situation of the children and their future. Therefore, the continuous attacks on village areas portend grave danger for the children's future. Most children will grow up mentally unstable and socially imbalanced without the requisite skills development and employment education. From the condition of infants in the displaced settlements, Nigeria will continue to witness an unprecedented increase in the rate of out-of-school children on the one hand and mentally ill children who cannot grow as productive members of society. Children victims of interrupted early childhood education and development may grow up as criminals, aggravating the beleaguered security situation. The mentally disabled children would need special medical attention, overstressing the decrepit Nigerian healthcare system.

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