

THE IMPACT OF HUMAN DISPLACEMENT ON THE ATTAINMENT OF SDG 4 IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: The phenomenon of human displacement resulting in the production of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees has been a recurring issue in Nigeria in recent times. It affects all human engagement, most importantly the attainment of sustainable development goal number four as it pertains to access and provision of education for the vulnerable, like the displaced people who are scattered by conflicts in different locations in Nigeria. The study utilizes secondary materials to depict how human displacements and the sporadic movements of the victims- pose a challenge to the actualization of the educational goal of the sustainable development programme. The paper found that violent disruption of human settlements hinders provision and access to education among the displaced persons, thereby impeding access to education as envisioned in the Sustainable Development Goal under focus, which is anchored on widening access to quality education among the vulnerable groups. The paper is significant in that it attempts to explore the discourse on the centrality of a tranquil human settlement towards the sustenance of provision and access to education among the internally displaced in Nigeria.

Keywords: Challenge, Education, Human Displacement, Internally Displaced Persons, Refugee, Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

Violent human displacement as a result of human engagements like insurgency and banditry in various parts of Nigeria resulted in mass movement of people from their places of habitual residence, thereby affecting the provision of education and access to it among the victims as envisioned in Sustainable Development Goal number 4. As a United Nations (UN) development vision, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is meant to prolong, support, and nourish the United Nations Ambitious Millennium Development Goals (MDG) anchored on the promotion of human capital through many sectors, including education. The central target of the SDG in this regard is the enhancement and consolidation of the modest achievements recorded by the MDG via more educational provisions, thereby widening its access to the citizens. This provision of education and widening its access is always influenced by, among others, the attainment of a peaceful and tranquil environment where the human element and its settlement are not threatened and uprooted.

In Nigeria, since the year 2016 when the Sustainable Development Goals were conceived and launched by the UN, the incidence of human displacement resulted in refugee movement from Nigeria to Niger, Chad, and Cameroonians well as the movement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has become a norm instead of an exception. There are tangible and physical pieces of evidence that demonstrate that people, communities, and their properties were violently uprooted and displaced mainly due to the activities of insurgents and bandits in the Northeast and Northwest of Nigeria.

These developments, according to Idegu (2014), result in or produce disorganized human settlements, each of which comprises mainly people from different locations and communities that have not interacted intimately before. Also, the crisis that produced these displaced people was so intense that in 2014 alone, 700,000 Nigerians were displaced (Kangiwa, 2014). This development inhibits their access to education and the provision of educational facilities, which the Sustainable Development program seeks to support. The sporadic attacks on several communities in the states of Borno, Yobe, Zamfara, Kaduna, Adamawa, and Sokoto also came along with it a massive destruction of critical educational infrastructure like schools and learning materials provided under the defunct MDGs which constitutes a challenge to the mission and vision of SDG as it pertains to sustainable access to education. The study, therefore, unravels the challenge posed by violent human displacement to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal number 4 on widening access to education among internally displaced persons as a demographic category of vulnerable groups in Nigeria. This study is divided into five sections. The first section is the introduction. The second section is about conceptual clarification. The third section is about conflict, human displacement, and education as it pertains to the safety of infrastructure and continuity. Section four of the paper covers the challenge posed by human displacement towards the education goal of SDG targeted at widening access to education. The last section provides the conclusion.

Conceptual Clarification

This section attempts to clarify very important concepts that are repeated in sections of the work. The main aim of the clarification is to explain the concepts and highlight their general meanings and specific application in this work so as to appreciate their applicability to this study.

Education

As conceived by the Federal Government of Nigeria, education is a sustainable, lifelong learning that provides reading, writing, and numeracy skills. It comprises a wide variety of formal and non-formal educational activities and programs designed to enable learners to acquire functional literacy (FGN, 1990). In the context of this paper, education entails more provision and sustenance of access to education by the victims of human displacement technically seen as Internally Displaced persons who are violently uprooted in parts of Nigeria and live in disorganized settlements in parts of Nigeria and whose quest for access to education is under serious threat by the uncertainties of their new places of abode.

Human Displacement

This involves the forceful displacement of humans by both natural and human-induced factors, as a result of which people move to another location for safety (UNHCR, 2008). In this work, human displacement specifically has to do with many incidences of human displacement in recent years, which are caused by insurgents and Bandit attacks in parts of the Northeast and Northwest of Nigeria, as a result of which many people are displaced, thereby affecting their access to education.

Refugee

A refugee according to the UN and as is domesticated in Nigeria's Act (1991), is one who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail himself the protection of that country. A refugee is also a victim of colonialism and natural disaster who crosses an international border as conceived in the Nigeria Act on Refugee. Therefore, refugees, as used here, are victims of persecution by the insurgents, bandits and other criminal non-state actors in the Northeast and Northwest of Nigeria because of which they are forced to seek safety by crossing into neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon and whose educational needs are of concern to the SDG document.

Internally Displaced Persons

These are victims of forceful displacement either by natural or human-induced factors because of which they relocate to safer parts of their country (UN, 2008). As used in this paper, IDPs are the victims of forced displacements as a result of attacks by both insurgents and bandits in Northern Nigeria who left their places of habitual residences and stayed in different locations within Nigeria and whose access to education is of interest to SDG document.

Sustainable Development Goals

According to the UN (2017), these are goals that are designed to build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals aimed at promoting growth and addressing social needs in education, health, job provision, etc, among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. In this study, SDG has to do with the utilization of its goal number four on education so as to widen access to Education for the internally displaced persons in the so-called safety settlements they relocated and the challenges involved.

Challenge

This has to do with stimulating difficulties or duel involved in doing and accomplishing a task (Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2000). As is used here, challenge entails the hitches or stimulating difficulties encountered in widening access to education for the displaced people who are scattered in several disorganized settlements, which hinders effective educational support to them through the SDG.

Conflict, Human Displacement And Education Infrastructure

In all the theatres of conflict, such as the insurgency activities of Boko Haram and kidnapping and rustling by the bandits, the wave of destruction affects both human and non-human elements of the environment. It is, however, very difficult to provide an exact number of people displaced and particularly educational infrastructure either attacked or destroyed as a result of these conflicts in Nigeria. This is caused largely by the problems of poor record keeping, inadequate logistics, falsification of figures, and the intensive nature of the generalized violence, which forced many people to leave their places of habitual residence hurriedly. In the Northeast of Nigeria, where Boko Haram insurgents launched a sustained offensive for many years, which destroyed lives and educational infrastructures, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) estimates that there were 1,934,765 displaced people across the states of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba. This estimate did not include displaced people hosted at informal camps, private residences, and in places where the IDPs sought protection like Kano, Kaduna and Abuja as well as Neighbouring Countries of Cameroun, and Niger Republic. For instance, in 2014, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2014) reveals that as of 2013, there were some 12,000 Nigerian refugees in Northern Cameroon, 1,000 in Chad, and 20,000 in Niger.

All these displaced people belong to different communities in their states of origin or habitual residence. The attack by the insurgents and the bandits respects no boundary as they spare nothing which results in several negative consequences. It stresses the victims and heightens their perception of injustice, insecurity and deprivation. More importantly, the destruction of schools as basic educational infrastructure indicates much about its negative impact on the human capital development aspiration of Nigeria. In fact, a violent human displacement, which often comes along with the destruction of infrastructure, not only affects the victim's capacity for self-development but also significantly impacts the overall human development plans of the country. This is easily acceptable if viewed against the wave of destruction caused by the bandits and the Boko Haram insurgents whose onslaught generally threatened human security, destroyed infrastructure, and weakened basic institutions and economic growth.

President Buhari confirmed the massive destruction of public institutions, including schools, which was so alarming and widespread that the Federal Government faces the problem of repairing the schools and recruiting teachers to teach in risk-prone IDP settlements (Buhari, 2016). A good testimony about the series of attacks on schools and brutal murder of innocent students was given by the Yobe State Governor, who revealed that Yobe State has suffered the largest school-based casualties with 128 students killed in four schools while there were 309,509 registered IDPs, most of who are of school age (Gaidam, 2016). This official estimate did not include the attack and kidnap of students of Dapchi Girls Secondary School in the state, which came as a replica of the attack and kidnap of girls from Chibok Secondary School in Borno State. Some IDPs stay in school for safety, and often, the schools are overcrowded. When IDPs in large numbers occupy and stay in schools, all formal school programs for pupils of host communities are suspended, thereby compounding the unprecedented protection crisis as it concerns educational provision and access. In places where makeshift learning outfits are established, they are mostly overcrowded as they have to accommodate the children of the hosts and the IDPs which makes both the teaching and learning environments very uncomfortable for both teachers and students. These sometimes result

in the outbreak of epidemic as was reported at the Arabic Teachers College camp in Maiduguri, which housed 8,034 displaced persons, leading to death and spread of the disease, which stalled schooling among the students (Abubakar,2016)

In some so-called organized camps where IDPs are housed, the educational provisions are, to say the least, poor as revealed by a published survey of IDP camps in Abuja by Michael (2017) who found that:

- a) The teachers in IDP Primary schools do not receive their salary as and when due.
- b) The schools contain makeshift structures that are run by non-governmental Organizations that are out to exploit innocent children by securing aid in the name of the children from philanthropists and diverting it for personal use.
- c) The few available classes are overcrowded, with, for instance, a kindergarten class with more than 108 pupils.
- d) The ill-motivated teachers often contribute money to buy teaching aids like markers and lesson notebooks.

These conditions are not learner-friendly and cannot aid teaching and learning. The root of this predicament was the violent displacement which forced the victims to seek safety in an environment where essential educational infrastructure does not exist to promote access to education for the displaced. In a worst-case scenario like those where payment of salary is irregular and classrooms are temporarily erected and overcrowded, the quest for educational empowerment for the IDPs is an unachievable mission.

Also, effective learning and teaching cannot flourish in any community or society unless the community enjoys security, consensus, and prosperity, all of which are lacking among the IDP settlements in Nigeria. After violent displacement, which, among other things, destroyed their homes and the schools in their places of habitual residence, most displaced persons relocate to new settlements, which increases their vulnerability to invasions and attacks by miscreants with different motivations. They are, therefore, unsettled and with little chance of prosperity, which impedes the easy acquisition of knowledge by their kids, who, like their parents, also face tough lives. The documented case of a displaced kid who cannot go to school because of Boko Haram insurgents that displaced his community; exposed to harsh living conditions in the uncompleted two-storey building that serves as his home; forced to sleep on the bare floor; and plays in a dirty environment with the smell of human waste all over (Idegu & Akowe, 2015) represents a pathetic picture of the consequences of human displacement and destruction of education infrastructure and how it can inhibits widening of access to education as in the goal of the SDG.

Human Displacement as a Challenge to SDG Goal 4 of Education

There is an inextricable link between the imperative of sustainable development and the wave of human displacement regarding goal number four of the SDGs: access to quality education. While the former is exemplified by the quest for and attainment of self-fulfillment of citizens through the sustenance and widening of educational provision and access as enunciated in the SDG, the latter is about the wave of forced displacement of people from their places of habitual residence,

destroying lives, properties, and essential infrastructure. The latter tends to have a strong security and social equity implication, which retards the progress of displaced communities and individual self-fulfilment, particularly where it concerns access to education.

Before the adoption of SDG in January 2016 by the UN as an agenda for sustainable development, the UN General Assembly adopted the MDG to promote global partnership of countries and other development partners committed to eight voluntary development goals to be achieved by 2015. One of these goals is the widening of access to universal primary education. The road to the attainment of the MDG goals has witnessed unprecedented mobilization of resources across a wide spectrum of national and international initiatives, including the convening of gatherings of development partners at certain intervals to assess the progress recorded. Some of these engagements include the 2005 World Summit, which reaffirmed global commitment to the MDG (U.N., 2005), and another one was the 2008 gathering in New York which announced multiple initiatives to accelerate the attainment of the millennium agenda of which education is key (U.N., 2008).

In its achievement, the MDG did not only reshape the global discourse on development, bringing primary education and an expanded access to it to the top of the global agenda, but it also expanded development assistance between 2000 and 2014, which reached \$135 billion (UN, 2015). The expansion and utilization of these grants in Nigeria and other developing countries resulted in significant progress in education. The report shows that the primary school net enrolment rate reached 91% in 2015, up from 83% in 2000. Many more girls enrolled in schools, thereby achieving the target of eliminating gender disparity in primary education. (Cadwell, 2009).

The achievements credited to MDG, whose pillar of sponsorship includes donor governments, international agencies, and country decision-makers, cannot certainly be overwhelming. In Nigeria, for instance, provision and expansion of access to education for the vulnerable, especially the internally displaced people, remain abysmal. They left their places of habitual residence where school infrastructures were destroyed by invading attackers and settled in disorganized and staggered locations. As at the period of the winding up of the MDG and its replacement with SDGs in 2015, the wave of displacement and destruction of educational infrastructure has reached a climax in the conflict areas where the bulk of the displaced persons were uprooted, like Borno, Yobe, Nassarawa, and Adamawa. Many communities and their infrastructure were destroyed, which left virtually little to sustain and consolidate.

The SDG goals were meant to consolidate and sustain, among others, the achievement of the MDG in education. It is to ensure everyone has access to learning no matter who they are or where they are, including vulnerable people, children in difficulty, and persons with disabilities (U.N., 2017). A deep look into the travails and conditions of the IDPs clearly suggests that they are vulnerable people whose children of school age live in extreme deprivation and difficulty, which should be of concern to the SDG. They face psychological trauma; they are often on the move and unstable due to frequent attacks on their camps and makeshift safety zones. As Hamza (2005) rightly asserts, IDPs are the most at-risk population in the world. These conditions of the IDPs pose a serious challenge to the attainment of the goal of widening access to education for them. A stable human environment with a minimized threat is a necessary requirement for SDG to succeed. This

stable human settlement, according to the UNUN (2017), must be peaceful and non-violent so that people can receive quality education. However, generally, the settlements of IDPs are not peaceful and are largely violent-prone. The IDPs are initially violently displaced and thereafter face violence, which is two-fold in nature. They experience violence as they move in search of uncertain safety and are sporadically attacked where they finally settle. This violence and unfriendly situation make the provision of education for them difficult and quite often impossible.

Closely linked to these factors, which hinder access to education as envisioned under the SDGs, is the issue of recruitment into forced labour and discrimination within communities hosting IDPs, which are common occurrences against the IS. Forced labour and bullying of children exacerbate psychological stress, foster feelings of inferiority, and increase vulnerability among school-age children in IDP settlements. All of these factors contribute to reduced access to education as outlined by the SDG objectives.

Also, an attempt to widen the scope of access to education can only come to fruition when there is a proper record of the beneficiaries. In most IDP settlements in Nigeria, the figure of the residents is falsified by aid workers in order to attract assistance, which is often diverted for personal use instead of channelling it for the benefit of IDPs. For instance, when the Borno state Government began a thorough headcount of IDPs at Gobio and Bakassi Camps, it was discovered that only 2,027 IDPs as opposed to 6,000 IDPs and less than 1,000 IDPs as opposed to 10,000 IDPs respectively, stayed on the camps (Okoye, 2016). This wave of corruption, which even forced the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, to launch an anti-corruption crusade in IDP camps (Magu, 2016), constitutes a hindrance to the widening of access to education for the IDPs as the SDG seeks to do. It is challenging to plan and expand access to education in situations where the exact number of beneficiaries is not ascertained. The sustenance strategies of the SDG cannot be executed on a distorted and outrightly falsified size of the displaced persons who are meant to benefit. In the absence of accurate data, it is nearly impossible to prepare a needed curriculum, train enough teachers, provide enough instructional materials, and other essential indicators of widening access to education, which is the hallmark of goal number four of the SDG.

Indeed, the dream of widening access to education among the IDPs through the SDG is also threatened by the general security challenge in the IDP environment. Education cannot flourish in a community that does not enjoy security, consensus, and prosperity, as is typical in most IDP settlements in Nigeria. For instance, when insurgents barbarically attacked the Mubi camp, all the residents had to flee for safety to Cameroon and leave behind the makeshift schools meant to provide access to education for the inhabitants (Abubakar, 2014). This threat-induced migration affects the psychological composure and disposition of the IDPs with a lasting impact on them even in the new settlements they relocate to. As a result, they do not have the mental and emotional composure and disposition to access the educational provision provided for them. Even in IDP camps where a documented report indicates that most IDP children who are housed in camps are eager to learn and their parents are willing to support them (Matazu, 2016), the extreme deprivation confronting the parents tends to inhibit the translation of the willingness into action as most of them cannot feed, cloth, or take care of shelter needs of their families. Under this condition, it is difficult for them to garner enough resources to complement the role of government and other stakeholders towards the provision of education for their children as envisaged under the SDG.

The sustainability of any educational programme, including those under the SDG, depends largely on the involvement of all stakeholders in a community. Parents are the major stakeholders in any IDP camps and their involvement is essential in ensuring an enduring culture of sustainable education for their kids. On the other hand, and as it is obtained in some IDP settlements, their exclusion from planning, funding, and management of schools meant for their kids has the potential of hindering the attainment of the goals of SDG of empowering them.

Conclusion

It is, indeed, a truism that a sustainable development programme, particularly its goal number 4 on education, is meant to widen educational access to the vulnerable groups of which IDPs are an important component. As depicted earlier, sustainable access to education, which includes the provision of more infrastructure, teacher recruitment and training, development of curriculum around skills acquisition, and enhanced participation of critical stakeholders, is hardly tenable within IDP communities, which are heavily congested, disorganized, and prone to attacks. As highlighted in the paper, there is also the problem of endemic poverty, unemployment, hopelessness, and psychological frustration among the IDPs in various settlements. All these not only run counter to the ideal situations envisaged for the creation of a positive learning environment but especially constitute a challenge to the actualization of the mission of SDG, which involves sustenance and widening access to education among the vulnerable group, which the IDPs in Nigeria constitute an important component. The paper demonstrates that although the ambitious goal number four was meant to ginger development globally through the promotion of education, its realization can be impeded by certain peculiarities in different parts of the world. This, as revealed in this paper, is amply demonstrated in the Nigerian experience where the unique peculiarity of the environment and circumstances like incessant attacks, destruction of education infrastructure, poor humanitarian services, poverty, hopelessness, and uncertainty constitutes a challenge to the widening of access to education as the SDG is meant to do.

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