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Effectiveness of interventions: Reducing gender-based violence against women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps

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Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) disproportionately affects women and girls, creating a pervasive threat in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. This study examines the effectiveness of existing interventions designed to mitigate GBV in Nigerian IDP camps. The study uses a desktop research design to analyze data from 15 academic publications (2012-2023) focused on Nigerian IDP camps. Thematic analysis identifies key themes concerning GBV prevalence, contributing factors, and intervention effectiveness. Findings reveal sexual violence as the most prevalent form of GBV, with rape, forced marriage, and transactional sex commonly reported. Unequal power dynamics, insecurity, and disrupted gender roles are identified as contributing factors. GBV consequences include unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and mental health issues. While existing interventions – like dignity kit distribution and post-conflict care – exist, concerns around inadequacy and corruption are identified. This study underscores the need for critical assessment of existing interventions. By identifying gaps and limitations, the research aims to inform evidence-based recommendations for strengthening GBV mitigation strategies in Nigerian IDP camps.

Keywords: Interventions, Effectiveness, IDP camps, GBV, IDPs

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive global issue affecting millions of women and girls, constituting a significant public health and human rights crisis[2]. Conflict and displacement exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, creating a climate of fear and hindering safety, health, and well-being[3]. Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, characterized by overcrowding, limited

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[2] Adichie, G. A. (2021). The Experiences of Internally Displaced Women and Girls in Nigeria and the Implementation of the WPS Agenda. *Indiana Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *2*(7), 29-34.
[3] UNHCR. (2021, November 19). Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Refugee Camps. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/90962

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resources, and disrupted social structures, become breeding grounds for GBV[4]. Studies reveal a disturbing prevalence of GBV in IDP camps worldwide. Research specific to Nigeria highlights sexual violence as the most common form, with rape, forced marriage, and transactional sex being prevalent[5]. Unequal power dynamics, insecurity due to the displacement context, and the disruption of traditional gender roles are identified as key factors contributing to GBV in IDP camps[6].

The consequences of GBV for women and girls in IDP camps are severe. Physical injuries, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and long-term mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and PTSD are just some of the devastating repercussions[7]. Beyond the immediate physical harm, GBV in IDP camps has a profound impact on a woman or girl's ability to function and participate in daily life. Fear of violence can restrict their movement, limiting access to essential services like food distribution points, sanitation facilities, or healthcare centers[8]. This not only increases the risk of further violence but also hinders their ability to meet basic needs and contribute to their family's well-being.

The psychological trauma associated with GBV can be long-lasting and debilitating. Feelings of shame, isolation, and fear can significantly impact mental health. Studies have shown a strong correlation between GBV and the development of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)[9]. These mental health conditions can further hinder a woman or girl's ability to cope with the challenges of displacement and rebuild their lives. The cycle of violence can even continue into the next generation, as children who witness GBV are more likely to experience or perpetrate violence themselves in the future.

While interventions aiming to mitigate GBV in IDP camps exist, their effectiveness remains a crucial area of investigation. Existing research often focuses on broader geographical regions, with limited studies specifically

[4] Adinma, J. I. B. D., Oguaka, V. N., Ugbaja, J. O., Umeononihu, O. S., Adinma-Obiajulu, N. D., & Okeke, O. L. (2019). Experience of, and Perception on Gender Based Violence (GBV) by Pregnant Women in South Eastern Nigeria. *Advances in Reproductive Sciences*, *7*(4), 113-124

[5] Agbaje, F. I. (2020). The objectified female body and the Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria: Insights from IDP camps in Abuja. *African Security Review*, *29*(1), 3-19.

[6] Bawa, A. G., & Kaur, S. (2023). Gender-Based Violence: Implications for Girl-Child Education in Some Selected Displaced Persons Camps in Maiduguri. *Education Research International*, *2023*.

[7] García-Moreno, E., Tjaden, P., Hague, G., Rivas, A., & Violence against Women Working Group. (2016). World report on violence and health: summary. World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9241545615

[8] UNHCR - gender-based violence (2022). Available from: https://www.unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html. Gender-based violence in emergencies, UNICEF Available from: https://www.unicef.org/protection/gender-based-violence-in-emergencies.

[9] García-Moreno et al., (2016)

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examining the Nigerian context[10]. Furthermore, concerns have been raised regarding the adequacy and effective implementation of existing interventions.

Limitations of Existing Interventions

While interventions exist to address GBV within IDP camps, their effectiveness in the Nigerian context faces several limitations. Here's a closer look at these challenges:

- Cultural Appropriateness:

Current interventions might not be culturally sensitive or adapted to the specific socio-cultural norms of Nigerian communities residing in IDP camps. A "one-size-fits-all" approach can be insensitive to existing beliefs and practices related to gender roles, sexuality, and reporting mechanisms for GBV. This cultural disconnect can lead to low participation, limited trust in the interventions, and ultimately, reduced effectiveness.

- Addressing Specific Needs and Vulnerabilities:

The needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps may be unique and require targeted interventions. Existing programs might not adequately address these specificities. For instance, interventions focused solely on raising awareness may not be enough for women facing high risks of intimate partner violence within the camp setting. Additionally, the needs of marginalized groups within the camp population, such as adolescent girls, pregnant women, or women with disabilities, might be overlooked entirely.

- Resource Constraints and Logistical Challenges:

IDP camps are often characterized by limited resources and logistical difficulties. Insufficient funding, lack of trained personnel, and inadequate infrastructure can significantly hinder the implementation and reach of GBV mitigation programs. For example, a lack of proper lighting in camp pathways at night can limit the effectiveness of promoting safe spaces for women.

- Limited Data on Effectiveness:

A crucial limitation lies in the scarcity of data on the effectiveness of existing interventions in Nigerian IDP camps. Without proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, it's difficult to assess the true impact of these programs, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate their return on investment to secure continued funding. The lack of data also makes it challenging to hold implementing agencies accountable for achieving intended outcomes.

These limitations highlight the need for a critical assessment of current GBV mitigation strategies in Nigerian IDP camps. By understanding these

[10] Capasso, A., Skipalska, H., Guttmacher, S., Tikhonovsky, N. G., Navario, P., & Castillo, T. P. (2021). Factors associated with experiencing sexual violence among female gender-based violence survivors in conflict-afflicted eastern Ukraine. *BMC Public Health*, *21*(1), 1-16.

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shortcomings, your research can pave the way for developing more culturally appropriate, needs-based, and evidence-based interventions that can effectively address GBV and ensure the safety and well-being of women and girls in these vulnerable settings.

Rationale for This Study

Given the limitations of existing research and the severity of GBV in Nigerian IDP camps, a critical assessment of current interventions is essential. This study aims to address this gap by examining the effectiveness of existing GBV mitigation strategies in Nigerian IDP camps. By analyzing existing data (reports, evaluations) and incorporating stakeholder perspectives (NGOs, camp authorities), this research seeks to identify strengths, weaknesses, and limitations within the current methods and approaches.

Materials and Method

This study employed a desktop research design to explore the effectiveness of interventions aimed at mitigating gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls in Nigerian Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the logistical challenges of accessing IDP camp settings, existing data and documents were analyzed to achieve the research objectives.

Population

The target population of this research was women and girls residing in IDP camps within Nigeria. These women and girls face a heightened risk of GBV due to the disruptions caused by conflict and displacement. Factors such as overcrowded living conditions, limited access to basic necessities, and the breakdown of social structures can create an environment conducive to violence. Understanding the experiences of women and girls in IDP camps and the effectiveness of interventions aimed at protecting them is crucial for informing evidence-based policies and practices.

However, due to the limitations of a desktop research design, this study did not directly interact with the target population. Conducting interviews, surveys, or focus groups with women and girls in IDP camps would have provided valuable first-hand accounts of GBV experiences and the impact of interventions. However, ethical considerations around potential risks of re-traumatization and the logistical challenges of gaining access to secure and confidential research settings within IDP camps made a desktop research design more suitable for this study.

Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select relevant data sources. This approach involved systematically identifying existing literature and documents that specifically addressed GBV in Nigerian IDP camps and the effectiveness of interventions aimed at mitigating it. The selection process prioritized data sources that met the following criteria:

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- Focus on Nigeria: The research focused on GBV within the specific context of Nigerian IDP camps. Studies or reports addressing GBV in IDP camps from other countries were excluded.

- Published between 2012 and 2024: The timeframe ensured the data captured recent trends and interventions related to GBV in Nigerian IDP camps.

- Relevance to Research Objectives: The data sources needed to directly address the research objectives of exploring the types of GBV faced by women and girls, contributing factors, existing interventions, their effectiveness, and associated challenges.

Data Sources

The following data sources were utilized for the study:

- Academic Publications: Peer-reviewed academic journals published between 2012 and 2024 were prioritized. These journals focused on fields such as public health, social work, gender studies, and conflict studies. Electronic databases such as ScienceDirect, JSTOR, and PubMed were used to search for relevant publications using keywords like "gender-based violence," "internally displaced persons," "Nigeria," and "IDP camps."

- Reports: Reports published by reputable organizations working on GBV issues in Nigeria were included. These organizations included Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and government bodies. Reports focusing on specific interventions implemented in Nigerian IDP camps or on the overall situation of GBV within these settings were prioritized. Websites of relevant organizations and online databases were searched to identify appropriate reports.

- Policy Briefs and Working Papers: Policy briefs and working papers from relevant organizations can offer valuable insights on the policy landscape surrounding GBV interventions in Nigerian IDP camps. These documents were obtained from the websites of NGOs, UN agencies, and government bodies involved in GBV prevention and response efforts.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze the data gathered from the selected sources. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting recurring themes within a dataset. This method was chosen due to its flexibility in exploring a broad range of data sources and its ability to identify both explicit and implicit patterns related to the research objectives.

Thematic analysis involved a systematic process of coding data from the selected sources. Codes were then grouped into broader themes based on their

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similarities and relationships. These themes provided insights into the following key areas:

- Types of GBV faced by women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps.
- Contributing factors to GBV within these settings.
- Existing interventions aimed at mitigating GBV in Nigerian IDP camps, including their scope and implementation strategies.
- The reported effectiveness of these interventions based on the data sources.
- Challenges and limitations associated with current interventions, including resource constraints, cultural appropriateness, and data gaps.

Ethical Considerations

Although this study involved secondary data analysis, ethical considerations remained important. Data anonymization was maintained throughout the research process to protect the identities of women and girls who may have been involved in the studies or reports being analyzed. This involved removing any identifying information from the data before analysis and ensuring all reporting of findings maintained participant anonymity. Additionally, proper attribution was given to all data sources used in the research.

Theoretical Framework: Ecological Systems Theory (EST)

This study utilizes the Ecological Systems Theory (EST), developed by[11], as a theoretical framework to understand the complex interplay of factors contributing to GBV against women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps. EST posits that the interaction of nested environmental systems influences human development, each with varying degrees of influence on individual behavior[12].

Microsystem:

The innermost layer of the EST, the microsystem, represents the immediate settings where individuals interact face-to-face[13]. In the context of IDP camps, the microsystem encompasses the immediate living environment of women and girls, including their relationships with family members, camp residents, and camp officials. Power dynamics within these relationships can influence vulnerability to GBV. For example, unequal power dynamics within families or a lack of supportive social networks can increase the risk of intimate partner violence or sexual exploitation.

Mesosystem:

[11] Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2007). The bioecological model of human development. *Handbook of child psychology*, *1*.
[12] Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). Ecological systems theory (1992).
[13] Donelli, I., & Matas, G. (2020). Ecological Systems Theory:(Re) Constructing Identity in Toni Morrison's Beloved. *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu*, (13), 111-130.

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The mesosystem refers to the interactions between the microsystems that an individual experience. Within IDP camps, the mesosystem includes the interplay between the living environment, available services, and security measures. Limited access to healthcare, sanitation facilities, or psychosocial support services can exacerbate the consequences of GBV for women and girls. Inadequate security measures within the camp, such as poor lighting or lack of designated safe spaces, can create an environment conducive to violence.

Exosystem:

The exosystem encompasses the broader social settings that indirectly influence the microsystem. In the context of GBV in IDP camps, the exosystem includes factors like prevailing cultural norms regarding gender roles, social acceptance of violence, and the legal framework surrounding GBV. Cultural norms that condone violence against women or view women as subordinate to men can increase social tolerance for GBV. Weak legal systems or lack of enforcement mechanisms for GBV can create a climate of impunity for perpetrators.

Macrosystem:

The outermost layer of the EST, the macrosystem, represents the overarching societal and political contexts. For Nigerian IDP camps, the macrosystem includes factors like the root causes of conflict leading to displacement, national policies on GBV prevention and response, and the level of humanitarian aid provided to IDP camps. The root causes of conflict, such as poverty or ethnic tensions, can create social instability and increase the risk of violence against women and girls. Inadequate national policies on GBV or insufficient funding for GBV prevention and response efforts in IDP camps can hinder the effectiveness of interventions.

Chronosystem:

The chronosystem, added by Bronfenbrenner later, emphasizes the influence of historical events and socio-economic transitions on individual development and the surrounding ecological systems. For the context of GBV in Nigerian IDP camps, the chronosystem considers factors like the duration of displacement, the history of conflict in the region, and the changing demographics within the camp population over time. The prolonged nature of displacement can erode social structures and coping mechanisms, further increasing vulnerability to GBV. A history of conflict in the region can normalize violence and create a culture of impunity. Changes in the camp population, such as an influx of younger men or a decrease in male family members, can alter the dynamics of power and risk within the camp.

The Ecological Systems Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interplay of factors that contribute to GBV against

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women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps. By considering the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, this research can identify key areas for intervention and prevention strategies that address GBV across multiple ecological levels, ultimately promoting the safety and well-being of women and girls in these vulnerable settings.

Result and Findings

Types of Gender-Based Violence Faced by Women and Girls in Nigerian IDP Camps

This study aimed to identify the types of gender-based violence (GBV) faced by women and girls residing in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps within Nigeria. Utilizing a desktop research design, the study analyzed existing data sources such as academic journals, reports by NGOs and UN agencies, and policy documents. The analysis revealed a concerning prevalence of various forms of GBV against women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps.

Commonly Identified types:

- Physical Violence: Physical assault, including beatings, kicking, and slapping, emerged as a prevalent form of GBV. Studies[14],[15] highlighted domestic violence from intimate partners as a significant concern.

- Sexual Violence: Rape, forced sexual intercourse, and sexual harassment were identified as major threats to the safety of women and girls. [16]emphasized the widespread occurrence of sexual violence in conflict settings like IDP camps.

- Transactional Sex: The precarious economic situation within IDP camps can push women and girls to engage in transactional sex to meet basic needs for food, shelter, or protection. This finding aligns with[17] which provides evidence of the link between displacement, sexual violence, and unintended pregnancies in IDP camps in Northeast Nigeria. It highlights the vulnerability of displaced women and the urgent need for interventions to address the root causes of sexual violence and exploitation.

[14] Ishaku, J., Adeniran, A. P., Onyekwena, C., & Castradori, M. (2020). Building the resilience of internally displaced persons in Nigeria.
[15] Isola, A. A., & Areogun, T. A. (2022). Women, security, and gender-based violence in the northeast, Nigeria. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *24*(4), 6.
[16] García-Moreno et al. (2016)
[17] Oladeji, O., Oladeji, B., Chamla, D., Safiyanu, G., Mele, S., Mshelia, H., & Agbor, J. (2021). Sexual violence–related pregnancy among internally displaced women in an internally displaced persons camp in northeast Nigeria. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, *36*(9-10), 4758-4770.

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- Psychological and Emotional Abuse: Verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, and humiliation were identified as significant forms of GBV. These tactics can create a climate of fear and control, further limiting women and girls' agency and well-being.

- Forced and Early Marriage: Studies[18],[19] point to the increased risk of child marriage within IDP camps. Poverty and the perceived need for protection can lead families to marry off young girls, denying them educational opportunities and exposing them to the risk of domestic violence.

Contributing Factors to GBV in Nigerian IDP Camps

This section explores the contributing factors to gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls in Nigerian Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, drawing upon insights from existing data and reports. The analysis is guided by the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) framework, highlighting the interplay of factors across various ecological levels.

Microsystem:

Unequal power dynamics within families and communities can characterize IDP camp settings. Traditional gender roles that emphasize male dominance and female subordination may increase women's and girls' vulnerability to violence from intimate partners, family members, or camp residents[20]. The breakdown of social structures due to displacement can weaken support networks for women and girls. The absence of trusted confidantes or community leaders who can intervene in cases of violence can leave them feeling isolated and without recourse[21]

Mesosystem:

Overcrowded living conditions in IDP camps, combined with inadequate lighting and lack of designated safe spaces, can create an environment conducive to violence. Limited access to sanitation facilities can further restrict women's and girls' movement at night, increasing their vulnerability to attack[22]. Also, Limited access to essential services like healthcare, psychosocial support, and legal aid can have a significant impact on GBV survivors. Without proper medical care, psychological support, or legal representation, women and girls may be less likely to report violence or access justice

[18] Ugwu, M. O. (2021). Gender-based violence in situations of internal displacement: Realities faced by women within the IDP camps in Nigeria. *IRLJ*, *3*, 132.
[19] Ekezie, W. (2022). Resilience actions of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in camp-like settings: A Northern Nigeria case study. *Journal of Migration and Health*, *6*, 100115.
[20] Ferris, E. E., & Martin, S. F. (2019). The global compacts on refugees and for safe, orderly and regular migration: introduction to the special issue. *International Migration*, *57*(6), 5-18.
[21] García-Moreno et al., (2016).
[22] UNHCR, (2022)

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Exosystem:

Cultural norms that condone violence against women or view women as subordinate to men can contribute to social tolerance of GBV within IDP camps. These norms may also discourage women and girls from reporting violence or seeking help[23]. In addition, inadequate legal frameworks and weak enforcement mechanisms for GBV can create a climate of impunity for perpetrators. Women and girls may be hesitant to report violence if they perceive the justice system to be ineffective or biased against them.

Macrosystem:

The underlying causes of conflict leading to displacement, such as poverty, ethnic tensions, or political instability, can perpetuate violence and contribute to the breakdown of social order. This can create conditions where GBV is more likely to occur[24]. Insufficient funding for IDP camps can lead to a shortage of resources for GBV prevention and response programs. This can hamper efforts to raise awareness, provide support services for survivors, or train camp officials in preventing and responding to GBV.

Chronosystem:

The prolonged nature of displacement can erode coping mechanisms and social support networks, further increasing vulnerability to GBV. The longer women and girls reside in IDP camps, the greater the risk of experiencing violence. Also, changes in the camp population, such as an influx of younger men or a decrease in male family members, can alter the dynamics of power and risk within the camp. This can create new vulnerabilities for women and girls.

Scope and Implementation Strategies of GBV Mitigation Interventions in Nigerian IDP Camps

This section analyzes the scope and implementation strategies of existing GBV mitigation interventions in Nigerian IDP camps. The analysis draws upon findings from the desktop research design, which involved reviewing academic publications, reports from NGOs and UN agencies, and policy documents. Scope of Interventions: The reviewed data revealed a range of interventions aimed at mitigating GBV in Nigerian IDP camps. These interventions can be broadly categorized into the following areas:
Prevention:

- Awareness Raising: Campaigns and workshops promoting awareness about GBV, its forms, and available support services[25].

[23] Gibbs, A., Dunkle, K., Ramsoomar, L., Willan, S., Jama Shai, N., Chatterji, S., ... & Jewkes, R. (2020). New learnings on drivers of men's physical and/or sexual violence against their female partners, and women's experiences of this, and the implications for prevention interventions. *Global health action*, *13*(1), 1739845.
[24] Heise, L., Greene, M. E., Opper, N., Stavropoulou, M., Harper, C., Nascimento, M., ... & Gupta, G. R. (2019). Gender inequality and restrictive gender norms: framing the challenges to health. *The Lancet*, *393*(10189), 2440-2454
[25] UNHCR, (2022)

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- Community Mobilization: Engaging community leaders and men in promoting gender equality and challenging social norms that condone violence[26].

- Life Skills Training: Equipping women and girls with skills to increase their self-reliance, confidence, and decision-making abilities[27].

Protection:

- Safe Spaces: Establishing designated areas within the camp where women and girls feel safe and can access psychosocial support services[28].

- Improved Lighting and Security: Enhancing camp infrastructure with proper lighting and security patrols to deter violence[29].

- Cash Assistance: Providing financial resources to women and girls can empower them to leave abusive situations or meet basic needs, reducing vulnerability to transactional sex[30].

Response:

- Clinical Care: Offering medical and psychological services to survivors of GBV, including emergency contraception and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

- Case Management: Providing social support and legal assistance to survivors of GBV to navigate the justice system and access appropriate resources[31].

Implementation Strategies:

The effectiveness of GBV mitigation interventions hinges on their implementation strategies. The research identified several key strategies employed in Nigerian IDP camps:

- Collaboration: Effective interventions often involve collaboration between NGOs, UN agencies, government bodies, and camp authorities. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures a coordinated response and leverages the expertise of different actors.

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[26] Isola and Areogun, (2022)
[27] World Vision. (2020). Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: A World Vision Perspective.

[28] Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF]. (2023). Nigeria: Displaced Women Face Violence and Neglect in Borno Camps. https://www.msf.org/nigeria
[29] Human Rights Watch [HRW]. (2019). Nigeria: Urgent Action Needed to Address Sexual Violence in Camps. https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/02/authorities-nigeria-should-ensure-justiceforuwa
[30] CARE International. (2021). Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Programming for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Interventions. https://www.care.org/our-work/disaster-response/cash-and-voucher-assistance/online-training/
[31] UN Women. (2022). Ending Violence against Women and Girls in Humanitarian Settings. https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women

- Community Engagement: Successful interventions actively involve the camp community in the design, implementation, and monitoring of programs. This fosters a sense of ownership and increases the likelihood of programs being culturally appropriate and sustainable.

- Capacity Building: Training camp staff, including security personnel and healthcare providers, on GBV identification, referral mechanisms, and survivor support is crucial for effective intervention.

- Data Collection and Monitoring: Regular data collection on the prevalence and types of GBV incidents, as well as the effectiveness of interventions, is essential for program improvement and resource allocation.

Challenges and Limitations:

While various interventions exist, the research also highlighted significant challenges and limitations hindering their effectiveness:

- Resource Constraints: Limited funding and lack of essential resources can restrict the scope and reach of GBV mitigation programs.

- Logistical Challenges: Security concerns, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to remote camps can create logistical barriers to implementing interventions.

- Cultural Appropriateness: Interventions might not be culturally sensitive or address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls within the Nigerian context[32].

- Limited Data Availability: The scarcity of data on the effectiveness of existing interventions makes it difficult to assess their true impact and identify areas for improvement.

Reported Effectiveness of GBV Mitigation Interventions in Nigerian IDP Camps

This section examines the reported effectiveness of existing interventions aimed at mitigating GBV against women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps. The analysis draws upon findings from the desktop research design, acknowledging the limitations of relying solely on existing data sources.
Challenges in Assessing Effectiveness:
Studies[33],[34] and reports often lack robust methodologies for evaluating the impact of GBV interventions in IDP camps. Limited data availability on the

[32] Levine, S., Ullah, Z., Ullah Khan, S., Ahmad, M., Ghulam, S., Iqbal, R., & Uddin, S. (2019). The impact of displacement on gender roles and relations: The case of IDPs from FATA, Pakistan. *Pakistan: Humanitarian Policy Group*.
[33] Ojengbede, O., Babawarun, T., Olayiwola, O., Ogun, M., Kongnyuy, E., & Adorin, O. (2019). Sexual and gender-based violence in camps for internally displaced people and host communities in northeast Nigeria: a mixed methods study. *The Lancet Global Health*, *7*, S6.
[34] Nnaemek, N. and Ezeabasili, C. E. (2020). Coverage of Gender-Based Violence in IDP Camps: A critical Analysis of select Nigerian Newspapers.

prevalence of GBV before and after interventions makes it difficult to establish a causal relationship between programs and a reduction in violence. Additionally, the sensitive nature of GBV can lead to underreporting, further hindering accurate assessments of effectiveness.

Reported Positive Outcomes:

Despite these challenges, some data sources report positive outcomes associated with specific interventions:

- Awareness-raising campaigns: Studies suggest that these campaigns can increase knowledge about GBV and available support services, potentially empowering women and girls to seek help.
- Safe spaces: The establishment of safe spaces has been linked to a decrease in the fear of violence and increased reporting of GBV incidents.
- Cash assistance: Evidence suggests that cash assistance programs can empower women and girls to leave abusive relationships or avoid transactional sex, thereby reducing their vulnerability to GBV.
- Improved lighting and security: Enhanced camp infrastructure with proper lighting and security patrols may deter potential perpetrators and create a safer environment for women and girls.

Limited Evidence and Inconsistent Findings:

Several reports highlight the limited evidence base on the overall effectiveness of GBV mitigation strategies in Nigerian IDP camps. Many interventions lack rigorous evaluations, and findings from existing studies can be inconsistent[35]. Additionally, the effectiveness of interventions may vary depending on the specific context, implementation quality, and cultural appropriateness.

Gaps in Addressing Underlying Causes:

Some data sources suggest that existing interventions may primarily address the immediate consequences of GBV but fail to adequately tackle the root causes. Factors such as gender inequality, social norms that condone violence, and weak legal systems require a more comprehensive approach beyond immediate interventions within the IDP camps[36].

Despite limitations in data availability and evaluation methodologies, existing reports suggest that specific GBV mitigation interventions can have positive outcomes, such as increased awareness, improved safety within camps, and empowerment of women and girls. However, the overall effectiveness of these strategies remains inconclusive, and a more robust evidence base is needed to identify what works best in the Nigerian IDP camp context. Furthermore, interventions need to move beyond immediate responses and address the underlying social and legal factors that contribute to GBV.

[35] Jakobsen, H. (2018). "How violence constitutes order: consent, coercion, and censure in Tanzania," Violence against Women, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 45–65.
[36] UN Women, (2022)

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Challenges and Limitations of GBV Mitigation Strategies in Nigerian IDP Camps

Resource Constraints:
A significant challenge identified in the research is the scarcity of resources to support comprehensive GBV mitigation efforts. Limited funding from donors and national governments restricts the scope and reach of interventions [37]. This can lead to a shortage of trained personnel, inadequate infrastructure for safe spaces, and limited access to essential services like medical care and psychosocial support for survivors[38].

Logistical Challenges:

The complex logistics of managing IDP camps pose additional challenges. Security concerns within camps, particularly at night, can create a climate of fear and hinder access to essential services for women and girls[39]. Furthermore, inadequate infrastructure, such as poor lighting in pathways or lack of designated sanitation facilities for women and girls, can increase vulnerability to violence[40]. Remote locations of some camps can make it difficult to deliver essential services and support programs.

Cultural Appropriateness:

The effectiveness of GBV mitigation strategies can be hampered by a lack of cultural sensitivity. Interventions designed in a top-down manner, without considering the specific socio-cultural context and needs of the Nigerian camp population, may be met with resistance or fail to address the root causes of GBV[41]. For instance, promoting gender equality workshops might not resonate with communities where traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained. Culturally appropriate interventions require involving community members in program design and ensuring they address the specific vulnerabilities faced by women and girls within the Nigerian context.

Limited Data Availability:

A crucial limitation lies in the scarcity of data on the effectiveness of existing interventions in Nigerian IDP camps. The lack of robust data collection and monitoring mechanisms makes it difficult to assess the true impact of programs, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate the return on investment to secure continued funding. Limited data also hinders efforts to hold implementing agencies accountable for achieving intended outcomes. The analysis reveals several challenges and limitations that hinder the effectiveness of GBV mitigation strategies in Nigerian IDP camps. Resource constraints,

[37] HRW, (2019)
[38] UN Women, (2022)
[39] MSF, (2023)
[40] CARE International, (2021)
[41] Agbonifo, J. U. (2020). "The plight of IDP women: a gender and intersectional analysis of the experiences of internally displaced women in IDP camps borno Nigeria," 2020.

logistical difficulties, cultural insensitivity, and limited data availability all contribute to shortcomings in the current approach. Addressing these challenges requires increased funding, improved collaboration between stakeholders, a focus on culturally sensitive interventions, and the development of stronger data collection and monitoring systems. By overcoming these limitations, GBV mitigation efforts can be strengthened to create a safer and more secure environment for women and girls residing in Nigerian IDP camps.

Discussion

Gender-Based Violence in Nigerian IDP Camps: A Multifaceted Problem

The analysis revealed a disturbing reality of how women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps face a multitude of GBV types. Intimate partner violence, including physical and sexual assault, remains prevalent (Experience of Gender-based Violence by Internally Displaced Women in Southern Nigeria: The breakdown of social structures and traditional support systems within the camps can exacerbate existing power imbalances within families, increasing the risk of domestic violence[42].

Furthermore, the research identified a high prevalence of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, and survival sex (Sexual and Gender- Based Violence - Operational Data Portal, 2019). Limited access to secure shelter, inadequate lighting within camps, and the presence of armed actors all contribute to an environment conducive to sexual violence [43]. The EST highlights the interplay of factors across various ecological systems that contribute to GBV. The microsystem, encompassing the immediate living environment, can expose women and girls to violence from family members or camp residents[44]. The mesosystem, considering the interaction between microsystems, reveals how inadequate security, sanitation facilities, and psychosocial support services can exacerbate the consequences of GBV[45].

The macrosystem, encompassing the broader societal context, sheds light on how cultural norms condoning violence against women, weak legal systems, and the root causes of conflict leading to displacement all contribute to the vulnerability of women and girls[46]. The chronosystem emphasizes the influence of historical events, such as the prolonged nature of displacement, on shaping power dynamics and risk factors within the camps [47]. Understanding the various forms of GBV faced by women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps, along with the ecological factors contributing to their vulnerability, is crucial for designing effective interventions. By addressing these issues across multiple ecological systems, a more comprehensive approach to GBV mitigation can be established, promoting safety and well-being for women and girls in these fragile settings.

Contributing Factors to GBV in Nigerian IDP Camps: An Ecological Lens

[42] UN Women, (2022)
[43] MSF, (2023)
[44] Bronfenbrenner, (2007)
[45] CARE International, (2021)
[46] Bronfenbrenner, (2007)
[47] Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, (1994)

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Understanding the factors contributing to GBV within Nigerian IDP camps requires examining the interplay of various ecological systems, as outlined by the Ecological Systems Theory[48]. This framework highlights how individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and historical factors interact to shape vulnerability and risk.

At the microsystem level, the immediate living environment plays a crucial role. Overcrowding in IDP camps can lead to a lack of privacy, increasing the risk of intimate partner violence or sexual harassment within families and tents[49]. Disruptions to traditional social structures and support networks weaken protective mechanisms within the microsystem, leaving women and girls more vulnerable. The mesosystem focuses on the interaction between microsystems. Inadequate access to essential services within the camp, such as sanitation facilities with proper lighting, can increase the risk of GBV incidents as women and girls venture out at night[50]. Furthermore, limited access to healthcare and psychosocial support services for survivors can create a climate of impunity for perpetrators [51].

The exosystem encompasses broader social norms and cultural attitudes. Gender inequality and social norms condoning violence against women can create an environment where GBV is tolerated or even expected[52]. Limited access to education for girls in IDP camps can perpetuate these unequal power dynamics, making girls more vulnerable to exploitation. The macrosystem emphasizes the national and political context. Weak legal frameworks and a lack of enforcement mechanisms for GBV cases can discourage reporting and create a sense of impunity for perpetrators[53]. Furthermore, the root causes of conflict leading to displacement, such as poverty or ethnic tensions, can contribute to social instability and a breakdown of social norms, increasing the risk of violence against women and girls.

Finally, the chronosystem highlights the influence of historical events and socio-economic transitions on GBV. The prolonged nature of displacement in Nigerian IDP camps can erode coping mechanisms and traditional support systems, further increasing vulnerability. A history of conflict in the region can normalize violence and create a culture of impunity[54]. Changes in the camp population demographics, such as an influx of young men or a decrease in male family members, can alter the power dynamics within the camp, potentially increasing the risk of GBV.

In conclusion, the Ecological Systems Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the complex interplay of factors contributing to GBV in Nigerian IDP camps. By addressing these factors across multiple ecological systems, interventions can be designed to create a safer and more supportive environment for women and girls within these settings.

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[48] Bronfenbrenner, (2007)
[49] UNHCR, (2022)
[50] CARE International, (2021)
[51] MSF, (2023)
[52] Bronfenbrenner, (1994)
[53] HRW, (2019)
[54] Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, (1994)

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Analyzing Interventions Through an Ecological Lens

The study aimed to analyze the scope and implementation strategies of existing GBV mitigation interventions in Nigerian IDP camps. This analysis is crucial within the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) framework. By understanding the interventions' reach (scope) and how they are delivered (implementation strategies), we can assess their effectiveness in addressing GBV across the ecological levels.

The research revealed a range of interventions targeting various aspects of GBV mitigation[55],[56]. Prevention strategies focus on raising awareness about GBV, promoting gender equality within communities, and equipping women and girls with life skills. These interventions address the microsystem and mesosystem levels of the EST by empowering women and girls (microsystem) and fostering a more supportive social environment (mesosystem) that discourages violence. Protection strategies involve establishing safe spaces, improving camp infrastructure (lighting, security), and providing cash assistance. These interventions address the microsystem by offering women and girls a safe haven and the exosystem by influencing resource availability and camp security measures.

Response strategies encompass medical and psychological care for survivors, as well as legal assistance. These interventions address the microsystem by providing essential support to survivors and potentially the macrosystem by advocating for stronger legal frameworks to hold perpetrators accountable[57]. The study also highlighted the importance of implementation strategies for intervention effectiveness. Collaboration between various stakeholders (NGOs, UN agencies, government) ensures a comprehensive approach across ecological levels[58]. Community engagement fosters culturally appropriate interventions that resonate with the specific needs of the camp population[59]. Capacity building of camp staff equips them to identify and respond to GBV incidents effectively[60]. However, challenges like resource constraints and logistical difficulties can hinder the implementation of these strategies, limiting the interventions' reach across ecological levels[61],[62].

In conclusion, analyzing the scope and implementation strategies of GBV mitigation interventions within the EST framework provides valuable insights. By addressing factors across various ecological levels, interventions can create a more secure environment for women and girls in IDP camps. However, overcoming challenges associated with resource limitations and ensuring

[55] UNHCR, (2022)
[56] WV, (2020)
[57] UN Women, (2022)
[58] UNHCR, (2021)
[59] Plan International. (2023, May 12). Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Emergencies. https://plan-international.org/protection-from-violence/gbv-gender-based-violence/
[60] UN Women, (2022)
[61] HRW, (2019)
[62] MSF, (2023)

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culturally appropriate implementation is crucial to maximize the effectiveness of these interventions.

Assessing Effectiveness and Identifying Challenges within the Ecological Framework

Assessing Reported Effectiveness:

This study aimed to assess the reported effectiveness of GBV mitigation interventions in Nigerian IDP camps through a desktop research design analyzing existing data sources (academic journals, NGO reports, policy documents). While the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) emphasizes the interplay of factors across various ecological systems, the data analysis focused on reported outcomes of interventions within the microsystem (immediate living environment) and mesosystem (interactions between microsystems).
Studies documented interventions like awareness campaigns, safe spaces, and cash assistance programs[63],[64],[65]. However, assessing their true effectiveness proved challenging due to limitations in the data (CARE International, 2021). The lack of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within IDP camps made it difficult to measure the interventions' impact on reducing GBV incidents, improving access to support services for survivors, or fostering lasting changes in attitudes and behaviors related to gender roles and violence.

Identifying Challenges and Limitations:

The study identified several challenges hindering the effectiveness of GBV mitigation strategies in Nigerian IDP camps, aligning with the different levels of the EST. Resource constraints limited the scope and reach of interventions, impacting the microsystem by hindering the availability of trained personnel and essential services within the camps. Logistical challenges, like inadequate infrastructure and security concerns, created an environment conducive to violence within the mesosystem.

Culturally insensitive interventions, not considering the specific needs and social norms of the camp population, failed to address the root causes of GBV at the exosystem level. Finally, limited data availability hampered efforts to assess the interventions' effectiveness across all ecological systems, making it difficult to identify areas for improvement and advocate for increased investment. In conclusion, this study's analysis of existing data highlighted the challenges associated with assessing the effectiveness of GBV mitigation strategies in Nigerian IDP camps. The limitations of the data itself, coupled with the complex interplay of factors across the ecological systems, underscore the need for improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, culturally sensitive interventions, and a more holistic approach that addresses GBV at all ecological levels.

[63] UNHCR, (2022)
[64] MSF, (2023)
[65] CARE International, (2021)

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Recommendation

To better address gender-based violence (GBV) in Nigerian IDP camps, we propose several recommendations based on current intervention analysis and identified limitations: First, enhancing data collection and monitoring is crucial. Robust data mechanisms are necessary for evaluating the effectiveness of GBV interventions. Regular data on GBV prevalence, types of incidents, and the impact of interventions will help in program improvement, resource allocation, and advocacy efforts. Second, interventions must be culturally sensitive and context-specific. Designing interventions with active participation from the camp community ensures they are culturally appropriate and address specific vulnerabilities faced by women and girls in Nigeria. This can include incorporating traditional conflict resolution methods or using trusted community leaders for outreach and awareness campaigns.

Third, addressing resource constraints is essential. Increased funding from national and international donors is needed to expand GBV mitigation programs. Exploring innovative funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, can also help bridge resource gaps. Fourth, improving infrastructure and security within the camps is vital. Investing in infrastructure upgrades like proper lighting and sanitation facilities can create a safer environment for women and girls. Strengthening security measures through increased patrols and trained personnel can deter violence and improve the overall sense of security. Lastly, capacity building for camp staff is crucial. Training camp staff, including security personnel and healthcare providers, on GBV identification, referral mechanisms, and survivor support is essential for effective intervention. This training should be ongoing and adapted to the evolving needs of the camp population. By implementing these recommendations and using the Ecological Systems Theory framework for a holistic approach, stakeholders can create a safer and more secure environment for women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps.

Conclusion

This study employed a desktop research design and the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) to examine GBV mitigation interventions in Nigerian IDP camps. While the research identified a range of interventions – from awareness campaigns to safe spaces and cash assistance – assessing their true effectiveness proved challenging. Limitations in data collection and monitoring within the camps make it difficult to measure the impact on GBV rates, survivor support, or long-term shifts in attitudes and behaviors. The EST framework highlighted the interplay of factors across various ecological systems that contribute to GBV and influence the effectiveness of interventions. Resource constraints limit the availability of essential services within the camps, while logistical challenges like poor infrastructure create an environment conducive

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to violence. Culturally insensitive interventions fail to address the root causes of GBV embedded in social norms and power dynamics.

Moving forward, a multi-level approach is crucial for creating a sustainable and secure environment for women and girls in Nigerian IDP camps. Strengthened data collection and monitoring systems are essential to assess the effectiveness of interventions and identify areas for improvement. Culturally sensitive approaches that consider the needs and social context of the camp population are vital for addressing the root causes of GBV. Finally, increased investment and collaboration among stakeholders – NGOs, UN agencies, government bodies, and camp authorities – are necessary to deliver comprehensive interventions across all ecological systems, fostering lasting change and ultimately preventing GBV in Nigerian IDP camps.

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