

An Analysis of News Reports of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria by Daily Trust and the Nation Newspapers in the Year 2016

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Abstract

Crises in various part of Nigeria bring about high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) especially in the northern part of the country due to the Boko Haram Insurgency. The IDPs rely on humanitarian assistance for survival since they lost their means of livelihood. For them to get such assistance, their conditions need to be known by the general public in other to come to their rescue. Part of the press responsibility in the society is to effectively inform the citizens about happenings in their localities and the country as a whole. A UNICEF report indicates that there are 2.5 million malnourished children in the various IDP camps in Nigeria and about three hundred of them will die unless they are aided while, Doctors without Borders say at least 30 of them die every day. This highlights one serious condition in the IDP camps especially in Borno state due to the Boko Haram Insurgency which displaced hundreds of thousands from their homes. This paper analyzed Daily Trust and the Nation newspapers reports on the situation of the IDPs in the various camps across the country in other to determine the kind of role they play in highlighting their condition and soliciting support for them as well as the kind of agenda they set. Findings indicate that the situation in the various IDP camps has been highlighted by the two newspapers. They as well proffer solutions to effectively tackle the challenges. However, there is need for the newspapers to give more prominence to issues surrounding the management of the IDP camps in order to make it more transparent to minimize or eradicate corrupt practices to ensure better life for the IDPs and prevent the death of mal-nourished children.

Keywords: Analysis, News Reports, Daily Trust, The Nation, Boko Haram Insurgency and Internally Displaced persons (IDPs)

1. Introduction

Nigeria as a country is experiencing many crises due to its multi-ethnic and multi-religious setting. These crises vary in nature and impact on the affected areas. The recent Boko Haram Insurgency which devastated the north-eastern part of the country brings about high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The IDPs rely on humanitarian assistance for survival since they lost their means of livelihood. For them to get such assistance, their conditions need to be known by the general public in other to come to their rescue. Part of the press responsibility in the society is to effectively inform the citizens about happenings in their localities and the country as a whole. A UNICEF report indicates that there are 2.5 million malnourished children in the various IDP camps in Nigeria in 2016 and about three hundred of them will die in the year unless they are aided while, Doctors without Borders say at least 30 of them die every day. This highlights one serious condition in the IDP camps especially in Borno state where thousands of people were displaced from their homes. This indicates the pathetic condition of the IDPs and the need to come to their rescue. The press can play an important role especially through its agenda setting function to solicit assistance to the IDPs as well as getting a lasting solution to the remote cause of the problem.

Thus, this study set out to ascertain how Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper report the situation of people living in IDP Camps in Nigeria, the level of prominence given to IDP reports by Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper as well as to know if Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper proffer solutions to the challenges of IDPs in their reportage.

2. Literature Review

Displaced Persons under the International Law are persons or groups who have been forced or obligated to flee or leave their homes as a result of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters. According Tajudeen and Adebayo (2013), displaced persons can be categorised into two; Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Refugees. The Internally Displaced Persons are those who remain within their own national borders, while Refugees are those who have crossed into an Internationally recognized state (Ladan, 2006).

The term refugee, according to the 1969 OAU (AU) Convention shall apply to:

every person, who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or

events seriously disturbing public order in part or the whole of his/her country of origin or nationality is compelled to leave his (or her) place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his/her country or nationality”

Also, the Cartagena Declaration cited by the UNHCR (1995) say, the term “refugee” is defined as including “persons who have fled their countries because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violations of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order. Contributing to the foregoing, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC,2016) say, refugees cross international border in search of refuge, and this gives them legal refugee status which entitles them to certain rights and international protection. The interest of refugees however, is protected by the refugee convention of 1951 and the 1967; protocol relating to the statute of refugees (Tajudeen and Adebayo, 2013).

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), on the other hand, are people who as a result of situations of armed conflicts (or the threat thereof) and mass violations of human rights, as well as floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters, flee their homes to neighbouring and far reaching community to seek succour. The IDMC (2016) say, IDPs, who unlike refugees are still under the jurisdiction of their own government and may not claim any rights additional to those shared by their fellow citizens. The United Nations (2004) explain that, IDPs are persons or groups who have been forced to flee their homes or place of habitual residence suddenly or unexpectedly as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.

A Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID,2016) launched at the Chatam House, London in May 2016, shows that, in 2015, a total of 27.8 million people were displaced by conflict, violence and disasters in 127 countries of the world. This figure is an illustration of how internal displacement associated with conflict and violence has ravaged people’s lives globally. In the Middle East alone, 4.8 million people were displaced, while Iraq, Syria and Yemen accounted for over half of the total. Elsewhere, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Nigeria, South Sudan and Ukraine experienced the highest numbers of IDPs (GRID, 2016)

Nigeria is one of the countries that have the highest number of internally displaced persons. The incidence of internal displacement occurs in the country due to some multi-faceted factors. The National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (NPIDP, 2012) note that, thousands of Nigerians are annually internally displaced as a result of conflicts and natural disasters, including flooding, erosion, oil spillage as well as development projects. Similarly, there are over 400,000 returnees that were internally displaced from the oil rich Bakassi Peninsula that was handed over by Nigeria to Cameroon in 2008 resulting from the 10th October, 2002 ruling of the International Court of Justice. However, the IDMC (2015) observes that the leading factors of displacement in Northern Nigeria are inter-communal conflicts, religious, sectarian and electoral violence, Boko Haram insurgency and recurrent floods.

Furthermore, in the north east, more than 85,000 people fled their homes between January and August, 2014, in the states affected by Boko Haram insurgency (Nigeria Security Tracker cited in IDMC, 2015). And as a result of increasing conflict, particularly in the north east of the country due to Boko Haram Insurgency, the overall humanitarian situation in Nigeria has deteriorated (IOM, 2016).

Although, getting an exact figure of displaced persons in Nigeria is difficult as some of the displaced persons live in an unrecognized IDP camps but, the National Commission for Refugees (NCFR) in February 2014 reported that, there were 3.3 million IDPs in Nigeria as of 31st December 2013 while as of February 2015, the Displacement Tracking Index reports that, there are 1,235,294 IDPs in Northern Nigeria with Borno State (672,714 IDPs); Adamawa (220,159) and Yobe (135,810).

Also, Between November to December, 2015, there are about 2,152,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in 207 Local Government Areas (LGA) across 13 states of Northern Nigeria including Abuja (13,481 IDPs); Adamawa (136,010); Bauchi (70,078); Benue (85,393); Borno (1,434,149); Gombe (25,332); Kaduna (36,976) Kano (9,331); Nasarawa (37,553); Plateau (77,317); Taraba (50,227); Yobe (131,203); and Zamfara (44,929).

Further, 12.6 per cent of the population was displaced due to communal clashes, 2.4 per cent by natural disasters and 85 per cent as a result of insurgency attacks by Boko Haram Sect and the vast majorities are women, children and the old. Of this population, 87 per cent of the Internally Displace populations are staying in host families while 13 per cent live in camps or camp like setting and over 40 of such camps or sites are in Adamawa, Borno, and Taraba states hosting more than 150,000 IDPs (IOM/NEMA, 2016).

Despite efforts of the United Nations, its organs and non-governmental organizations in collaboration with the government of Nigeria to ameliorate the conditions of IDPs and rehabilitate the victims, there are daunting challenges confronting internally displaced persons (IDPs) in various camps. Among the major problems confronting government recognized IDPs camps in Nigeria include welfare, security and rehabilitation (Premium Times, Dec., 28, 2015).

Furthermore, there are disturbing allegations of corruption in the handling of IDP camps in Nigeria as

food materials made available by government and private individuals are siphoned by officials responsible for distributing them. For instance, on 10th July, 2016, the Guardian Newspaper reported that, 71 trailers of rice and other grains meant for Adamawa IDPs went missing. Another case of theft was reported on Friday, 4th August 2016, where the Secretary, Taraba State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) Mr Nuvalga Dan-Habu disclosed that, a full truck of relief materials sent to Taraba State for distribution to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by President Muhammadu Buhari went missing (Nairaland, 7th August, 2016). This indicates the spate of theft among people at the helm of affairs seizing the opportunity of hardship to loot.

As a result of the foregoing, hundreds of men, women and children in IDP camp in Maiduguri embarked on a peaceful protest on 25th August, 2016 barricading the Maiduguri-Kano/Jos Road in protest of shortage of food supply caused by the “diversion” attitude of the camp’s central feeding committee.

Similarly, there is allegation of sexual harassment in the IDP camps where it was also alledged that women exchange sex for food with the officials of the camps due to severe hunger. This situation led to the deployment of female police officers and officials of the Nigerian Civil Defence Corps to monitor the camps to ensure safety and protect women and children.

3. Theoretical Framework

The agenda setting theory was employed as the theoretical base of this research work. This theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L Show in the year 1972. The theory posits that the media lead the public in assigning relative importance to various public issues (Miller, 2002). Thus, the media agenda influences the public agenda by giving more space and time as well as more prominence to some issues. That is, if the media highlight an issue, the issue is likely to be seen as important item on the public agenda (Miller, 2002). However, if the media decide to ignore an issue, no matter how crucial it is to the development of the society, may not be the subject of public debate (Mohammed, 2003).

Folarin (2005) outline the elements that are involve in agenda setting as follows: -

- (1) The quality of frequency of reporting
- (2) Prominence given to the reports through headlines, pictures, display etc.
- (3) The degree of conflict generated in the reports and
- (4) Cumulative media-specific effects over time.

The theory is relevant to this study because the agenda setting role of the media is very vital in raising awareness about the problems of the society and finding solutions that will enhance a positive development and peaceful co-existence.

4. Methodology

Content Analysis was adopted as a research method in this study as media reportage of IDPs in camps constituted the major source of primary data for this study. The population of the study comprises of all editions of Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper from January to March, 2016. The total population of the studied editions was 182 papers for both Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper and 82 stories on IDPs were reported by both papers. The two newspapers were selected based on geographic location. Thus, Daily Trust is seen as a northern paper, while The Nation newspaper is seen as a southern paper. The rationale for this selection is to compare how the two newspapers cover the IDPs in camps across states in northern Nigeria.

The sample size for the study was determined via census approach as Asemahet *al* (2012) asserts that census is attractive for small populations (200 or less). And hence the population of the study is 182 papers, census was considered appropriate. The unit of analysis for this study was pictures, feature stories and straight news stories and the content category was prominence and frequency. The Coding Sheet however was used as instrument to content analyze reports on IDPs by Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of one hundred and eighty two editions (182) of Daily Trust and The Nation newspapers were content analyzed out of which Eighty two (82) stories on IDPs were reported. The data presentation and analysis were as follows:

Table 1: News Frames Used in Reporting IDPs by Daily Trust and The Nation Newspaper

Frames	Daily Trust (%)	The Nation
Assistance	34 (42%)	28 (34%)
Security	4 (5%)	2 (2%)
vulnerability	10 (12%)	4 (5%)
Total	48 (59%)	34 (41%)

Table one shows that, out of 82 stories on IDPs in various camps of northern Nigeria reported by Daily Trust and The Nation Newspaper, Daily Trust reported 34 (42%) and was framed describing the IDPs as people in need of assistance from either private individuals, organizations or the government for survival. The Nation

newspaper reported 28 (34%) and also framed reports on IDPs as people in need of assistance for survival. 4 (%) and 2 (3%) reports on IDPs in Various camps by Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper respectively reports IDPs as being unsafe. Also, 10 (12%) and 4 (5%) news by Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper respectively report IDPs in various camps of northern Nigeria as living in a vulnerable state to diseases.

Table 2: Prominence Given to IDP reports by Daily Trust and The Nation Newspapers

Placement	Daily Trust (%)	The Nation (%)
Front Page	11 (13%)	2 (3%)
Back Page	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Inside Page	37 (45%)	32 (39%)
Total	48 (59%)	34 (41%)

Table two shows that, out of 48 stories on IDPs reported by Daily Trust newspaper, 11 (13%) appeared on front page, while The Nation newspaper carried only 2 (3%) stories on IDPs on its front page. This indicates that Daily Trust has given more prominence to IDP reports than the Nation newspaper.

Also, in regard to the level of coverage, out of the total of 82 reports on IDPs, 48 (59%) stories were reported by Daily trust, while The Nation newspaper reported 34 (41%) stories. This indicates that Daily Trust cover more stories on IDPs than the Nation newspaper.

Also, 16 (20%) of news reports on IDPs by Daily Trust were suggestions on how best to tackle the challenges of IDPs in various camps, likewise 5 (6%) reports by The Nation newspaper.

6. Discussion of Results

From the results of this study, it could be seen that, the newspapers under study carried reports about the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in various camps of Northern Nigeria. Similarly, the newspapers highlighted the condition of the IDPs in order to solicit assistance for them. Data obtained from the study show that, majority of news reports by Daily Trust (42%) and The Nation newspaper (34%) see Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in various camps of Northern Nigeria as people who can only survive if assistance is provided to them since they have lost their homes and means of livelihood. These reports could make the public understand the situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Nigeria as people in need of assistance, be it in kind or cash.

However, there is disparity in terms of level of coverage of IDP issues by the two newspapers under study. This corresponds with a study by Okioya and Adedowole (2011) that, various news media houses have their own area of interests when covering a particular news event. This could be as a result of their house policy which defines what to cover and what not to. However, the study shows that, Daily Trust gave more coverage on IDPs (59%) than The Nation newspaper (41%). This outcome is an indication to the fact that, media organization differs in philosophy of operations and interest.

Also, the interest of media organization determines what to be emphasized and what not to. In this regard, the study shows that, Daily Trust gave more prominence on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (13%) than The Nation newspaper (3%). It could be because, Daily Trust is more concerned on the interest of the North since it is a northern paper than The Nation which is a Southern newspaper.

On proffering solutions to the challenges of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in various camps of Northern Nigeria, both newspaper (Daily Trust and The Nation) suggested measures in their reportage on how government, private individuals and international bodies could bring succour to the challenges of IDPs although there was a disparity on the level of solution offered by Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper. Daily Trust newspaper had 76 % solution in their reports under study while The Nation had 24% solution to the challenges of IDPs in various camps.

The study found that Daily Trust and The Nation newspaper are of the view that, empowerment, education, provision of social amenities like water, shelter and health facilities are measures that can assist in resolving the challenges faced by IDPs. Also, the study found that, government need to probe people at the helm of affairs in order to checkmate the spate of corruption that have seen food items in trailers siphoned by individuals or officials in various IDPs camps as well as allegations of sexual harassment in northern Nigeria.

7. Conclusion

The two studied newspapers have framed the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as people in need of assistance who need to be salvaged from various challenges facing them. These challenges include shelter, security, hunger, diseases and even government neglect. With the foregoing, the media could salvage the situation and make lives of IDPs worth living especially by highlighting happenings in the IDP camps in order to make running of their affairs more efficient and transparent. The two newspapers under study have created awareness about the condition of people living in IDP camps as well as set agenda for the need to rehabilitate and assist them to alleviate their suffering.

8. Recommendations

The media can play a pivotal role in mobilizing the government, individuals and organization to take the challenge of making life worth living for Internally Displaced Persons in various camps. To achieve this, the Nigeria press should:

1. Give more prominence to issues of welfare and well-being of IDPs via front page stories, editorials, columns and feature stories so that Nigerians will be better informed on the situation of IDPs in camps.
2. The media should encourage people to play a role in rehabilitating the IDPs as well as expose corrupt and criminal activities perpetrated by people at the helm of affairs at various IDP camps to ease the suffering of people living there and as well make the officials accountable.
3. The media should give voice to IDPs in order to let the world understand their situation and their needs which can go a long way in salvaging and rehabilitating them.

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