Public Administration and the Bumpy Road to Social Welfare Provisioning: An Assessment of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) Camps in Nigeria

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Abstract

With the neoliberal policy regime been witness in the world especially since the 80's, the welfare state has experience a geometric decline. Since the neoliberal introduction in developing countries especially in Africa and particularly in Nigeria, the gap between public wants and state policies has widened. Today, Nigeria has been cut in the web of a tripod situation: endemic political corruption and mismanagement, rising challenges of insecurity, and an abysmal state of public infrastructure. With IDPs living in dilapidated structures and poor living conditions, the welfare structure in Nigeria has further raised further questions about government policies and the needs of the people. Hence, the aim objective of the study is to examine the bumpy road (challenges) to social welfare provisioning in Nigeria especially in IDP camps. This study was carried out based on both desk based research. The study discovered that, government policies especially with citizens needs have been retrenched over the years. Also, challenges such as corruption, lack of funding amongst others affects social welfare provisioning in Nigeria. The study recommends amongst others that, there is need for government to embark on an urgent, holistic and coordinated framework for the enactment of a viable social welfare policy structure to help cushion the effect of displacements both from natural or manmade disaster and conflict situations and the Nigerian government should fight corruption and ensure a direct link between the management agencies and the IDPs.

Keywords: Social Welfare, strategic development, Planning, Internally Displaced Persons, Poverty

Introduction

Numerous studies (Gary and Karl, 2003; Action Aid Nigeria, 2007; Eboh and Igbokwe, 2006; Ogun, 2010) over the years has examined the effects of Nigeria's historically negative credentials in governance manifesting in its poor resource management and how it is reflected in the poor state of welfare and general development. The capacity to effectively provide for the welfare and security of her citizens is a critical responsibility of the state and its decision-making machinery - the government. As observed by Oshelowo and Oniemola (2011), effective social service delivery is coterminous with the development aspiration of any country.

Recent years has seen rising awareness on the important role national governments must play in social service delivery for the enhancement of public welfare, particularly in societies with high poverty statistics, communal conflict and high insurgencies because of its implications for political and economic stability, law and order (Abegunde and Akinyemi, 2014). This recognition underlies the clamor for state intervention in welfare provision and social development as recognized in the Washington Consensus, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (Oshelowo and Oniemola, 2011). This awareness underlies the identification of globally critical social policy agendas for governments' intervention through the 2015 MDGs target programmes with particular respect to high poverty and conflict concentrations across the globe.

The advocacy for democratization as a political imperative rests on the importance of society-responsive policies that attends to the people's needs and aspirations (Onakuse and Eamon, 2007: 41). In spite of Nigeria's democratization since 1999, disconnections between public policy and public aspirations in Nigeria have persisted. The state has seen, and continues to witness disruptions of varying degrees in public social and economic activities expressed through strike actions, protests and street demonstrations that have become regular strategies for the expression of discontent against government policies perceived as illegitimate and antithetic to public welfare (Umezurike, 2010).

According to Abegunde and Akinyemi (2014), these confrontations pose crucial questions for public administration, public opinion and welfare in Nigeria, as they present new angles to strategic development planning. The portend problems of policy legitimacy which traverses important areas of decision making in a democratic state: questions of *what*, *when*, *where* and *how* to optimize choices and administration of public policies for effectiveness and efficiency at the least cost to the welfare of the citizenry. This highlights one of the issues of social welfare provisioning as it relates to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Nigeria.

Nigeria, particularly, has been finding it increasingly difficult and is almost failing, if not failing in its task to manage its plethora of IDPs (Olagunju 2006 as cited in Obikaeze and Onuoha, 2017). Obviously, the phenomenon of internal displacement is not new to Nigeria. In recent times, the number of internally displaced people is on the increase as a result of Boko Haram insurgency in the North-eastern Nigeria. Of the total figure of IDPs, the assessment indicates that 13.33 per cent were displaced due to communal clashes, 0.99 per cent by natural disasters and 85.68 per cent as a result of insurgency attacks (International Organisation for Migration, 2016). With the increase in IDP camps across Nigeria, the administration of social welfarism for the basic needs of IDPs has been called to question.

Statement of the Problem

The historical trajectory of social welfare services in traditional Nigerian societies was more of assistance or help by individuals in families, communities and kingdoms to the vulnerable people. During this period, social welfare policy was not a challenge in Nigeria; hence provision of social welfare services was based on communal rules and love for the care of the vulnerable people. But as the society evolved into a more scientifically-based one, with attendant increase in population, taking care of the vulnerable people became extremely challenging to people and government at all levels in Nigeria. However, to come out of the "web" of the foregoing challenges, attempts were made by the Federal Government (FG) to formulate a comprehensive social welfare policy; unfortunately, these were hampered by insufficient political will and corruption among the elites in Nigeria.

With the increase in both communal conflict and insurgencies including natural disasters, IDP camps have literally taken a geometric amplified dimension. Unfortunately, despite the efforts made by the Nigerian government, it has been observed that IDPs have continued to face harsh condition especially in the IDP camps. These conditions ranges insecurity to all forms of exploitation and abuse, including rape, camping in congested shelters, isolated as well as insecure or inhospitable areas. Hence, with the aforementioned problems, the paper will tend to examine further, the administration of social welfare delivery and challenges encountered in the process social welfarism as it relates to IDP camps in Nigeria.

Research Questions

With the aforementioned problematic, the paper will tend to proffer answers to the following questions;

1. What are the perceived views about government social welfare policies as it relates to IDPs in Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges to social welfare provisioning in Nigeria?

Conceptualization of Terms

Social Welfare

Dyrough (1995) sees social welfare services as the organized system of social services and institutions designed to aid individuals and groups to attain satisfying standards of life, health, personal and social relationships that permit them to develop their full capacities and to promote their well-being in harmony with the needs of their families and the community as a whole. For Woodsite and McClam (2002) social service as social care is assisting clients in meeting their social needs, with the focus on those who cannot care for themselves. In addition, *National Open University of Nigeria* (2004) defines social welfare services as alleviation of poverty in its many ramifications.

Apart from the definitive analysis of social welfare services, Krcatovich (2017) explains that social welfare services also include cash assistance for the elderly and disabled, free or reduced cost school lunches, help with a home loan, and provision of physical goods like groceries, medical devices, and health insurance.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

According to the African Union Convention for Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention, 2009), the term - Internally Displaced Persons is defined as —persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are citizens of a country who are displaced within the territory of a country as a result of natural disasters such as erosion, desertification, flooding etc (Obikaeze and Onuoha, 2017). People can also be displaced as a result of human-caused disaster such as civil war, internal armed conflict, terrorism and so forth. In this situation, people are left with the option of fleeing their homes for safety (Obikaeze and Onuoha, 2017).

Research Methodology

This study was carried out based on both desk based research looking at existing literature and other studies carried out on the topic – Public Administration and the challenges of social welfare provisioning: An assessment of the IDP camps in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The interaction of public policy and the delivery of social welfare services in Nigeria have been interrogated from several angles. This paper relies on Thomas Hobbes "Social

Contract Theory" in line with Rotberg's *Failed State Analysis*. Hobbes argued that individuals living without a state and a rule of law find themselves in a situation of war, of all against all in which life is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short (John, 2008). His idea was that individuals would voluntarily make a social contract with an absolute sovereign government - the state – by giving up some of their freedom in exchange for guaranteed peace, security and good governance (John, 2008).

Rotberg further explained in his book titled *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (2003:72), that Nation-states fail due to internal convulsion and violence, and the loss of the capacity to deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. This is marked by the government's loss of legitimacy, as the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens.

A number of issues are critical in Thomas Hobbes *Social Contract Theory*: the maintenance of sovereignty and the ability of the state to deliver on social obligations (Rotberg, 2003). A nation's strength or weakness is adjudged by its performances in the delivery of the public goods and social welfare to its citizens. He asserts that nation-states exist to provide a decentralized method of delivering political (public) goods to persons living within designated parameters (borders), and having replaced the monarchs of old, modern states focus and answer the concerns and demands of citizens (Rotberg, 2003). They more or less organize and channel the interests of their people in furtherance of national goals and values. States are also saddled with the responsibility to buffer or manipulate external forces and mediate between the constraints and challenges between the international arena and the dynamism of their own internal economic, political, and social realities. States succeed or fail across all or some of these dimensions. But it is according to their performance - according to the levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial political goods - that strong states may be distinguished from weak ones, and weak states from failed or collapsed states (Rotberg, 2003).

Characteristically, failed states are marked by tension, deeply rooted and dangerous conflicts, as well as bitter contestations by warring factions, including the inability of state apparatus to provide basic social needs to its citizens (Abegunde and Akinyemi, 2014). Relating the Thomas Hobbes *Social Contract Theory and* Rotberg's *Failed State Analysis* to the situation of IDPs in Nigeria, according to Erika (2005), present happenings in the country has depicts Nigeria to either be failing as a state or a failed state. With number of violent cases charactering IDPs formation in Nigeria, one can be justified that Nigeria has failed to provide basic needs for its citizens - fundamental needs like security to life and properties. With the Nigerian state inability to provide social welfare to its citizens especially IDPs,

observed scenario according to Erika (2005) shows that, IDPs are often confronted with the same situation: lack of access to the necessaries of basic needs approach that is healthcare, descent sanitation, inadequate facilities for accommodation or shelter. Others are entrapped and face the continuous challenges of diverse sexual abuse or violence and human trafficking and denial of justice (Erika 2005).

Social Welfare Policy in Nigeria: A Brief Situational Analysis

Social welfare policy in Nigeria is not comprehensive yet. But there are pockets of social welfare programmes that are provided by National Pension, National Health Insurance and Universal Basic Education laws as well as got through the youth development schemes to cater for the elderly, indigent children, physically challenged, mentally ill and prisoners, in addition to other vulnerable people in Nigeria (Origi, 2018). In the circumstance, efforts are made by FG to have a comprehensive social welfare policy that will be devoid of fragmented social welfare programmes for the vulnerable people in Nigeria. Indeed, when this is achieved, it will be an all-inclusive National Social Welfare Policy, which will contain packages to take care of the developmental needs of Persons With Disability (PWDs), orphans and vulnerable children, as well as the elderly within the society (Okafor, 2012); and this is on the verge of being developed for the country.

In addition, Okafor (2012:1) also emphasizes that: The new policy is expected to provide a comprehensive social welfare package to check the growing menace of street begging in and around Nigerian cities by impoverished citizens in form of the locally known *Almajiri*. It is equally geared towards arresting the alarming rate of street hawking by children, social excesses of street urchins as well as taking into consideration the plight of the ageing sector of the country's population and other vulnerable. In consonance with this laudable vision, the Federal Government of Nigeria planned to spend 500 billion naira ($2.5 billion) in 2016 on welfare programmes over three (3) years in Nigeria (*The News*, 2017). However, these social intervention welfare programmes did not cover the needs of all vulnerable people in Nigeria, and to close the above lacuna, the Federal Government should today, put in well thought out measures for the formation of a comprehensive social welfare policy in the country despite its relative efforts like the *Npower,* more social needs are still yarning for interventions, for example the IDPs.

The Internally Displaced in Nigeria: An Analytical Discourse

According to Egwu (2011), the full scope of displacement is unknown in Nigeria. He based his argument on the capacity and resource of accurate data from a complex nature of IDPs. Consequently, the report of the IDMC (2012), shows that there had not been an actual survey

on displacement and no mechanisms to monitor for a durable solution. Rather what have been is mere estimate of those in IDP camps or sight whereas researcher has not taken into consideration those with families and relatives outside the camps. Consequently, no official government report has given the accurate number despite the growing concerns. Oduwole et al. (2013), traced the factor responsible for displacement to the push and pull factors involved; stating that one must take into cognizance violent conflict coupled with increasing level of poverty and low levels of education particularly in the northern Nigeria where the IDPs in high. The number of recorded cases of displacement caused by manmade circumstances supersedes those from nature such as flooding, ocean surges, fire, tsunamis, etc. (Manz, 2011). The democratic transition in Nigeria in 1999 clearly showed the increase of people affected by diverse conflicts. Thus, since then the numbers of IDPs in Nigeria have been on the increase (Micheal et al. 2014).

Politicization of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria led to the emergence of groups like Oduwuwa Peoples' Congress (OPC), the Arewa Peoples' Congress (APC), and of late the Movement Jama'atAhlus al-Sunnah LiddawatiWal- Jihad styled as Boko Haram and others (Bamidele 2012:10). The same goes to the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) movement of 1966 which led to the dreaded Nigerian-Biafran War that gulped about 1,000,000 people and displaced many. The emergence of these groups had resulted in the growing number of IDPs for decades in Nigeria. But the most radical of the group is the Boko Haram with reported cases of violence with and across the shores of Nigeria. Attacks from this Islamic sect have resulted in the destruction and damage of infrastructure worth billions (Oriakhi and Osemwengie 2012). People flee almost every day, and are still forced into repeated displacement, when there are limited safe places, as a safe place today may turn unsafe the next day. Some scholars have argued that the victims suffer not only displacement but also, dislocations. The situation of displacement is very critical that the government of Nigeria is even yet to have an up-to-date number of IDPs.

It is trite to note that terrorism whether domestic or transnational often has a devastating effect on the society. Hampton (2013), observed that immediately after the end of the Cold War the world had seen new forms of conflict which range from the birth of radical sect, terrorism, and fundamentalist group. The sovereignty of states is put to test by various secessionist groups' demand for autonomy while the innocent citizens affected are exposed to all forms of human right violation in conflict scenario (Hampton 2013).

Consequently, since the year 2009, Boko Haram gained recognition from international media and Western society particularly in the April 2014 tragic event that led to the

abduction of over 250 Chibok school girls (Zenn 2014). Scholars like Akpan, et al (2014); stated that within 2002-2013 an estimated number of 10,000 persons have lost their lives to the insurgency while over 100 million dollars of property destroyed by the sect which led to massive displacement of persons. Scholars have argued that Nigeria spends 25% revenue on security. However, despite the enormous amount that is channeled to security the situation remains unaddressed. Many critics have attributed the failure to the Nigeria to address the growing increase of IDPs as politically motivated factors.

In Ibeanu (1999), it was stated that due to the survey conducted it estimated that over 300,000 persons are displaced as a result of communal conflicts in the South-eastern part of Nigeria alone. The report submitted by National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) also confirms that Boko Haram had displaced over 60,000 people who had fled across the neighboring borders of Cameroon, Chad and Niger becoming refugees. No doubt the increasing numbers of IDPs in the country remains a problem to the international community. IDPs face diverse security challenges that remain unaddressed by the affected state. He further observed that it portrays a lack of political wills by the state.

Hampton (2013), maintained that displaced victims often settle in "forests or jungles" and become affected by contagious diseases or suffer human deprivation. It becomes evident that victims are in economic hardship, they are often deprived of contributing positively to the economy of the own state (Harris, 2010). Every year there are cases of hundreds and thousands of people fleeing their homes to seek refuge outside their communities "buffer zone" (Hampton 2013). The world figures of IDPs are growing by the day currently estimated that over 20-24 million are IDPs, and the number is still growing (The UN Refugee Agency 2015).

Perceived Views about Government IDPs Policies: An Analysis through the Lens of Failed State Formation

In line with the principles of international law, the states are required to accord full protection to their citizen or population in the protection of their fundamental human right (Levitts 2001). The responsibility for protection of citizens' is the sole responsibility of the home government (Cohen and Deng 2012). The national government has a duty to ensure that the challenges faced by the IDPs are under control since they obliged under their responsibility to protect civilians in crisis scenarios; the consensus reached in various literature that the national government should operationalizes it primary obligations. Levitts (2001) in his empirical study of the displaced people noted that cases of the victims arise due to two determinants factors: natural forces and man-made forces. The former may be almost impossible to envisage. Thus, the best that the state could do is to help

towards the resettlement or relocation of the victims to another area (Deng 1993). The latter is often linked to state failure in its primary responsibility of protecting its citizens, which may be a result of the lack of state's sovereignty.

The report given by different media organization buttresses the fact that when a government lacks credibility or legitimacy to fulfill its primary responsibilities in the social contract there is bound to be conflict. The ability of the state to prevent the occurrence of conflict or diffusion of violence at the nascent stage will together with coalition and negotiated settlement go a long way in averting displacement (Adenitan, 2016). Conventional and unconventional approach to the prevention of conflict can ensure that IDPs are adequately protected (Levitts2001). Thus, there is a need to integrate the aspect of physical, psychological and legal protection to the internally displaced persons; when properly managed the state becomes secure and the escalation of displacement is prevented. Considering the political dimension to conflict prevention and management, Deng (1993) concurs strongly that these state machinery are germane to the legal and physical protection of the displaced population. The political objective of conflict management is by promoting confidence to the displace people, in enduring peace and stability to allow for the voluntary repatriation and internal replacement (Levitts, 2001).

Scholars like Cohen and Deng (2012), have long articulated that the state objective should be to minimize and prevent the violent conflict situation as well make provision for humanitarian assistance. Cohen and Deng strongly believes that will go a long way in preventing the escalation of the conflict. Similarly, the works of Walter Kelvin as cited in Adenitan (2016) serves as an elucidation in understanding conflict solution, arguing that humanitarian intervention should be geared towards the sustenance and maintenance of peace building as well as the rebuild of failed states and NGOs and to give room for responsibility. The smooth running of machinery responsible for fulfilling the needs of the IDPs can be best coordinated through a national effort for IDPs as well as the collaboration with civil societies groups (Ferris et al. 2011), and building umbrella of a national framework. A proper mechanism should be in place that would facilitate right to return to the victims affected by either natural disaster or one caused by humans, in with accordance with their rights.

Unlike a failed state, a viable or near viable state possesses the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians to all victims affected by displacement and particularly to the right of return to their original communities peacefully and unharmed (Adenitan, 2016). Also, the government is saddled with the task of ensuring that the safety and dignity of the internally displaced population are sacrosanct in the agenda of its domestic policies.

Thus, the safety is considered to be an essential element that should guarantee the right of the displaced.

The Bumpy Road Dynamics to Social Welfare Provisioning in Nigeria: The Case of IDPs

With various experimental studies carried out in social welfare in Nigeria especially as regards IDPs and its various camps, the paper relied on extant literature and data on challenges and hurdles to the adequate management of IDPs in Nigeria. Data from examined literature indicate that (inadequate) funding; corruption and overlapping/insufficient policies are the principal structural challenges of IDPs management while the host community is the most critical cultural challenge. In most of the literature, funding is the most critical among the challenges, followed by corruption.

Funding

Most of the literature (Eweka and Olusegun, 2016; Olagunju, 2006; Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede, 2016) disclosed that although IDPs management agencies get funds mainly through revenue, international aids and donations, the funds they get are more often than not insufficient to meet the increasing needs of IDPs in the country. Lack or insufficiency of funds results in deficiency in manpower, commodities, infrastructure, equipment and mobility. Olagunju (2006) has keenly observed the use of untrained workers by IDPs management agencies. Similarly, Lomo (2000:1) noted that staff members of many institutions, including the UNHCR, are not sufficiently competent to implement existing provisions for protecting the constituencies for whom they are responsible. The majority of the respondents opined that where fund is lacking, standard facilities will be unavailable and the agencies will be inefficient. This is directly linkable to the position of Olagunju (2006) that government in Nigeria does not have adequate machinery in place to address IDPs issues and the organizations created by the government possess minimal capacity to handle IDPs related problems.

Corruption

Findings from literature (Eweka and Olusegun, 2016; Obikaeze and Unuoha, 2017) equally pointed out corruption as another major bumpy road to effective management of IDPs in Nigeria. While most of the respondents regarded this as the most serious challenge, a large number also regarded it as a very serious one. They maintained that corrupt office holders in government, and in IDPs management agencies alike, have on several occasions been found diverting funds and relief materials meant for IDPs for their personal purposes, a situation that reduces the efficiency of the agencies concerned in managing IDPs. Other discoveries, in concordance with Olagunju (2006, p. 28) who found out that government aid (money/relief) gets diverted and never gets to the IDPs themselves, equally traced

corrupt practices to camp officials and leaders of IDPs who may also convert and sell commodities provided for IDPs

Overlapping IDPs Management Institutions

Improperly defined, unclear and overlapping policies and institutions have been identified as a challenge confronting IDPs management agencies (Obikaeze and Unuoha, 2017). The overlapping responsibilities hinder agencies in the discharge of their duties. In terms of overlapping institutions, it was noticed from the testimony of key informants from government agencies that the government has established several IDPs management institutions or agencies with similar mandates and structures (Osagioduwa & Oluwakorede, 2016). According to them, a clear example cited by key informants is that of the National Commission for Refugees (NCFR). Originally, this institution was saddled with the responsibility of catering for refugees in the country and not IDPs. It is arguable understandable that as a result of upsurge of IDPs in the country, its mandate has been extended to include the responsibilities of NEMA/SEMA.

Today, NCFR has eventually but nominally metamorphosed into the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons. Considering the mandates and organizational structures of the National Commission for Refugees and NEMA one can opine that both them are analogous (Obikaeze and Unuoha, 2017). Based on this, both agencies are left with the question of who has the responsibility of doing this or that, what has been done, and what has not been done already. In a situation like this a significant part of the job risks being left undone. Beyond the overlapping functions of the above stated organizations established by the government, the partnering NGOs and other humanitarian organizations equally get confused as to which of the two government establishments to be work with.

Attitude of Host Communities

Sometimes, as internally displaced persons over-burden existing community services, resources and job or economic livelihood opportunities, tension arises between the two populations, making effective local integration difficult (Kangiwa, 2012). Cost of living in host communities increases, especially cost of food, housing, healthcare and education. In spite of this ugly situation, it has been observed that a good number of host communities are usually friendly with IDPs. However, this friendly attitude usually gets frosted whenever food and non-food items are supplied to the IDPs either from the government agencies or humanitarian groups (Obikaeze and Unuoha, 2017). As a result of poverty and hunger, members of the host communities of the IDP camp always struggle to have a share from the supplied items. Regrettably, taken cognizance of the likely consequence of refusal

by the agencies, which may lead to antagonism, frustration, hostility and physical violence at the detriment of the IDPs, members of the host communities are allowed to benefit from the items. This therefore, reducing or shorting the ration meant for the IDPs.

Conclusion

It is crystal clear that the "piece meal" delivery of social welfare services for IDPs was due to negligence of the formulation of a comprehensive welfare policy in Nigeria. These cannot be confuted; hence there is no clear-cut social welfare policy to address the decline in qualitative education, inadequate healthcare, food insecurity, inadequate economic empowerment, poor infrastructural development, as well as inadequate recreation activities for IDPs in Nigeria. It is imperative to note at this point that management of IDPs with its numerous challenges has not been an easy task especially in Nigeria that takes dominant position in IDPs management. The inability to adequately manage IDPs is tantamount to human rights abuse as well as human security challenges. This therefore presupposes that absence of proper management of IDPs would make them prone to social vices, violent conflicts and other several complexities that are antithetical to cordial relationships and sustainable human and national development.

Recommendations

According to the finding of this study, the paper recommends the following;

1. There is need for government to embark on an urgent, holistic and coordinated framework for the enactment of a viable social welfare policy structure to help cushion the effect of displacements both from natural or manmade disaster and conflict situations.
2. The Nigerian government should fight corruption and ensure a direct link between the management agencies and the IDPs.
3. The budgetary allocation for displacement in Nigeria should be separated from allocation for disaster and/or emergency since not all disasters and emergencies result in displacement.
4. Contingency plans should be made financially and bureaucratically in preparation for events of displacement.

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