

Social Vices in IDP Camps and Their Implications for Post-Conflict Reconstruction: A Study of Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract- The Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria has displaced over 3.6 million persons, creating one of the most severe humanitarian crises on the African continent. While significant scholarly attention has focused on the immediate humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) such as food, shelter, and healthcare, the proliferation of social vices within IDP camps in Maiduguri has remained an unseen crisis profoundly undermining post-conflict reconstruction efforts in the state. This paper examines the nature and prevalence of social vices—including drug abuse, prostitution, gangsterism, child abuse, and gender-based violence—in IDP camps, with particular focus on Muna Elbadawy Camp in Maiduguri. Drawing on secondary data, government reports, and humanitarian agency documents, the paper argues that the normalization of social vices in displacement settings fundamentally undermines the prospects for sustainable post-conflict reconstruction. The paper identifies three key mechanisms through which social vices impede reconstruction: (1) the erosion of social capital and community trust necessary for reintegration; (2) the creation of intergenerational cycles of trauma and deviance; and (3) the delegitimation of state institutions in the eyes of displaced populations. The paper concludes that addressing social vices in IDP camps is not merely a humanitarian concern but a strategic imperative for durable peace and national cohesion. Recommendations include integrating psychosocial support into camp management, strengthening community-based protection mechanisms, implementing sustainable livelihood programmes, and adopting a holistic approach that treats social vices as a symptom of deeper governance and structural failures rather than isolated behavioural problems.

Index Terms- Social Vices, Internally Displaced Persons, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, IDP Camps, Nigeria, Boko Haram

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's protracted conflict with Boko Haram has precipitated one of the most severe displacement crises in contemporary Africa. Since the insurgency escalated in 2009, over 3.6 million persons have been displaced across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, with women and children constituting nearly 80 per cent of the affected population (International Organization for Migration, 2023). Boko Haram insurgency accounts for 91.98% of Nigeria's internally displaced persons, surpassing intercommunal violence at 7.95% and natural disasters at 0.06% (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2024). The humanitarian consequences of this displacement—food insecurity, disease outbreaks, and inadequate shelter—have received considerable scholarly and policy attention. However, a less visible but equally consequential crisis has unfolded within the confines of Muna IDP camp Maiduguri Metropolis: the proliferation of social vices.

Social vices are behaviours that deviate from accepted societal norms and often result in harm to individuals, communities, or the broader social fabric. These have become endemic in many IDP camps across Northeast Nigeria. These include drug abuse, prostitution, gangsterism, child abuse, theft, gender-based violence, and other forms of criminality (Yakaka, Ibrahim, Tahir, & Bello, 2025). The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has raised alarm over increasing cases of drug abuse, prostitution, and other social vices in the Muna Internally Displaced Persons camp in Borno State (Daily Trust, 2025). Residents have expressed grave

concern over the worsening social conditions in the camp, particularly among children and vulnerable groups (Vanguard, 2025).

The crisis has become so pronounced that in May 2025, Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum ordered the closure of the Muna IDP camp, citing "increased level of prostitution, gangsterism, cases of child abuse and other criminalities" (Punch, 2025). The camp, established over a decade ago and housing approximately 11,000 families, had become a microcosm of the broader social disintegration wrought by prolonged displacement (Daily Trust, 2025b). Yet the closure of a single camp does not resolve the underlying problem; it merely relocates it. As the governor himself acknowledged, the resettlement of displaced persons must address the root causes of social dysfunction (New Telegraph, 2025).

This paper argues that the proliferation of social vices in Muna IDP camp constitutes an "unseen crisis" that fundamentally undermines the prospects for post-conflict reconstruction in Maiduguri Metropolis. While the physical infrastructure of war-torn communities can be rebuilt with relative speed, the social fabrics such as the trust, norms, and networks that enable collective action and peaceful coexistence are far more difficult to restore (Putnam, 2000; Colletta & Cullen, 2000). When displacement camps become sites of social disintegration, they produce not only immediate victims but also long-term consequences that ripple across generations and communities. It is against this background, this paper examined the nature and prevalence of social vices and their implications for post-conflict reconstructions in Maiduguri Metropolis, with particular focus on Muna Elbadawy Camp.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Displacement and Social Disintegration

Forced displacement is not merely a physical relocation; it is a profound social process that disrupts every aspect of individual and community life. Cernea (2000) identified several interconnected risks associated with displacement, including landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, food insecurity, social disarticulation, and marginalisation.

In conflict-affected settings such as Northeast Nigeria, these risks are intensified by security vulnerabilities and weak governance structures (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

Displacement in Nigeria has been predominantly driven by insurgency, communal violence, and banditry. Chukwuorji, Ifeagwazi, and Eze (2019) argue that displacement exposes individuals to cumulative trauma arising from pre-displacement violence, the stress of flight, and post-displacement hardships. These experiences often result in psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, which in turn affect social functioning and community cohesion (Njoku, 2019). Displacement also disrupts family structures, gender roles, and intergenerational relationships, reshaping power dynamics and social expectations within displaced communities (Oluwaniyi, 2021).

The camp environment itself compounds these challenges. Overcrowding, inadequate access to basic services, and the absence of privacy create conditions conducive to social dysfunction. As one study notes, displaced people in camps are subjected to additional burdens like psychological trauma and gender-based violence due to inadequate utilities, poor housing, and a lack of privacy (Agbaje, 2020). The breakdown of traditional social control mechanisms such as the family, the community, religious institutions leave displaced populations vulnerable to exploitation and deviance (Olawale & Owoeye, 2020).

Social Vices in Displacement Settings

The literature on social vices in displacement settings remains relatively scarce. Yakaka et al. (2025) examined the effects of insurgency on social vices among IDPs in Muna Elbadawy Camp, finding that drug abuse was perceived as occurring "very often" in the camp (62.8% of respondents), followed by rape and gender-based violence. The study identified multiple drivers of social vices, including psychological trauma, economic deprivation, family breakdown, and weak social control mechanisms.

Olawale and Owoeye (2020) examined the relationship between insurgency and social disorder in IDP camps in Northeastern Nigeria, finding that

drug abuse, prostitution, and theft were among the most prevalent social vices. The study attributed the prevalence of these vices to the breakdown of social control mechanisms, economic deprivation, and the psychological trauma of displacement. Similarly, Nasr and Adam (2016), in their case study of Bama IDP Camp, found that social vices were widespread and linked to high levels of insecurity and social disorder.

More recent research has documented the specific mechanisms through which social vices proliferate in displacement settings. A study on criminal grooming within IDP populations in Bauchi State found that "crime within IDP camps worsens economic conditions, exacerbates poverty, and fosters social tensions with host communities" (Akinola, Inegbedion, & Anikwe, 2018, p. 129). The study highlighted how the absence of economic opportunities and the breakdown of social norms create conditions for criminal behaviour to flourish (Imam & Isa, 2024).

Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Challenge of Reintegration

Post-conflict reconstruction is a multidimensional process involving the rebuilding of physical infrastructure, the restoration of political institutions, and the rehabilitation of social and economic systems (Collier et al., 2003). Most of the ongoing reconstruction efforts in Nigeria have focused primarily on the first two dimensions i.e. rebuilding towns and cities and re-establishing state authority, while neglecting the social and psychological dimensions of recovery (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020). A study on post-conflict trauma and psycho-social rehabilitation among IDPs in Bama Local Government Area examined the challenges and prospects for sustainable recovery in a region severely impacted by the Boko Haram insurgency (Onapajo, 2020). The study found that psychological trauma, if unaddressed, significantly impedes the reintegration of displaced populations and the restoration of community life (Thompson, Hall, Hecker, & Walsh, 2023). Similarly, research has revealed how the lived experiences of displaced persons complicate and challenge dominant state-led reintegration frameworks, revealing their limitations and silences (Oyawale, 2022).

The persistence of IDP camps years after the active phase of conflict has raised troubling questions about Nigeria's security architecture, governance failures, and the long-term strategy for restoring affected communities. As Jatau and Ugwueze (2026, p. 185) noted, "survival often depends on irregular aid and fragile government support", creating a cycle of dependency that undermines self-reliance and community agency. While the literature on displacement and social vices has grown, few studies have explicitly linked the proliferation of social vices in IDP camps to the broader project of post-conflict reconstruction. Additionally, the mechanisms through which social vices impede reconstruction remain under-theorised. The specific dynamics of social vices in Muna IDP camp have not been adequately examined (Ike, Jidong, Ike, & Ayobi, 2025).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design, utilizing documentary analysis of secondary data sources including academic literature, government reports, humanitarian agency documents, and media reports (2014-2025). The study was conducted in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, with particular focus on Muna Elbadawy IDP Camp, selected due to documented prevalence of social vices. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis, guided by social disorganisation theory and strain theory. As the study relied exclusively on secondary data, it did not require ethical approval from an institutional review board. However, the study adhered to ethical principles including proper citation, accurate reporting, and balanced presentation of evidence. The study is limited by reliance on secondary data and focus on a single camp, which may affect generalisability of findings.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is anchored on two complementary theoretical frameworks: social disorganisation theory and strain theory.

Social Disorganisation Theory

Social disorganisation theory was originally propounded by Shaw and McKay in 1942 in the context of urban criminology. It posits that crime and

deviance are products of neighbourhood characteristics rather than individual pathology. According to the theorists, communities with weak social ties, low levels of informal social control, and high levels of residential instability experience higher rates of crime and deviance (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997).

In IDP camps, social disorganisation theory provides a powerful framework for understanding the proliferation of social vices. IDP camps are characterised by extreme residential instability like populations in flux and constant arrivals and departures; and weak social ties such as families and communities' fragmentation, and residents becoming strangers to one another; and low level of informal social control in the context of poor traditional authority structures, and weak camp management (Agbibo, 2018). These conditions create a vacuum in which social vices can flourish. Moreover, the camp environment disrupts the socialisation processes that normally transmit norms and values across generations. Children growing up in camps are exposed to behaviours such as drug abuse, prostitution, and violence that would be condemned in their home communities. The normalisation of these behaviours creates a cycle of social disintegration that extends beyond the camp and into the communities to which IDPs eventually return (Onapajo, 2025).

Strain Theory

Strain theory, as articulated by Merton (1938) and later developed by Agnew (1992), provides a complementary framework for understanding why individuals in IDP camps turn to deviant behaviour. Merton (1938) argued that individuals engage in deviant behaviour when they are unable to achieve socially prescribed goals through legitimate means. The resulting "strain" may lead to a "retreatist" adaptation (rejecting both the goals and the means, leading to drug use and other forms of withdrawal) or an "innovative" adaptation (accepting the goals but rejecting the means, leading to crime). Loss of livelihoods, land, and social networks means that IDPs cannot provide for themselves or their families through conventional means. The strain produced by this situation may lead to drug abuse as a form of

retreat or to prostitution and theft as forms of innovation (Yakaka et al., 2025).

Agnew's (1992) General Strain Theory extends this framework by identifying multiple sources of strain which includes the failure to achieve valued goals, the removal of positively valued stimuli such as the loss of loved ones, and the presentation of negatively valued stimuli such as abuse or victimisation. IDPs experience all three forms of strain, often simultaneously. The negative emotions produced by these strains anger, frustration, depression, has increase the likelihood of deviant behaviour (Ndukwe, 2022).

Application of the Theories

Social disorganisation theory and strain theory are not competing theories but complementary to each other, which if applied would illuminate different aspects of the same problem. Social disorganisation theory explains why IDP camps provide a fertile environment for social vices: weak social ties, low informal social control, and residential instability create conditions in which deviance can flourish (Agbibo, 2020). Strain theory explains why individuals in camps turn to deviant behaviour: the inability to achieve goals through legitimate means, combined with the negative emotions produced by displacement-related trauma and deprivation, leads to drug abuse, crime, and other forms of deviance (Olawale & Owoeye, 2020).

These these suggest that addressing social vices in IDP camps requires interventions at multiple levels: strengthening social ties and informal social control (community-based protection mechanisms, camp governance reform) and addressing the structural sources of strain (economic empowerment, psychosocial support, trauma-informed care) (Ezard, 2012; Stree & Schilperoord, 2010).

V. SOCIAL VICES IN IDP CAMPS: NATURE AND PREVALENCE

The Case of Muna Elbadawy Camp

Muna Elbadawy IDP Camp, located in Jere Local Government Area of Borno State, serves as an instructive case study of the proliferation of social vices in displacement settings. Established over a

decade ago at the height of the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency, the camp has hosted over 9,400 households and approximately 48,000 displaced persons from Mafa and Dikwa Local Government Areas (Daily Trust, 2025b). At its peak, the camp accommodated about 51,000 IDPs (Punch, 2025).

The camp has been the subject of growing concern among humanitarian actors and government officials. In April 2025, NEMA raised alarm over increasing cases of drug abuse, prostitution, and other social vices in the camp (Daily Trust, 2025). A sensitisation programme conducted by NEMA and GEPAD discussed "how to minimise the increase of drugs abuse and intakes among youths" (Vanguard, 2025). Residents expressed grave concern over the worsening social conditions, particularly the vulnerability of children and persons with disabilities (Daily Trust, 2025).

The situation deteriorated to the point that Governor Zulum ordered the closure of the camp in May 2025. Announcing the closure, the governor cited "increased level of prostitution, gangsterism, cases of child abuse and other criminalities" (Punch, 2025). He noted that some displaced girls were reportedly engaging in prostitution and drug abuse, which he said undermines the state's cultural values (New Telegraph, 2025). The closure and resettlement of 6,000 families was framed as a response to the social dysfunction that had become endemic in the camp (Daily Trust, 2025b).

Types and Prevalence of Social Vices

The available evidence, drawn from academic studies, government reports, and media accounts, documents a range of social vices in IDP camps across Northeast Nigeria.

- i. **Drug Abuse:** Drug abuse is among the most prevalent social vices in IDP camps. Yakaka et al. (2025) found that 62.8% of respondents in Muna Camp reported that drugs are abused "very often," with cannabis, prescription medications (codeine and tramadol), and inhalants being the most commonly abused substances. NEMA has specifically raised alarm over drug abuse among youths in the camp (Daily Trust, 2025). The availability of drugs within camps is facilitated
- ii. **Prostitution and Transactional Sex:** Prostitution and transactional sex have become widespread in IDP camps, driven by economic desperation and the absence of alternative livelihood opportunities (Oluwaniyi, 2021). Governor Zulum specifically cited prostitution as a major concern, noting that some displaced girls were engaging in the practice (Punch, 2025). A civil society group has condemned what it described as "sexual violence and the hidden agony of Nigeria's displaced women and girls" in various camps across Nigeria, noting that "what is unfolding in Nigeria's IDP camps is a widespread, systemic failure, one that has normalised coercion and buried the cries of survivors beneath layers of fear, shame, and neglect" (The Sun, 2025).
- iii. **Gender-Based Violence:** Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is pervasive in IDP camps. Empirical insights derived from field reports reveal patterns of sexual exploitation, systemic impunity, and pervasive insecurity (Njoku, 2019). The persistence of SGBV in displacement settings is driven by insufficient gender mainstreaming, weak institutional protection mechanisms, and inadequate access to psychosocial and justice-oriented remedies (Agbaje, 2020; Oluwaniyi, 2021). The lack of privacy in overcrowded camps, the breakdown of family protection, and the vulnerability of women and children to exploitation all contribute to high rates of SGBV (Ike et al., 2025).
- iv. **Gangsterism and Criminality:** Gangsterism and organised criminal activity have emerged as significant problems in IDP camps. Governor Zulum cited gangsterism as one of the reasons for the closure of Muna Camp (New Telegraph, 2025). Criminal groups within camps engage in theft, extortion, and violence, creating an atmosphere of insecurity that further undermines social cohesion (Yakaka et al., 2025). A study on criminal grooming within IDP populations found that "crime within IDP camps worsens economic conditions, exacerbates poverty, and fosters

- social tensions with host communities" (Akinola et al., 2018, p. 129).
- v. **Child Abuse and Exploitation:** Children in IDP camps are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The closure of Muna Camp was prompted in part by concerns over "cases of child abuse" (Punch, 2025). Children may be forced into labour, sexual exploitation, or recruitment into criminal groups (Onapajo, 2020). The disruption of education and the absence of protective family and community structures leave children exposed to multiple forms of harm (Onapajo, 2025).
 - vi. **Theft and Property Crime:** Theft and other property crimes are common in IDP camps, driven by economic desperation and weak enforcement mechanisms (Olawale & Owoeye, 2020). Theft further erodes social trust within camps, as residents become suspicious of one another and community cohesion deteriorates (Nasr & Adam, 2016).
 - iii. **Family Breakdown:** Displacement disrupts family structures, separating spouses, parents from children, and extended family members (Chukwuorji et al., 2019). The loss of family support and protection increases vulnerability to exploitation and deviance (Oluwaniyi, 2021). Children separated from parents or raised in single-parent households may lack the supervision and guidance necessary to avoid harmful behaviours (Onapajo, 2020).
 - iv. **Weak Social Control:** The traditional mechanisms of social control—the family, the community, religious institutions—are weakened or destroyed by displacement (Agbibo, 2018). In their place, formal camp governance structures are often weak, under-resourced, and ineffective (Jatau & Ugwueze, 2026). This vacuum allows deviant behaviour to flourish without sanction (Olawale & Owoeye, 2020).
 - v. **Availability of Substances:** The camp environment, with its weak regulation and limited enforcement, facilitates the availability of drugs and alcohol (Aluh, 2024). Diversion of medical supplies, the presence of drug dealers, and the absence of effective countermeasures all contribute to substance abuse (Yakaka et al., 2025).
 - vi. **Idleness and Lack of Meaningful Activity:** The absence of employment, education, and recreational opportunities in camps leaves individuals—particularly youth—with little to occupy their time (Imam & Isa, 2024). Idleness, combined with frustration and hopelessness, creates conditions conducive to drug abuse, gangsterism, and other forms of deviance (Akinola et al., 2018).

Drivers of Social Vices

The proliferation of social vices in IDP camps is driven by multiple factors:

- i. **Psychological Trauma:** The experience of displacement—including exposure to violence, loss of loved ones, and destruction of homes—produces profound psychological trauma (Chukwuorji et al., 2019). Without adequate psychosocial support, individuals may turn to drugs, alcohol, or other harmful behaviours as coping mechanisms (Njoku, 2019). The cumulative trauma of pre-displacement violence, the stress of flight, and post-displacement hardships creates a cycle of psychological distress that fuels deviant behaviour (Thompson et al., 2023).
- ii. **Economic Deprivation:** The loss of livelihoods, land, and economic opportunities leaves IDPs in a state of extreme poverty (Cernea, 2000). Without income-generating activities, individuals may turn to prostitution, theft, or drug dealing as means of survival (Yakaka et al., 2025). The absence of economic hope also contributes to the sense of hopelessness that underlies drug abuse and other forms of retreatism (Adoke & Dauda, 2019).

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

The increase of social vices in IDP camps has profound implications for post-conflict reconstruction in Maiduguri Metropolis. These implications operate through three interconnected mechanisms: the erosion of social capital, the creation of intergenerational cycles of trauma and deviance, and the delegitimisation of state institutions.

- i. **Erosion of Social Capital:** Social capital is essential for post-conflict reconstruction (Putnam, 2000). Communities with high levels of social capital are better able to rebuild after conflict, resolve disputes peacefully, and engage in collective action for the common good (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). Social vices in IDP camps erode social capital in several ways. Crime and deviance create an atmosphere of fear and suspicion that undermines trust among community members (Olawale & Owoeye, 2020). When residents fear theft, violence, or exploitation, they withdraw from social interaction and cooperation (Nasr & Adam, 2016). The social networks that are essential for community resilience are weakened or destroyed. The normalisation of deviant behaviour undermines the norms and values that underpin social cohesion (Agbiboa, 2018). When behaviours that were once condemned become commonplace, the moral fabric of the community is frayed (Yakaka et al., 2025). This is particularly concerning for children growing up in camps, who may internalise deviant norms as normal (Onapajo, 2020). Furthermore, social vices create divisions within communities, as some individuals become victims of crime or exploitation while others become perpetrators (Njoku, 2019). These divisions persist after displacement ends, complicating the process of community reintegration and reconciliation (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020). The loss of social capital has direct implications for reconstruction. Communities that lack trust, cooperation, and shared norms are less able to engage in collective action for rebuilding (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). They are more susceptible to conflict and less able to resist the resurgence of violence (Collier et al., 2003). The social fabric that is essential for durable peace is weakened, perhaps irreparably.
- ii. **Intergenerational Trauma and Deviance:** The proliferation of social vices in IDP camps creates intergenerational cycles of trauma and deviance that extend far beyond the immediate displacement experience (Chukwuorji et al., 2019). Children growing up in camps are exposed to behaviours that shape their development and future trajectories (Onapajo, 2025). Children who witness or experience violence, abuse, or exploitation are at increased risk of psychological trauma, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Thompson et al., 2023). These psychological conditions, if untreated, persist into adulthood and affect individuals' ability to function in families, communities, and the economy (Njoku, 2019). The trauma of displacement and camp life can be transmitted across generations, as traumatised parents struggle to provide nurturing care for their children (Chukwuorji et al., 2019). Those who grow up in environments where drug abuse, prostitution, and crime are normalised are more likely to engage in these behaviours themselves (Onapajo, 2020). The normalisation of deviance creates a self-perpetuating cycle: children who observe deviant behaviour internalise it as normal and replicate it in their own lives (Agbiboa, 2018). This cycle extends beyond the camp, as children who grow up in camps carry these behaviours with them when they return to their communities or move to other settings (Yakaka et al., 2025).
- iii. **The intergenerational transmission of trauma and deviance** has profound implications for reconstruction. Communities that receive returning IDPs may be confronted with individuals who have been shaped by years of exposure to violence, exploitation, and deviance (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020). The reintegration of these individuals poses significant challenges (Jatau & Ugwueze, 2026). Without adequate psychosocial support and community-based reintegration programmes, the cycle of trauma and deviance may continue in post-conflict communities (Oyawale, 2022).
- iv. **Delegitimation of State Institutions:** The proliferation of social vices in IDP camps delegitimises state institutions in the eyes of displaced populations. When the state, through its agencies and representatives, fails to provide security, justice, and basic services, it loses the trust and legitimacy that are essential for effective governance (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020). IDPs who experience or witness crime, exploitation, and violence in camps, and who see

the state unable or unwilling to protect them, develop a deep distrust of state institutions (Jatau & Ugwueze, 2026). This distrust extends beyond the camp context to encompass the broader state apparatus (Oyawale, 2022). IDPs may view the state as indifferent to their suffering, complicit in their exploitation, or simply incapable of fulfilling its basic responsibilities.

- v. The delegitimisation of state institutions has direct implications for reconstruction. Post-conflict reconstruction depends on the willingness of citizens to cooperate with state institutions, to participate in political processes, and to contribute to the rebuilding of communities (Collier et al., 2003). When IDPs distrust the state, they are less likely to engage in these processes (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020). They may resist efforts at reintegration, reject government programmes, or turn to alternative means of addressing their grievances (Ike et al., 2025). Moreover, the delegitimisation of state institutions creates space for non-state actors including insurgents, criminal groups, and community-based organisations to fill the governance vacuum (Agbiboa, 2018). In camp where the state is absent or ineffective, these actors may provide security, justice, and services, building their own legitimacy at the expense of the state. This dynamic perpetuates the conditions that gave rise to the insurgency in the first place.
- vi. The closure of Muna Camp, while presented as a response to social vices, also reflects the delegitimisation of camp governance. The state's inability to maintain order in the camp, despite years of effort, undermines its claim to be a capable and legitimate authority. The resettlement of IDPs to their ancestral homes, while necessary, does not automatically restore trust in the state. Without a concerted effort to rebuild legitimacy through effective governance and service delivery, the cycle of distrust and disengagement will continue.

VII. CONCLUSION

The proliferation of social vices in IDP camps in Northeast Nigeria is an unseen crisis with profound

implications for post-conflict reconstruction. The social disintegration that occurs in camps the loss of social capital, the creation of intergenerational cycles of trauma and deviance, the delegitimisation of state institutions which undermines the prospects for durable peace and national cohesion. Addressing this crisis requires more than the closure of camps or the provision of humanitarian assistance. It requires a fundamental reorientation of reconstruction efforts to address the social and psychological dimensions of recovery. As Borno State confronts the challenge of rebuilding communities devastated by years of insurgency, it must recognise that the social fabric is as important as physical infrastructure. The rebuilding of trust, norms, and networks, the social capital that enables cooperation and peaceful coexistence, is essential for durable. Without addressing the unseen crisis of social vices in IDP camps, reconstruction efforts will remain incomplete, and the conditions that gave rise to the insurgency will persist.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are made for policy and practice:

i. Integrate Psychosocial Support into Camp Management

The strong association between psychological trauma and social vices highlights the importance of addressing the psychological consequences of displacement. Trauma-informed care should be integrated into all aspects of camp management and service delivery. This includes training camp staff in trauma-informed approaches, establishing accessible counselling services within camps, and creating safe spaces for survivors of violence and exploitation.

ii. Strengthen Community-Based Protection Mechanisms

The breakdown of traditional social control mechanisms in camps has contributed to the proliferation of social vices. Community-based protection mechanisms should be strengthened through the engagement of traditional and religious leaders, the establishment of community watch groups, and the empowerment of women and youth as agents of change. These mechanisms can provide

informal social control, mediate disputes, and protect vulnerable individuals from exploitation.

iii. Implement Sustainable Livelihood Programmes

Economic deprivation is a significant driver of social vices. Sustainable livelihood programmes should be designed and implemented to provide IDPs with income-generating opportunities. This includes skills training, vocational education, micro-grants, and access to credit. Livelihood programmes should be tailored to the specific needs and capacities of different groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

iv. Address the Availability of Substances

The availability of drugs and alcohol in camps facilitates substance abuse. Camp governance should be strengthened to regulate the distribution of prescription medications, prevent diversion of medical supplies, and disrupt drug trafficking networks. Sensitisation programmes should be complemented by enforcement measures that send a clear message that drug abuse will not be tolerated.

v. Provide Meaningful Activities for Youth

Idleness and lack of meaningful activity contribute to drug abuse, gangsterism, and other forms of deviance among youth. Camps should provide structured activities for young people, including education, vocational training, sports, and recreational programmes. These activities can provide a sense of purpose, build skills, and reduce the appeal of deviant behaviour.

vi. Strengthen Camp Governance and Security

Weak camp governance and security contribute to the proliferation of social vices. Camp management should be strengthened through improved coordination among government agencies, humanitarian actors, and community representatives. Security presence should be enhanced, with a focus on protecting vulnerable individuals and disrupting criminal networks. However, security measures should be implemented in a manner that respects the rights and dignity of IDPs.

vii. Borno State Government should Adopt a Holistic Approach to Reconstruction

Post-conflict reconstruction must address not only physical infrastructure and state institutions but also the social and psychological dimensions of recovery. This requires a holistic approach that integrates humanitarian assistance, development programming, and peacebuilding. Social vices in IDP camps should be treated as a symptom of deeper governance and structural failures rather than isolated behavioural problems. Addressing these root causes is essential for durable peace and national cohesion.

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