

Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in Internally Displaced Persons Camps in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.	<p><i>This paper examined the Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) within Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Adamawa State, Nigeria a region profoundly affected by the Boko Haram insurgency and recurrent humanitarian crises. The research was guided by one key objective which is to ascertain the prevalent forms of GBV in IDP Camps. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study collected quantitative data through a structured questionnaire administered to 460 IDPs across six camps, selected via stratified random sampling. This was complemented by qualitative data from 40 Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions, using structured interview guides. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) computed with SPSS version 26 for the quantitative data, and thematic analysis conducted using NVivo software for the qualitative data. The results reveal an alarming prevalence of GBV, fulfilling the objective by identifying physical violence (Mean ≥ 3.15), emotional/psychological abuse (Mean ≥ 3.04), and economic deprivation as the most common forms. The findings indicated that GBV is a systemic feature of the displacement context in Adamawa, where intersecting vulnerabilities of gender, poverty, and displacement status converge. The study concluded that the cycle of violence is sustained by structural failures and deeply ingrained socio-cultural norms. Consequently, it recommended multi-faceted response centered on implementing integrated livelihood and economic empowerment programmes; strengthening physical protection and security within camps; enhancing legal accountability mechanisms to combat impunity; conducting community-led sensitization campaigns to challenge harmful gender norms; and scaling up accessible, survivor-centered health, psychosocial, and legal support services. This evidence-based approach is critical for policy formulation and humanitarian intervention aimed at mitigating GBV and promoting sustainable recovery in conflict-affected displacement settings.</i></p>
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Introduction

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has long been recognized as one of the most widespread, persistent, and devastating violations of human rights in the contemporary world, cutting across geographical, cultural, economic, and religious boundaries. It remains a deeply entrenched social problem that affects individuals and societies irrespective of development status, manifesting in both private and public spheres. The United Nations (UN, 2023) defines GBV as any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will that is rooted in socially ascribed gender differences between males and females. This definition underscores the fact that GBV is not merely a manifestation of individual deviance or interpersonal conflict, but rather a reflection of structural inequalities and patriarchal power relations that privilege men over women and reinforce gender hierarchies. In

practice, GBV encompasses a broad spectrum of abusive acts, including but not limited to sexual assault, intimate partner violence, human trafficking, forced or early marriage, honor killings, female genital mutilation (FGM), psychological and emotional abuse, as well as economic deprivation or control. Each of these manifestations reflects the diverse forms through which gendered power imbalances are maintained within societies (UN Women, 2022). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) estimates that approximately one in every three women about 736 million globally has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner at some point in her life. Such violence often occurs in contexts of inequality, where women have limited access to education, financial independence, or legal protection.

In Nigeria, the phenomenon of GBV remains a pressing and multifaceted challenge, deeply intertwined with cultural norms, socio-economic inequalities, and institutional weaknesses. The country's diverse ethnic composition and patriarchal social structures contribute to the perpetuation of harmful traditional practices and gender stereotypes that normalize violence against women and girls (UN Women, 2022). The persistence of insecurity particularly in the North-East due to the Boko Haram insurgency has further aggravated this situation. Since 2009, the region has experienced significant levels of displacement, destruction of livelihoods, and breakdown of community structures. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2024) estimates that Nigeria currently hosts over 3.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), one of the highest figures in Africa. The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2025) further reports that approximately 2.25 million of these displaced individuals are concentrated in the North-East states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. The magnitude of displacement has overwhelmed humanitarian systems and weakened local institutions, thereby exposing women and girls to heightened risks of violence, exploitation, and neglect.

Adamawa State, one of the epicenters of displacement in North-East Nigeria, has faced severe humanitarian challenges arising from both conflict and climate-induced disasters. The IOM (2024) reported that over 213,000 people are displaced within the state, while the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) confirmed that nearly 7,000 IDPs currently reside in four official camps across Yola North, Yola South, and Girei Local Government Areas. In addition, recurring floods and communal clashes have forced thousands into temporary shelters, further straining existing humanitarian resources (Associated Press, 2025). This combination of insecurity, environmental shocks, and poverty has disproportionately affected women and girls, who are often left to manage households amid loss, trauma, and displacement. In these contexts, GBV manifests not only as a symptom of crisis but as a distinct humanitarian emergency that compounds existing inequalities and undermines recovery efforts.

Empirical evidence reveals that GBV in displacement settings is alarmingly prevalent. A study conducted by The Lancet (2019) found that in North-East Nigeria, 33.2% of displaced women reported experiencing sexual violence, 20.5% physical violence, 28.4% socio-economic violence, and 30.5% emotional violence. Many incidents occur while women engage in daily survival activities such as collecting firewood, fetching water, or accessing food supplies, which expose them to harassment and assault. Within Adamawa, the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2018) found that 44.4% of women aged 15–49 had experienced some form of GBV, a rate believed to be even higher among displaced populations. The prevalence of GBV in IDP camps demonstrates the complex interplay between displacement, gender inequality, poverty, and institutional fragility. These interrelated challenges amplify the vulnerability of women and girls, leaving them with limited access to protection, justice, and essential services.

Despite Nigeria's commendable legislative and institutional

frameworks, the country continues to face considerable challenges in addressing GBV effectively. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) enacted in 2015, alongside the National Gender Policy (2021), provides a comprehensive legal framework for protecting victims and prosecuting offenders. However, the implementation of these policies remains limited, especially in conflict-affected areas such as Adamawa, where institutional capacities are weak and awareness is low (Okem & Emekwuru, 2019). Humanitarian actors such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), UNFPA, and local NGOs have established various programmes including safe spaces, psychosocial counseling, and medical care for survivors. Nonetheless, gaps persist due to underfunding, fragmented coordination, cultural barriers, and poor monitoring mechanisms. For example, the UN's 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan sought \$910 million to assist 7.8 million people across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, yet less than half of the funding target was achieved, leaving critical GBV response programmes under-supported (Reuters, 2025).

The decision to focus this research on GBV among women and girls in IDP camps within Adamawa State is informed by both scholarly and humanitarian imperatives. While other socio-economic problems such as unemployment, poverty, or food insecurity are prominent in the state, GBV stands out as a human rights crisis that directly undermines human dignity, social stability, and sustainable development. Adamawa presents a unique case study because it sits at the intersection of protracted displacement, fragile institutional capacity, and socio-cultural conservatism. Studying GBV in this context thus offers an opportunity to understand how multiple vulnerability factors conflict, displacement, gender inequality, and poverty interact to perpetuate violence against women. Moreover, this study responds to the urgent need for evidence-based research to guide policy and strengthen GBV prevention and response mechanisms in conflict-affected communities.

Ultimately, this study contributed meaningfully to the global discourse on gender-based violence by situating the experiences of displaced women and girls in Adamawa within broader theoretical and policy frameworks. It aims to generate empirical data on the prevalence, forms, and underlying causes of GBV, evaluate the effectiveness of existing interventions, and recommend practical strategies for improving survivor-centered responses. By doing so, the study bridges the gap between global policy commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 5 and 16) and local realities in humanitarian contexts. Its findings are expected to inform the efforts of key stakeholders, including the Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency (ADSEMA), local NGOs, international partners, and policymakers. More importantly, the research aspires to strengthen institutional accountability, enhance community awareness, and promote gender equity in displacement settings. In this way, it contributed not only to academic scholarship but also to the broader goal of building safer, more inclusive, and resilient communities in Adamawa State and other conflict-affected regions of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

This study examined the prevalent of gender-based violence

in IDP camps in Adamawa State Nigeria. The specific objective was to:

- i. Ascertain the prevalent forms of gender-based violence experienced by IDPs in Adamawa State.

Research Questions

The study answered the following research question:

- i. What are the prevalent forms of gender-based violence experienced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) within camps in Adamawa State?

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains a profound challenge within Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Nigeria, especially in Adamawa State where conflict, insurgency, and displacement have created conditions that exacerbate women's and girls' vulnerabilities. Understanding GBV in this context requires robust theoretical grounding to explain not only the extent and causes but also the multifaceted impacts and responses, including the effectiveness of available support services. In this theoretical framework, Social Learning Theory was used which offers critical insights into the dynamics of GBV in IDP camps. This theory helps to uncover the root causes of violence, the lived realities of survivors, and the structural and cultural factors that perpetuate the cycle of abuse. It also provided a basis for evaluating the adequacy of interventions and designing more comprehensive strategies to address GBV.

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura (1977), emphasizes that human behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Individuals acquire behaviours not only through direct experience but also by observing the actions of others and the consequences that follow. In the context of GBV, violent behaviours are often perpetuated across generations and communities because children and young people grow up witnessing violence as a normalized means of asserting power, resolving conflict, or enforcing gender roles. In patriarchal societies such as those in Northern Nigeria, where cultural norms often reinforce male dominance and female subordination, GBV becomes a learned and repeated behaviour. In IDP camps in Adamawa State, Social Learning Theory provides a lens to understand how displaced men and boys may replicate violent behaviours they witnessed in their communities before displacement. The dislocation caused by conflict and the breakdown of traditional social structures amplify these tendencies. Young boys who observed domestic violence in their homes may imitate such behaviours when they assume positions of authority within camp settings. Similarly, girls who have grown up seeing their mothers or female relatives subjected to violence may internalize submissive roles, perceiving abuse as part of normal gender relations. The absence of strong legal enforcement within IDP camps reinforces this cycle, as perpetrators often face little or no consequences for their actions, further legitimizing violence as acceptable behaviour.

Moreover, the theory explains how peer groups and camp dynamics contribute to the persistence of GBV. In overcrowded and poorly supervised camps, young men may learn from one another that exploiting vulnerable women and girls through coercion or sexual violence is tolerated. Where such actions are rewarded or go unpunished, the behaviour becomes reinforced. For survivors, repeated exposure to violence and the perception that resistance is futile often leads to psychological conditioning where silence and compliance are seen as the only survival strategies. Applying Social Learning Theory to GBV in IDP camps highlights the need for interventions that disrupt these cycles. Programmes that provide positive role models, challenge harmful gender norms, and promote non-violent behaviours are essential. Male engagement programmes that encourage men and boys to question inherited beliefs about masculinity and dominance can serve as counterweights to the patterns of violence observed and learned in these settings. Thus, Social Learning Theory situates GBV not only as an individual act but as a socially constructed behaviour that can be unlearned through targeted interventions.

Social Learning Theory has been applied in several Nigerian studies to explain the persistence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV). For instance, a study analyzing the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) data drew from a social learning framework to show that women who witnessed violence between their parents as children were more likely to experience IPV as adults (Ndjoku, 2018). This supports Bandura's view that behaviours are transmitted through observation and reinforcement. In displacement contexts, research in IDP camps in Borno State has similarly highlighted how the absence of accountability for perpetrators, coupled with overcrowded camp settings, reinforces cycles of abuse. An assessment of GBV in IDP camps in Maiduguri (Aphria, 2025) noted that violence was normalized in part because men and boys observed acts of abuse going unpunished, which further legitimized violence as acceptable behaviour. These findings affirm the relevance of Social Learning Theory in understanding how GBV is sustained in conflict-affected communities.

Gender-based violence in IDP Camps in Adamawa State

Gender-based violence (GBV) in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Adamawa State represents one of the most severe and complex humanitarian challenges in Nigeria. Displacement induced by conflict, insecurity, and climate-related crises has created a population highly vulnerable to multiple forms of violence, with women and girls disproportionately affected due to pre-existing gender inequalities and power imbalances. The multidimensional nature of GBV in these camps encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse highlights the interplay between structural, social, and individual factors that sustain and exacerbate the vulnerability of displaced populations (UN Women, 2020; WHO, 2021). Recent evidence underscores that GBV in Adamawa IDP camps is both systematic and pervasive. For instance, a 2024 report by Punch Newspaper documented a particularly harrowing case

in the Malkohi camp, where a 15-year-old girl was repeatedly raped by a camp official who exploited his position of authority to demand sexual favors in exchange for promises of food rations for her family. While extreme, this incident is indicative of broader structural dynamics that enable abuse, including the lack of accountability mechanisms, limited law enforcement capacity, overcrowded facilities, and chronic scarcity of essential resources (Alaga, 2019; OCHA, 2020). Such structural vulnerabilities create environments in which perpetrators exploit both physical dependency and institutional weaknesses, thereby normalizing violence and reducing survivors' capacity to seek redress.

The manifestations of GBV in Adamawa's IDP camps are multifaceted. Women and girls frequently endure sexual exploitation, coerced transactional sex for access to food and healthcare, intimate partner violence, early and forced marriages, and harassment within communal spaces such as latrines and sleeping areas (Ellsberg *et al.*, 2020; UNFPA, 2022). Psychological violence, including threats, intimidation, and social isolation, is often intertwined with physical and sexual abuse, producing long-term mental health consequences such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation (WHO, 2021). These mental health effects are compounded by social stigmatization, victim-blaming, and the erosion of traditional support networks, creating a cycle of vulnerability that can persist across generations. The socio-economic ramifications of GBV in IDP settings are equally profound. Survivors often face restricted access to education, income-generating activities, and healthcare services, reinforcing dependency and entrenching poverty (World Bank, 2022). Transactional sex and other forms of coerced economic exploitation are both survival strategies and mechanisms through which existing power hierarchies are reproduced (UN Women, 2020). Consequently, the impacts of GBV extend beyond individual survivors, undermining community cohesion, resilience, and long-term development prospects.

From a legal and policy perspective, the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention (2023) and international human rights frameworks emphasize the responsibility of states and humanitarian actors to prevent and respond to GBV. In Adamawa, however, implementation gaps, inconsistent monitoring, and weak coordination between governmental agencies and humanitarian organizations exacerbate the risks faced by displaced women and girls (OCHA, 2020). Humanitarian actors such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC, 2021) and UNFPA (2022) stress the critical importance of integrated GBV response strategies, including the establishment of safe spaces, provision of medical and psychosocial services, legal support, and empowerment initiatives designed to restore autonomy and agency to survivors. Furthermore, the protracted nature of displacement in Adamawa often lasting several years due to persistent conflict and insecurity magnifies the exposure of women and girls to GBV. Extended stays in temporary accommodations, combined with insufficient protection measures such as secure sanitation facilities, lighting, and private sleeping quarters, not only increase the frequency of violent incidents but also amplify their psychological and socio-economic impact over time (UNHCR, 2023). In

addition, displacement often intersects with climate-induced crises, further compounding vulnerability and straining the capacity of both local communities and humanitarian actors to provide protection (UNFPA, 2023).

Addressing GBV in Adamawa's IDP camps therefore requires a gender-transformative and multi-layered approach. This involves not only immediate protective interventions but also systemic reforms to address underlying structural inequalities, entrenched gender norms, and the power dynamics that facilitate abuse. Coordinated programming should integrate GBV considerations into broader humanitarian response strategies, including shelter, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and livelihood support, ensuring that the protection and empowerment of women and girls are central to emergency planning (UN Women, 2020; Ellsberg *et al.*, 2020). Importantly, effective interventions require sustained engagement with local communities to challenge social norms, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and promote survivor-centered approaches that respect autonomy, confidentiality, and dignity.

The GBV in Adamawa's IDP camps is a complex and systemic problem, deeply intertwined with the broader socio-political, economic, and humanitarian context. Its prevention and response demand an integrated framework that addresses both immediate and long-term needs, promotes legal accountability, and empowers survivors while transforming the structural inequalities that perpetuate violence. Without such comprehensive strategies, displaced women and girls will continue to experience profound physical, psychological, and socio-economic harms that extend well beyond the immediate crisis.

Prevalence and types of gender-based violence in IDP camps

The prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps is alarmingly high, with women and girls disproportionately affected. Empirical studies underscore that GBV in these settings is multidimensional, encompassing physical assault, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, forced marriage, and economic exploitation (International Rescue Committee [IRC], 2022; UNHCR, 2022). Sexual violence, including rape, sexual coercion, and exploitation, is particularly widespread, yet a substantial proportion of incidents remain underreported due to fear of social stigma, reprisals, and distrust of authorities (IRC, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2022). The prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) in IDP camps also reflects the erosion of social cohesion and the heightened stress associated with displacement. Displacement disrupts traditional family and community structures, undermining informal protective mechanisms that previously shielded women and girls from abuse (UNHCR, 2022; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2022). This breakdown of social networks, coupled with the collapse of law enforcement and accountability mechanisms, fosters an environment where perpetrators often act with impunity (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Several structural and socio-economic factors exacerbate vulnerability to GBV in IDP camps in Adamawa State.

Socio-economic instability, limited access to education and livelihood opportunities, dependency on humanitarian aid, and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality create a fertile environment for exploitation (Ibrahim & Abubakar, 2023). Economic dependency, in particular, increases women's susceptibility to coercive sexual practices, transactional sex, and forced marriages, as survivors navigate the scarcity of essential resources. Similarly, the presence of armed groups and inadequate law enforcement mechanisms compounds risk by facilitating a culture of impunity (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Socio-demographic factors such as age, marital status, and educational attainment also shape exposure to GBV. Research indicates that younger women and girls, particularly those who are unmarried, separated, or widowed, face heightened risks of sexual violence and exploitation (OCHA, 2022). Conflict-related vulnerabilities, including the trauma of forced displacement, loss of social capital, and disruption of protective community structures, further exacerbate these risks (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2022; Uthman & Lawoko, 2019).

From a theoretical perspective, the occurrence of GBV in IDP camps can be analyzed through the lens of structural violence, as conceptualized by Galtung (1969). Structural violence refers to the systematic ways in which social structures harm or disadvantage individuals, often indirectly, through institutionalized inequalities, discrimination, and exclusion. In the context of Adamawa's IDP camps, structural violence manifests through gendered power asymmetries, economic deprivation, and institutional failures, which collectively heighten women's vulnerability to abuse (Fatusi *et al.*, 2019; Fagan *et al.*, 2020). These structural inequities are compounded by cultural and societal norms that legitimize male dominance and control, reinforcing both the prevalence and normalization of GBV within displaced populations. The prevalence and types of GBV in Adamawa's IDP camps are shaped by an interplay of socio-economic, socio-demographic, cultural, and structural factors, as well as the broader humanitarian context. Understanding GBV in these settings requires moving beyond simple statistics to recognize the systemic, multifaceted, and contextually embedded nature of violence, which has profound physical, psychological, and socio-economic consequences for survivors and their communities. Addressing these challenges demands integrated, multi-sectoral interventions that combine protection, legal accountability, psychosocial support, and empowerment strategies, while simultaneously challenging the structural and normative factors that perpetuate violence (UN Women, 2020; Ellsberg *et al.*, 2020).

Methodology

The study adopted mixed method approach, the target population for this study comprised 7300 individuals and personnel drawn from six selected Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Adamawa State: Salama House,

Madagali IDP Camp, Malkohi IDP Camp, Mubi IDP Camp, Yolde Pate IDP Camp, and KunuMaaje Host Community; encompassing a diverse demographic of women, men, children, and the elderly. In addition to the IDP residents, the study population includes staff responsible for the management and coordination of these camps, such as government-appointed camp coordinators, health workers, teachers, security personnel, and community volunteers who play vital roles in maintaining camp operations. Furthermore, humanitarian actors from key non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The study adopted a multi-stage stratified sampling design to ensure that the data collected were representative of the target population while also incorporating the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the management and welfare of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations, applying a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error was employed to arrive at 460 respondents. Data for this study were collected using a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The quantitative component involved the administration of structured questionnaires designed on 4 point Likert scale to a representative sample of IDPs across selected camps while for the KII was interview guide was used. The reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha (α) coefficient, a statistical measure used to determine the internal consistency of scale items and values above 0.70 are considered acceptable and satisfactory for research instruments used in the social sciences, indicating that the items within the instrument consistently measure the intended constructs.

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, to summarize the prevalence, forms, and impacts of GBV. A decision rule was applied whereby mean responses ≥ 2.50 and above were considered as "Agreed" and < 2.50 as "Disagreed." Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were analyzed using content analysis, allowing thematic patterns related to GBV, coping mechanisms, and institutional responses to emerge.

Result

Forms of Gender - Based Violence in IDPs Camps in Adamawa State

Research Question One: What are the prevalent forms of gender-based violence experienced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) within camps in Adamawa State?

Table 1: Forms of GBV in Salama House IDP Camp

S/N	Questions (n=81)	Mean (x)	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Physical violence is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	3.21	0.94	Agreed

2	Sexual violence and non-consensual sexual act	2.83	0.90	Agreed
3	Emotional violence which includes insults, threats, intimidation, etc.	3.12	0.95	Agreed
4	Financial abuses which includes denying the victim access to money	3.09	0.91	Agreed
5	Harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage and forced marriage	2.32	0.92	Disagreed
6	Humiliation is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	2.94	1.02	Agreed
7	Sexual exploitation	2.74	1.01	Agreed
8	Denying girl/boy child access to education or healthcare	2.35	1.04	Disagreed
9	Some policies reinforce gender inequality	2.64	1.08	Agreed
10	Behaviour that results in the isolation and alienation of a woman from her friends and family	2.82	0.98	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 1 illustrates the various forms of gender-based violence (GBV) experienced in Salama House IDP Camp. Physical violence emerges as the most frequently reported form ($\bar{x} = 3.21$, $\sigma = 0.94$), followed by emotional violence ($\bar{x} = 3.12$, $\sigma = 0.95$) and financial abuse ($\bar{x} = 3.09$, $\sigma = 0.91$), highlighting their common occurrence in the camp. Sexual violence ($\bar{x} = 2.83$, $\sigma = 0.90$) and sexual exploitation ($\bar{x} = 2.74$, $\sigma = 1.01$) were also reported, albeit slightly less frequent. Harmful cultural practices, including child and forced marriage ($\bar{x} = 2.32$, $SD = 0.92$), and denial of access to education or healthcare ($\bar{x} = 2.35$, $\sigma = 1.04$) were less prevalent. Other notable forms include humiliation ($\bar{x} = 2.94$, $\sigma = 1.02$), policies reinforcing gender inequality ($\bar{x} = 2.64$, $\sigma = 1.08$), and behaviours causing social isolation ($\bar{x} = 2.82$, $\sigma = 0.98$).

Table 2: Forms of GBV in Madagali IDP Camp

S/N	Questions (n=88)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Physical violence is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	3.09	0.98	Agreed
2	Sexual violence and non-consensual sexual act	2.70	0.94	Agreed
3	Emotional violence which includes insults, threats, intimidation, etc.	2.97	0.93	Agreed
4	Financial abuses which includes denying the victim access to money	3.01	0.96	Agreed
5	Harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage and forced marriage	2.27	0.96	Disagreed
6	Humiliation is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	2.88	1.04	Agreed
7	Sexual exploitation	2.63	1.04	Agreed
8	Denying girl/boy child access to education or healthcare	2.29	1.05	Disagreed
9	Some policies reinforce gender inequality	2.58	1.11	Agreed
10	Behaviour that results in the isolation and alienation of a woman from her friends and family	2.79	0.99	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 2 illustrates the various forms of gender-based violence (GBV) experienced in Madagali IDP Camp. Physical violence emerges as the most frequently reported form ($\bar{x} = 3.09$, $\sigma = 0.98$), followed by financial abuse ($\bar{x} = 3.01$, $\sigma = 0.96$) and emotional violence ($\bar{x} = 2.97$, $\sigma = 0.93$), highlighting their common occurrence in the camp. Sexual violence ($\bar{x} = 2.70$, $SD = 0.94$) and sexual exploitation ($\bar{x} = 2.63$, $\sigma = 1.04$) were also reported, albeit slightly less frequent. Harmful cultural practices, including child and forced marriage ($\bar{x} = 2.27$, $\sigma = 0.96$), and denial of access to education or healthcare ($\bar{x} = 2.29$, $\sigma = 1.05$)

were less prevalent. Other notable forms include humiliation ($\bar{x} = 2.88$, $\sigma = 1.04$), policies reinforcing gender inequality ($\bar{x} = 2.58$, $\sigma = 1.11$), and behaviours causing social isolation ($\bar{x} = 2.79$, $\sigma = 0.99$).

Table 3: Forms of GBV in Malkohi IDP Camp

S/N	Questions(n=98)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Physical violence is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	3.18	0.99	Agreed
2	Sexual violence and non-consensual sexual act	2.80	0.95	Agreed
3	Emotional violence which includes insults, threats, intimidation, etc.	3.10	0.97	Agreed
4	Financial abuses which includes denying the victim access to money	3.10	0.95	Agreed
5	Harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage and forced marriage	2.34	0.97	Disagreed
6	Humiliation is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	2.93	1.03	Agreed
7	Sexual exploitation	2.70	1.03	Agreed
8	Denying girl/boy child access to education or healthcare	2.33	1.03	Disagreed
9	Some policies reinforce gender inequality	2.65	1.10	Agreed
10	Behaviour that results in the isolation and alienation of a woman from her friends and family	2.83	0.99	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 3 illustrates the various forms of gender-based violence (GBV) experienced in Malkohi IDP Camp. Physical violence is reported as the most frequent form ($\bar{x} = 3.18$, $\sigma = 0.99$), followed by emotional violence ($\bar{x} = 3.10$, $\sigma = 0.97$) and financial abuse (Mean = 3.10, $\sigma = 0.95$), indicating their high occurrence in the camp. Sexual violence ($\bar{x} = 2.80$, $\sigma = 0.95$) and sexual exploitation ($\bar{x} = 2.70$, $\sigma = 1.03$) were also identified, though slightly less prevalent. Harmful cultural practices, including child and forced marriage ($\bar{x} = 2.34$, $\sigma = 0.97$), and denial of access to education or healthcare ($\bar{x} = 2.33$, $\sigma = 1.03$) were less common. Other significant forms include humiliation ($\bar{x} = 2.93$, $\sigma = 1.03$), policies reinforcing gender inequality (Mean = 2.65, $\sigma = 1.10$), and behaviours causing social isolation ($\bar{x} = 2.83$, $\sigma = 0.99$). Overall, GBV in Malkohi primarily manifests through physical, emotional, and financial abuse, alongside social and policy-related inequalities.

Table 4: Forms of GBV in Mubi IDP Camp

S/N	Questions(n=93)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Physical violence is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	3.12	0.97	Agreed
2	Sexual violence and non-consensual sexual act	2.76	0.91	Agreed
3	Emotional violence which includes insults, threats, intimidation, etc.	3.04	0.95	Agreed
4	Financial abuses which includes denying the victim access to money	3.08	0.93	Agreed
5	Harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage and forced marriage	2.28	0.94	Disagreed
6	Humiliation is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	2.89	1.01	Agreed
7	Sexual exploitation	2.68	1.00	Agreed

8	Denying girl/boy child access to education or healthcare	2.31	1.02	Disagreed
9	Some policies reinforce gender inequality	2.60	1.07	Agreed
10	Behaviour that results in the isolation and alienation of a woman from her friends and family	2.81	0.97	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 4 presents the various forms of gender-based violence (GBV) experienced in Mubi IDP Camp. Physical violence is reported as the most frequent form (Mean = 3.12, $\sigma = 0.97$), followed closely by emotional violence ($\bar{x} = 3.04$, $\sigma = 0.95$) and financial abuse ($\bar{x} = 3.08$, $\sigma = 0.93$), highlighting their high prevalence within the camp. Sexual violence ($\bar{x} = 2.76$, $\sigma = 0.91$) and sexual exploitation ($\bar{x} = 2.68$, $\sigma = 1.00$) were also recorded, though less frequent. Harmful cultural practices, such as child and forced marriage ($\bar{x} = 2.28$, $\sigma = 0.94$), and denial of access to education or healthcare ($\bar{x} = 2.31$, $\sigma = 1.02$) were less common. Other notable forms include humiliation ($\bar{x} = 2.89$, $\sigma = 1.01$), policies reinforcing gender inequality ($\bar{x} = 2.60$, $\sigma = 1.07$), and behaviours causing social isolation ($\bar{x} = 2.81$, $\sigma = 0.97$).

Table 5: form of GBV in Yolde Pate IDP Camp

S/N	Questions(n=76)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Physical violence is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	3.06	1.01	Agreed
2	Sexual violence and non-consensual sexual act	2.69	0.93	Agreed
3	Emotional violence which includes insults, threats, intimidation, etc.	3.01	0.98	Agreed
4	Financial abuses which includes denying the victim access to money	3.06	0.96	Agreed
5	Harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage and forced marriage	2.26	0.93	Disagreed
6	Humiliation is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	2.87	1.04	Agreed
7	Sexual exploitation	2.66	1.05	Agreed
8	Denying girl/boy child access to education or healthcare	2.30	1.06	Disagreed
9	Some policies reinforce gender inequality	2.61	1.09	Agreed
10	Behaviour that results in the isolation and alienation of a woman from her friends and family	2.77	1.00	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 5 presents the different forms of gender-based violence (GBV) reported in Yolde Pate IDP Camp. Physical violence emerges as the most frequently experienced form ($\bar{x} = 3.06$, $\sigma = 1.01$), followed by financial abuse ($\bar{x} = 3.06$, $\sigma = 0.96$) and emotional violence ($\bar{x} = 3.01$, $\sigma = 0.98$), indicating their high prevalence in the camp. Sexual violence ($\bar{x} = 2.69$, $\sigma = 0.93$) and sexual exploitation ($\bar{x} = 2.66$, $\sigma = 1.05$) were also reported, though less frequent. Harmful cultural practices, such as child and forced marriage ($\bar{x} = 2.26$, $\sigma = 0.93$), and denial of access to education or healthcare ($\bar{x} = 2.30$, $\sigma = 1.06$) were less common. Other forms include humiliation ($\bar{x} = 2.87$, $\sigma = 1.04$), policies reinforcing gender inequality ($\bar{x} = 2.61$, $\sigma = 1.09$), and behaviours causing social isolation ($\bar{x} = 2.77$, $\sigma = 1.00$). Overall, GBV in Yolde Pate primarily manifests through physical, financial, and emotional abuse, alongside social and policy-related inequalities.

Table 6: Forms of GBV in KunuMaaje Host Community

S/N	Questions(n=64)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Physical violence is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	3.15	0.96	Agreed
2	Sexual violence and non-consensual sexual act	2.84	0.94	Agreed
3	Emotional violence which includes insults, threats, intimidation, etc.	3.00	0.94	Agreed
4	Financial abuses which includes denying the victim access to money	3.11	0.93	Agreed
5	Harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage and forced marriage	2.29	0.95	Disagreed
6	Humiliation is a frequent issue in the IDP camps.	2.90	1.02	Agreed
7	Sexual exploitation	2.74	1.02	Agreed
8	Denying girl/boy child access to education or healthcare	2.32	1.04	Disagreed
9	Some policies reinforce gender inequality	2.65	1.10	Agreed
10	Behaviour that results in the isolation and alienation of a woman from her friends and family	2.79	0.98	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 6 illustrates the forms of gender-based violence (GBV) experienced in KunuMaaje Host Community. Physical violence is the most frequently reported form ($\bar{x} = 3.15$, $\sigma = 0.96$), followed by financial abuse ($\bar{x} = 3.11$, $\sigma = 0.93$) and emotional violence ($\bar{x} = 3.00$, $\sigma = 0.94$), indicating their high prevalence. Sexual violence ($\bar{x} = 2.84$, $\sigma = 0.94$) and sexual exploitation ($\bar{x} = 2.74$, $\sigma = 1.02$) were also noted, albeit less frequent. Harmful cultural practices, including child and forced marriage ($\bar{x} = 2.29$, $\sigma = 0.95$), and denial of access to education or healthcare ($\bar{x} = 2.32$, $\sigma = 1.04$) were less common. Other notable forms include humiliation ($\bar{x} = 2.90$, $\sigma = 1.02$), policies reinforcing gender inequality ($\bar{x} = 2.65$, $\sigma = 1.10$), and behaviours causing social isolation ($\bar{x} = 2.79$, $\sigma = 0.98$). GBV in KunuMaaje primarily manifests through physical, financial, and emotional abuse, alongside social and policy-related inequalities.

Responses from KII and FGD:

The findings from the Key Informant Interviews (KII) reveal that gender-based violence (GBV) in the IDP camps manifests in multiple forms. Physical and sexual violence were reported, with incidents such as beatings and verbal insults predominantly affecting children who resist attending school or fail to comply with parental directives. Emotional and verbal abuse was found to be widespread, particularly within domestic settings, where spouses especially husbands frequently insult or publicly reprimand their wives. The study also identified forced and early marriages as a recurring issue, often driven by economic hardship or perceived security concerns. Furthermore, exploitation and survival sex were highlighted, whereby women are compelled into high-risk situations in exchange for basic

necessities such as food or money. Women and girls were also noted to face increased vulnerability during nighttime activities, such as fetching water or firewood, underscoring gendered risks associated with displacement contexts. Other evidence from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) corroborated these findings, revealing additional dimensions of GBV. Sexual exploitation for survival was commonly reported, with young girls coerced into sexual acts to meet basic needs. Domestic violence was frequently linked to heightened stress and economic hardship, resulting in physical abuse by partners. Forced early marriages persisted as families struggled to manage socio-economic pressures. Survivors of rape or sexual abuse were often subjected to stigmatization and social ostracization. Power-based harassment was also noted, reflecting structural inequalities and the heightened risks faced by displaced populations. The qualitative insights were obtained through field surveys and subjected to thematic analysis using NVivo software (2025).

Discussion of Findings

The study identified a high prevalence of physical, emotional, and financial abuse, forming a triad of coercive control over displaced women and girls. This finding resonates strongly with empirical studies from the region. For instance, Oluwafunmilayo (2021) and Nwankwo (2021) similarly found physical assault and emotional abuse to be among the most common forms of GBV in IDP camps in Northeast Nigeria. The qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) gave a voice to these forms, with participants detailing how "domestic violence was frequently linked to heightened stress and economic hardship, resulting in physical abuse by partners." This illustrates how the camp environment exacerbates pre-existing tensions, manifesting as physical violence. The high incidence of financial abuse, such as the denial of access to money, corroborates the work of Adejumo *et al.* (2021) and Oriola & Abimbola (2023), who identified economic coercion as a critical manifestation

of violence. The quantitative data on sexual violence and exploitation is powerfully contextualized by the KIIs, which revealed incidents of "exploitation and survival sex were highlighted, whereby women are compelled into high-risk situations in exchange for basic necessities such as food or money." This aligns with Nwankwo's (2021) finding that approximately 41% of respondents engaged in transactional sex. A harrowing dimension was added by FGDs, which reported that "sexual exploitation for survival was commonly reported, with young girls coerced into sexual acts to meet basic needs," underscoring the brutal intersection of gender-based violence and economic despair.

The persistence of these interconnected forms of abuse can be understood through Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). As indicated in the literature review, violent behaviours are learned and normalized through observation and reinforcement. The qualitative findings support this, with KIIs noting that physical violence was often perpetrated against "children who resist attending school or fail to comply with parental directives," suggesting the intergenerational transmission of violent discipline. In the congested and stressful environment of IDP camps, where traditional social structures have collapsed, as one KII respondent pointed out, the "absence of male accountability was linked to weak enforcement mechanisms," allowing learned violent behaviours to be reinforced with impunity.

Conclusion

The study shows that gender-based violence (GBV) in the IDP camps of Adamawa State is not just a minor problem but a serious and ongoing crisis deeply rooted in the difficult conditions of displacement. It continues because of a cycle where existing gender inequality is made worse by poverty caused by conflict, the breakdown of community protection systems, and the failure to punish offenders. The study also concluded that the cycle of violence is sustained by structural failures and deeply ingrained socio-cultural norms. Protecting and respecting the rights and dignity of displaced women and girls is not only a moral duty but also a key step toward achieving lasting peace and rebuilding the affected communities in Northeast Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and subsequent conclusions, the following recommendations were proposed:

- i. The humanitarian agencies and the Adamawa State Government prioritize the redesign of camp infrastructure and safety protocols. This should include installing adequate lighting, securing separate and lockable sanitation facilities for women and girls, and establishing monitored safe spaces to directly mitigate the prevalent forms of physical and sexual violence identified.
- ii. Government should enhance physical protection and security within camps; and also enhance legal accountability mechanisms to combat impunity.

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