

Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Gender-Based Violence in Internally Displaced Person Camps in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>The prolonged humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria, fueled by the Boko Haram insurgency has caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. IDP camps designed as places of safety, have instead become environments where women and girls face heightened risks of gender-based violence (GBV). This article assessed the socio-cultural factors Influencing gender-based violence in IDP camps in Adamawa state, Nigeria. The research was guided by one objective and one research question. Employing mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, the study collected quantitative data through a structured questionnaire administered to 460 IDPs across six camps, selected via stratified random sampling and complemented by qualitative data from 40 Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions, using structured interview guides. The qualitative data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation computed with SPSS version 26 while the qualitative data were thematically analyzed using NVivo. The finding revealed that the collapse of community protection structures, entrenched patriarchal norms, and a pervasive culture of impunity as the factors responsible for the prevalent of Gender-based violence in IDP camps. The findings also 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 a multi-faceted response centered on implementing integrated livelihood and economic empowerment programmes.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Gender-Based Violence, Internally Displaced Persons, factors, Camps, Women, Girls</p>
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Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to any harmful action carried out against an individual without their consent and motivated by socially constructed gender differences. It encompasses a range of abuses, including physical assault, sexual violations such as rape and exploitation, survival sex, emotional or psychological harm, economic deprivation, harmful traditional practices like early or forced marriage, and the denial of essential services such as education or healthcare. GBV is a complex issue shaped by unequal power relations, cultural norms, and social structures, and although it affects people in all regions, women and girls bear a disproportionate burden. The United Nations (2015) defines GBV as behaviors or threats

that cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm, coercion, or the restriction of a person's freedoms. Its roots lie in persistent gender inequalities and deeply embedded power imbalances that are reinforced by cultural expectations and social practices. The World Health Organization (2022) reports that GBV remains a global crisis, with one in three women experiencing violence in their lifetime. Research continues to demonstrate the wide-ranging consequences of GBV on women's physical and psychological health, economic stability, and overall quality of life (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2023; Karakire, 2020).

Recent evidence shows that GBV persists at alarming levels worldwide. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2023) notes that the COVID-19 pandemic intensified existing vulnerabilities, with lockdowns and financial strain contributing to a rise in domestic violence cases. Devries et al. (2022) identify intimate partner violence (IPV) as the most prevalent form of GBV, affecting 27% of women aged 15–49 at some point in their lives. GBV appears in multiple forms, each carrying distinct implications: physical violence includes actions such as hitting, slapping, or choking; sexual violence refers to rape, assault, or coerced sexual acts; psychological violence involves emotional manipulation, intimidation, or threats; and economic violence limits access to financial resources, employment, or education (Ellsberg et al., 2023). Fulu and Heise (2023) highlight that these forms often overlap, with many women facing more than one type of violence simultaneously.

Many factors increase the risk of experiencing GBV. Socio-economic stress, patriarchal norms, and lack of education are significant contributors. A study by Heise & Kotsadam (2022) highlights that women with lower education levels and those living in impoverished conditions are more likely to experience GBV. Further, cultural norms that condone male dominance and female submissiveness perpetuate the cycle of violence (Jewkes *et al.*, 2023). The consequences of GBV are broad and severe. Physically, survivors may suffer injuries, chronic pain, and disabilities. Psychologically, they are at a higher risk of developing depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Garcia-Moreno *et al.*, 2023). Economically, GBV limits women's ability to work, leading to financial dependence and perpetuating poverty (Duvvury *et al.*, 2022). Socially, survivors often face stigma and isolation, further worsening their plight (Jewkes *et al.*, 2023). Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain. Cultural and social barriers often hinder the implementation of GBV policies and interventions. Stigma and fear of retaliation prevent many survivors from seeking help or reporting abuse (Jewkes *et al.*, 2023). Also, limited resources and inadequate training of service providers compromise the effectiveness of GBV response services (UNFPA, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that involves all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and international organizations (Fulu & Heise, 2023). Moreover, according to Okeke-Ihejirika *et al.* (2020), studies document significant levels of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence against female IDPs within camps. Reports emerging from various humanitarian settings across Nigeria have frequently documented disturbing incidents of transactional sex and sexual coercion, in which female Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are allegedly compelled to exchange sexual favors for food, shelter, or other essential relief materials.

These abuses are predominantly attributed to male security agents, camp officials, and male IDPs occupying leadership or gatekeeping roles within displacement camps, who exploit their positions of authority and control over access to resources (Amnesty International, 2019; Mustapha & Mustapha, 2023). Such exploitative practices are often driven by acute resource scarcity, weak oversight mechanisms, and systemic gender inequality, thereby exacerbating the vulnerability of women and girls in already precarious humanitarian conditions.

The scale of GBV in displacement contexts is alarming. In Adamawa state in particular, IDP camps often expose displaced women and girls to systematic abuse, including sexual exploitation, rape, intimate partner violence, and coercion into survival sex in exchange for food, water, or mobility rights. It is therefore against this backdrop that this study assessed the socio-cultural determinants of gender-based violence in IDP camps in Adamawa state.

Statement of the Problem

The prolonged humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria, fueled by the Boko Haram insurgency, communal clashes, and climate-induced shocks, has displaced millions of people, with Adamawa State hosting a significant proportion of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in both formal camps and informal settlements (OCHA, 2025; IOM, 2024). These spaces, designed as places of safety, have instead become environments where women and girls face heightened risks of gender-based violence (GBV). Rather than serving solely as shelters, IDP camps often expose displaced women and girls to systematic abuse, including sexual exploitation, rape, intimate partner violence, and coercion into survival sex in exchange for food, water, or mobility rights (Bashir *et al.*, 2025). The scale of GBV in displacement contexts is alarming. Across Northeast Nigeria, research shows that more than one-fifth of displaced women report experiencing GBV at the hands of non-family members, while over 12% face intimate partner violence. Earlier studies indicate that as many as six in ten women in the region have suffered one or more forms of GBV, risks exacerbated by displacement, inadequate protection, poor camp infrastructure, and the collapse of livelihoods (UNHCR, 2018). Even basic activities such as fetching water, collecting firewood, or using communal latrines routinely expose women and adolescent girls to sexual assault due to weak security and unsafe camp layouts.

The consequences of this widespread GBV are severe and multidimensional. Survivors are left with lasting physical injuries, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections including HIV as well as deep psychological scars such as trauma, depression, and anxiety (WHO, 2023). Stigma and trauma as a result of conflicts compound

the suffering of women and girls involved, isolating them further and undermining their chances of recovery. Structural weaknesses within the camps such as the breakdown of family and community protections, entrenched gender inequalities, and a prevailing culture of impunity further embolden perpetrators and silence victims (Mustapha & Mustapha, 2023). Although Nigeria has introduced legal instruments like the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015 and humanitarian actors provide medical, psychosocial, and legal aid, gaps in implementation, accessibility, and accountability remain stark, particularly in Adamawa's dispersed and resource-limited camps.

Critically, there is still a lack of comprehensive and up-to-date data that captures the specific patterns of GBV within Adamawa State's IDP camps. Little is known about the forms of violence most prevalent, the categories of perpetrators, the barriers survivors face in seeking help, and the effectiveness of existing support services. Without such context-specific knowledge, responses risk being generic, fragmented, and insufficient. This knowledge gap perpetuates cycles of abuse and impunity, while leaving displaced women and girls in Adamawa State trapped in conditions of heightened vulnerability and diminished dignity.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at assessing the socio-cultural factors influencing gender-based violence in IDP camps in Adamawa state. The specific objective was to:

- i. identify the socio-cultural factors contributing to the persistence of gender-based violence within IDP camps in Adamawa State.

Research Questions

The following question guided the study:

- i. what are the socio-cultural factors contributing to the persistence of gender-based violence within IDP 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 the causes. The Intersectionality Theory offers critical insights into the dynamics of GBV in IDP camps and helps to uncover the root causes of violence.

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality Theory, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), states that woman's experiences of oppression and violence cannot be understood through a single lens such as gender alone. Instead, multiple identities such as age, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, and displacement status intersect to create unique vulnerabilities and forms of marginalization. Within IDP camps in Adamawa State, intersectionality provides a critical framework for examining how diverse categories of women and girls experience GBV differently, shaped by overlapping axes of disadvantage. For instance, teenage girls in IDP camps face a heightened risk of sexual exploitation due to their age, lack of protection, and dependency on camp structures for survival. Widows or divorced women, who lack male protection in patriarchal communities, may be targeted for abuse, coerced into exploitative relationships, or denied access to aid. Women with disabilities may face double discrimination: they are more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence and also face barriers in accessing support services. Ethnic and religious identities further complicate the picture, as women from minority groups may suffer exclusion or discrimination in accessing humanitarian assistance.

Intersectionality also underscores how displacement amplifies existing vulnerabilities. Displaced women already marginalized by poverty or low education levels face compounded risks in camp environments characterized by insecurity and resource scarcity. Structural inequalities are further reinforced by cultural practices such as child marriage, which are often intensified in displacement contexts as families marry off daughters in exchange for financial relief or protection. The theory is particularly useful in understanding why certain categories of survivors are excluded from support services. For example, stigma associated with sexual violence may be more pronounced for younger unmarried girls, leading families to hide their experiences to preserve marriage prospects. Similarly, women from minority ethnic groups may mistrust services delivered by agencies dominated by other groups. Intersectionality thus reveals that GBV responses must be tailored, recognizing the overlapping vulnerabilities that shape the experiences of women and girls. By applying Intersectionality Theory, this study can identify which groups in Adamawa State IDP camps are most vulnerable, why they are vulnerable, and how interventions can be designed to ensure inclusivity. It also challenges one-size-fits-all approaches, emphasizing that without addressing the intersecting dimensions of oppression, support services may fail to reach those most in need.

Intersectionality Theory has also been increasingly adopted in Nigerian GBV research to examine how multiple

identities combine to create compounded vulnerabilities for women and girls. Awoniyi and Ayobami (2024) applied an intersectional framework to explore the experiences of women living with disabilities in Nigeria, finding that disability and gender intersect to expose women to heightened risks of violence and exclusion from support services. In another study, an intersectional approach was specifically used to analyze GBV against internally displaced women in Northern Nigeria, revealing that displacement status, culture, poverty, and gender norms interact to shape women's vulnerability and limit their access to justice and aid (RSIS, 2023). Intersectionality has also been applied in health-related contexts, such as in Ebonyi State, where researchers showed how social identities like age, gender, and education intersect to shape young people's experiences of discrimination in health facilities (Odo *et al.*, 2024). These studies demonstrate the utility of intersectionality in capturing the layered realities of GBV survivors in IDP camps, where overlapping identities such as age, marital status, ethnicity, and disability define unique vulnerabilities.

Causes of Gender-Based Violence in Crisis Settings

Gender-based violence (GBV) has been recognized as an international public health crisis and human rights issue. Here are five reasons why it persists.

- i. Harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultures
 - ii. Conflicts, crises, and displacement
 - iii. Poverty and economic challenges
 - iv. Lack of legal protections and weak law enforcement
 - v. Inadequate political representation of women
 - vi. Cultural practices that reinforce inequality
- i. Harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultures:** Deeply rooted gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms often serve as justification for violence against women. These beliefs portray men as dominant, aggressive, and authoritative, while women are expected to be submissive, passive, and compliant. In such contexts, men may be viewed as providers, and women are treated as their possessions. When these attitudes become embedded in the cultural fabric, they normalize abusive behaviors and contribute to high rates of violence, particularly during times of stress or crisis. In some societies, these norms are reinforced by religious interpretations that sanction physical punishment of women or treat girls and women as property belonging first to their fathers and later to their husbands. As a result, harmful practices such as forced or early marriage and female genital mutilation persist as mechanisms for controlling women's bodies and sexuality. For many men, acts of violence are tied to

protecting or asserting their social "honor," giving rise to severe forms of GBV such as honor killings and dowry-related deaths.

- ii. **Conflicts, crises, and displacement:** The increasing number of conflicts globally has contributed to a rise in conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). At the United Nations General Assembly, Ana Peláez Narváez, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), emphasized that sexual violence continues to be used as a weapon of war in many conflict settings. In such environments, women often become the primary heads of households and thus face heightened vulnerability. Prolonged crises erode social protection systems, creating environments where GBV can occur with little or no accountability. Even women who remain with their partners may experience increased violence, as men coping with stress, uncertainty, and a loss of control may resort to abuse. During crises, women and girls also face heightened risks of other forms of GBV. For example, child marriage rates in Syria have risen since the onset of the civil war in 2011, as families often view early marriage as a desperate means of ensuring safety or financial stability for their daughters. Older women may also turn to, or be coerced into, exploitative practices, including sexual exploitation, to survive. These risks are intensified by intersecting inequalities and preexisting vulnerabilities.
- iii. **Poverty and other economic challenges:** Even outside conflict settings, economic hardship contributes significantly to GBV. Many girls aged 15 to 18—and in some cases much younger—are forced into marriage because families struggling financially see this as a way to reduce expenses or secure economic support through bride price or assistance from the groom's family. Such marriages often expose young brides to sexual violence and other forms of abuse. The Council of Europe notes that the relationship between poverty and GBV creates a cycle in which violence exacerbates poverty, making it extremely difficult for survivors to escape abusive situations. Additionally, as seen in conflict-related contexts, economic instability and unemployment can cause men to perceive a loss of social status or masculinity, leading some to reassert control through violence.
- iv. **Lack of legal protections:** In many countries, various forms of GBV persist because legal systems do not adequately criminalize them or fail to uphold women's rights. According to UN Women, out of 195 UN member states, around 33 still lack laws against domestic violence, and 48 have no legislation addressing workplace sexual harassment. Even where laws exist, they may not align with international

standards, may remain unimplemented, or may be poorly enforced. Additionally, key legal protections related to gender equality are often absent. When the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted in 2015, 112 countries had not yet criminalized marital rape. As of 2023, the United Nations reports that 50 countries still maintain discriminatory nationality laws that deny women equal citizenship rights. Such laws leave many women effectively stateless, even in the countries where they were born, further restricting their access to protection and recourse from violence.

Inadequate political representation: Ending gender-based violence (GBV) remains a complex challenge that cannot be effectively addressed without equitable female representation in political and policymaking spaces. Meaningful participation of women including those representing marginalized and intersectional identities is crucial in developing inclusive policies that address GBV at its roots. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2023), women account for only 26.5% of national parliamentarians globally, indicating that legislative decisions are often made without sufficient input from those most affected by gender-related inequalities. During the 2023 United Nations General Assembly, Rwanda's delegate, Flavia M. Nyamulisa, highlighted that the "limited inclusion of women in decision-making remains a persistent global issue," underscoring the systemic barriers preventing women's voices from shaping policies that directly impact their lives. Furthermore, women in political positions often face severe gender-based harassment and violence, which discourages broader participation. A UN Women (2022) study revealed that 82% of female parliamentarians reported experiencing some form of psychological violence during their tenure, including sexism, sexual harassment, and threats of death, rape, assault, or abduction. The report also noted that 44% of such incidents occur online, while 65% of women have faced sexist or sexual remarks at work, frequently from male colleagues. These experiences not only endanger individual safety but also reinforce structural inequalities within governance systems. Addressing GBV thus requires institutional commitment to gender-transformative policies that promote women's safety, leadership, and empowerment. Organizations such as Concern Worldwide have integrated gender-transformative frameworks into their programs, recognizing that harmful gender norms impede social and economic resilience. These frameworks emphasize community empowerment, psychosocial support, and the active participation of women and girls in all aspects of development and humanitarian response (Concern Worldwide, 2023).

- i. *Cultural factors:* Patriarchal and sexist views legitimize violence to ensure the dominance and superiority of men. Other cultural factors include gender stereotypes and prejudice, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity, the socialization of gender, an understanding of the family sphere as private and under male authority, and a general acceptance of violence as part of the public sphere (e.g. street sexual harassment of women), and/or as an acceptable means to solve conflict and assert oneself. Religious and historical traditions have sanctioned the physical punishment of women under the notion of entitlement and ownership of women. The concept of ownership, in turn, legitimizes control over women's sexuality, which, according to many legal codes, has been deemed essential to ensure patrilineal inheritance. Sexuality is also tied to the concept of so-called family honour in many societies. Traditional norms in these societies allow the killing of women suspected of defiling the honour of the family by indulging in forbidden sex or marrying and divorcing without the consent of the family. Norms around sexuality also help to account for the high numbers of homeless LGBT+ young people, and for the prevalence of hate crimes against them, on the grounds that they are considered a threat to societal norms. The same norms around sexuality can help to account for the mass rape of women (Council of Europe, 2023).

Methodology

This study adopted mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collections. The target population was 7300 individuals drawn from the 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, the elderly and camps management officials, as well 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).

Multi-stage stratified sampling was adopted to ensure adequate representation of the target population while also incorporating the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the management and welfare of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Sample size of 460 respondents were selected using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected using mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys and

qualitative interviews. The reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha (α) coefficient at 0.70.

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, and the decision rule on each item was based on the cut of point of 2.50, 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

The Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to the Persistence of Gender-Based Violence

Research Question One: What factors that contributed to the persistence of gender-based violence within IDP camps in Adamawa State?

Table 1: Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to GBV in Salama House IDP Camp

S/N	Item(n=81)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Poverty is a factors primarily contributes to GBV	3.75	0.50	Agreed
2	Harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultures	3.20	0.79	Agreed
3	Lack of legal protections	3.45	0.70	Agreed
4	Cultural factors include gender stereotypes and prejudice, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity	3.46	0.73	Agreed
5	The lack of economic resources generally makes women particularly vulnerable to violence.	3.57	0.58	Agreed
6	A collapse of community structure and the rule of law means women can find themselves without social support and protection systems in violent situations	3.50	0.70	Agreed
7	Displacement: women living in IDP camps and other temporary accommodation can face safety issues that put them at greater risk	3.54	0.63	Agreed
8	Substance abuse and high stress levels among displaced population lead violence.	3.45	0.79	Agreed
9	Inadequate access to service	3.28	0.88	Agreed
10	Men/women may use violence to reassert control	3.12	0.87	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 1 presents the socio-cultural factors contributing to the persistence of gender-based violence (GBV) in Salama House IDP Camp. Poverty is identified as the primary contributing factor ($\bar{x} = 3.75$, $\sigma = 0.50$), followed by displacement-related safety issues ($\bar{x} = 3.54$, $\sigma = 0.63$) and the lack of economic resources that make women particularly vulnerable ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, $\sigma = 0.58$). Other significant factors include cultural norms and gender stereotypes (Mean = 3.46, $\sigma = 0.73$), lack of legal protections ($\bar{x} = 3.45$, $\sigma = 0.70$), collapse of community structure and rule of law ($\bar{x} = 3.50$, $\sigma = 0.70$), harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal culture ($\bar{x} = 3.20$, $\sigma = 0.79$), substance abuse and high stress levels ($\bar{x} = 3.45$, $\sigma = 0.79$), inadequate access to services ($\bar{x} = 3.28$, $\sigma = 0.88$), and use of violence to reassert control ($\bar{x} = 3.12$, $\sigma = 0.87$).

Table 2: Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to GBV in Madagali IDP Camp

S/N	Item(n=88)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Poverty is a factors primarily contributes to GBV	3.70	0.51	Agreed
2	Harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultures	3.17	0.80	Agreed
3	Lack of legal protections	3.42	0.70	Agreed
4	Cultural factors include gender stereotypes and prejudice, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity	3.41	0.74	Agreed
5	The lack of economic resources generally makes women particularly vulnerable to violence.	3.53	0.58	Agreed
6	A collapse of community structure and the rule of law means women can find themselves without social support and protection systems in violent situations	3.47	0.70	Agreed

7	Displacement: women living in IDP camps and other temporary accommodation can face safety issues that put them at greater risk	3.50	0.64	Agreed
8	Substance abuse and high stress levels among displaced population lead violence.	3.41	0.79	Agreed
9	Inadequate access to service	3.25	0.88	Agreed
10	Men/women may use violence to reassert control	3.10	0.87	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 2 summarizes the socio-cultural factors contributing to gender-based violence (GBV) in Madagali IDP Camp. Poverty emerges as the most significant factor ($\bar{x} = 3.70$, $\sigma = 0.51$), followed closely by displacement-related safety risks ($\bar{x} = 3.50$, $\sigma = 0.64$) and the lack of economic resources that render women vulnerable ($\bar{x} = 3.53$, $\sigma = 0.58$). Other notable contributors include collapse of community structure and rule of law ($\bar{x} = 3.47$, $\sigma = 0.70$), cultural norms and gender stereotypes ($\bar{x} = 3.41$, $\sigma = 0.74$), lack of legal protections ($\bar{x} = 3.42$, $\sigma = 0.70$), harmful patriarchal practices ($\bar{x} = 3.17$, $SD = 0.80$), substance abuse and high stress levels ($\bar{x} = 3.41$, $\sigma = 0.79$), inadequate access to services ($\bar{x} = 3.25$, $\sigma = 0.88$), and use of violence to reassert control ($\bar{x} = 3.10$, $\sigma = 0.87$).

Table 3: Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to GBV in Malkohi IDP Camp

S/N	Item(n=98)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Poverty is a factors primarily contributes to GBV	3.74	0.51	Agreed
2	Harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultures	3.19	0.79	Agreed
3	Lack of legal protections	3.44	0.71	Agreed
4	Cultural factors include gender stereotypes and prejudice, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity	3.45	0.73	Agreed
5	The lack of economic resources generally makes women particularly vulnerable to violence.	3.56	0.57	Agreed
6	A collapse of community structure and the rule of law means women can find themselves without social support and protection systems in violent situations	3.49	0.70	Agreed
7	Displacement: women living in IDP camps and other temporary accommodation can face safety issues that put them at greater risk	3.53	0.64	Agreed
8	Substance abuse and high stress levels among displaced population lead violence.	3.43	0.79	Agreed
9	Inadequate access to service	3.27	0.88	Agreed
10	Men/women may use violence to reassert control	3.11	0.86	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 3 presents the socio-cultural factors contributing to gender-based violence (GBV) in Malkohi IDP Camp. Poverty is identified as the most significant factor ($\bar{x} = 3.74$, $\sigma = 0.51$), closely followed by the lack of economic resources that increase women's vulnerability ($\bar{x} = 3.56$, $\sigma = 0.57$) and displacement-related safety risks ($\bar{x} = 3.53$, $\sigma = 0.64$). Other key contributors include collapse of community structures and the rule of law ($\bar{x} = 3.49$, $\sigma = 0.70$), cultural norms and gender stereotypes ($\bar{x} = 3.45$, $\sigma = 0.73$), lack of legal protections ($\bar{x} = 3.44$, $\sigma = 0.71$), harmful patriarchal practices ($\bar{x} = 3.19$, $\sigma = 0.79$), substance abuse and stress among displaced populations ($\bar{x} = 3.43$, $\sigma = 0.79$), inadequate access to services ($\bar{x} = 3.27$, $\sigma = 0.88$), and the use of violence to reassert control ($\bar{x} = 3.11$, $\sigma = 0.86$).

Table 4: Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to GBV in Mubi IDP Camp

S/N	Item(n=93)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Poverty is a factors primarily contributes to GBV	3.73	0.51	Agreed
2	Harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultures	3.18	0.79	Agreed
3	Lack of legal protections	3.44	0.70	Agreed

4	Cultural factors include gender stereotypes and prejudice, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity	3.44	0.73	Agreed
5	The lack of economic resources generally makes women particularly vulnerable to violence.	3.55	0.58	Agreed
6	A collapse of community structure and the rule of law means women can find themselves without social support and protection systems in violent situations	3.48	0.70	Agreed
7	Displacement: women living in IDP camps and other temporary accommodation can face safety issues that put them at greater risk	3.52	0.63	Agreed
8	Substance abuse and high stress levels among displaced population lead violence.	3.43	0.79	Agreed
9	Inadequate access to service	3.26	0.88	Agreed
10	Men/women may use violence to reassert control	3.11	0.86	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 4 summarizes the socio-cultural factors sustaining gender-based violence (GBV) in Malkohi IDP Camp. Poverty emerged as the most critical factor ($\bar{x} = 3.74, \sigma = 0.51$), followed by limited economic resources increasing women's vulnerability ($\bar{x} = 3.56, \sigma = 0.57$) and displacement-related safety risks ($\bar{x} = 3.53, \sigma = 0.64$). Other significant contributors include the collapse of community structures and the rule of law ($\bar{x} = 3.49, \sigma = 0.70$), cultural norms and gender stereotypes ($\bar{x} = 3.45, \sigma = 0.73$), lack of legal protections ($\bar{x} = 3.44, \sigma = 0.71$), patriarchal practices ($\bar{x} = 3.19, \sigma = 0.79$), substance abuse and stress among displaced populations ($\bar{x} = 3.43, \sigma = 0.79$), inadequate access to services ($\bar{x} = 3.27, \sigma = 0.88$), and the use of violence to reassert control ($\bar{x} = 3.11, \sigma = 0.86$).

Table 5: Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to GBV in Yolde Pate IDP Camp

S/N	Item(n=76)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Poverty is a factors primarily contributes to GBV	3.71	0.51	Agreed
2	Harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultures	3.16	0.79	Agreed
3	Lack of legal protections	3.43	0.70	Agreed
4	Cultural factors include gender stereotypes and prejudice, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity	3.43	0.74	Agreed
5	The lack of economic resources generally makes women particularly vulnerable to violence.	3.54	0.58	Agreed
6	A collapse of community structure and the rule of law means women can find themselves without social support and protection systems in violent situations	3.47	0.70	Agreed
7	Displacement: women living in IDP camps and other temporary accommodation can face safety issues that put them at greater risk	3.51	0.63	Agreed
8	Substance abuse and high stress levels among displaced population lead violence.	3.42	0.79	Agreed
9	Inadequate access to service	3.25	0.88	Agreed
10	Men/women may use violence to reassert control	3.11	0.86	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 5 highlights the socio-cultural factors contributing to gender-based violence (GBV) in Yolde Pate IDP Camp. Poverty is identified as the leading factor ($\bar{x} = 3.71, \sigma = 0.51$), followed by the lack of economic resources that increase women's vulnerability ($\bar{x} = 3.54, \sigma = 0.58$) and displacement-related safety risks ($\bar{x} = 3.51, \sigma = 0.63$). Other significant contributors include the collapse of community structures and the rule of law ($\bar{x} = 3.47, \sigma = 0.70$), cultural norms and gender stereotypes ($\bar{x} = 3.43, \sigma = 0.74$), lack of legal protections ($\bar{x} = 3.43, \sigma = 0.70$), patriarchal practices ($\bar{x} = 3.16, \sigma = 0.79$), substance abuse and stress among displaced populations ($\bar{x} = 3.42, \sigma = 0.79$), inadequate access to services ($\bar{x} = 3.25, \sigma = 0.88$), and the use of violence to reassert control ($\bar{x} = 3.11, \sigma = 0.86$).

Table 6: Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to GBV in KunuMaaje Host Community

S/N	Item(n=64)	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Remark
1	Poverty is a factors primarily contributes to GBV	3.72	0.51	Agreed
2	Harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultures	3.18	0.80	Agreed
3	Lack of legal protections	3.44	0.70	Agreed
4	Cultural factors include gender stereotypes and prejudice, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity	3.44	0.73	Agreed
5	The lack of economic resources generally makes women particularly vulnerable to violence.	3.55	0.57	Agreed
6	A collapse of community structure and the rule of law means women can find themselves without social support and protection systems in violent situations	3.48	0.70	Agreed
7	Displacement: women living in IDP camps and other temporary accommodation can face safety issues that put them at greater risk	3.52	0.63	Agreed
8	Substance abuse and high stress levels among displaced population lead violence.	3.43	0.79	Agreed
9	Inadequate access to service	3.26	0.88	Agreed
10	Men/women may use violence to reassert control	3.11	0.86	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2025, analyzed using SPSS Version 26

Table 6 presents the socio-cultural factors contributing to gender-based violence (GBV) in KunuMaaje Host Community. Poverty emerges as the primary factor ($\bar{x} = 3.72, \sigma = 0.51$), closely followed by the lack of economic resources that heighten women's vulnerability ($\bar{x} = 3.55, \sigma = 0.57$) and displacement-related safety risks ($\bar{x} = 3.52, \sigma = 0.63$). Other notable contributors include the collapse of community structures and the rule of law ($\bar{x} = 3.48, \sigma = 0.70$), cultural norms and gender stereotypes ($\bar{x} = 3.44, \sigma = 0.73$), lack of legal protections ($\bar{x} = 3.44, \sigma = 0.70$), harmful patriarchal practices ($\bar{x} = 3.18, \sigma = 0.80$), substance abuse and stress among displaced populations ($\bar{x} = 3.43, \sigma = 0.79$), inadequate access to services ($\bar{x} = 3.26, \sigma = 0.88$), and the use of violence to reassert control ($\bar{x} = 3.11, \sigma = 0.86$).

The data qualitative survey for the study were obtained through field surveys and analyzed thematically using NVivo software (2025). The findings from the Key Informant Interviews reveal several socio-cultural factors contributing to the persistence of gender-based violence (GBV) within internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Poverty and economic desperation emerged as a primary

driver, as conflict-induced displacement often results in the loss of livelihoods and increased vulnerability to exploitation. Displacement and social breakdown were also highlighted, with respondents emphasizing the collapse of traditional family structures and community networks that once offered protection and support. Gender and marital status further influenced vulnerability, as women and young girls especially those without husbands were perceived as targets for abuse. Cultural norms and stigma perpetuated silence among survivors, as fear of social labeling discouraged them from reporting incidents. Additionally, the absence of male accountability was linked to weak enforcement mechanisms and a lack of effective legal frameworks within the camps, allowing perpetrators to act with impunity. Similarly, the Focus Group Discussion findings corroborate these themes, offering deeper community-level perspectives. Participants identified poverty-driven vulnerability as a key factor, where economic hardship pushes women and girls into exploitative or survival-based relationships. The lack of male protection for widows and single women was also identified as a major source of insecurity. Stigma was seen

to silence survivors, discouraging them from seeking justice or support due to fear of shame and social exclusion. Cultural normalization of violence emerged as another significant issue, where some community members perceive GBV as socially acceptable or inevitable.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study paint a stark picture of the dynamics of gender-based violence (GBV) within the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The discussion that follows interprets these results by situating them within the context of the empirical literature reviewed and the theoretical frameworks of Intersectionality Theory. Crucially, the qualitative insights from survivors, camp administrators, and NGO staff breathe life into the quantitative data, providing a textured understanding of the lived realities behind the statistics. This triangulation reveals that GBV in these camps is not a random occurrence but a systemic crisis, deeply embedded in and perpetuated by the socio-structural fabric of displacement.

The study identified that the persistence of GBV is driven by an interplay of socio-cultural and economic factors. Poverty emerged as the single most significant contributor across all sites, compounded by limited economic resources that disproportionately increase women's vulnerability. The collapse of community structures and the rule of law in displacement settings further exacerbates risks, leaving women without traditional social support or protection mechanisms. Other strongly agreed-upon contributing factors included harmful gender stereotypes, patriarchal norms, displacement-related safety risks, substance abuse, and inadequate access to legal protections and support services, collectively creating an environment in which GBV can persist with relative impunity.

The identification of poverty as the paramount driver of GBV robustly supports a wealth of empirical evidence. Adejumo *et al.* (2021) and Marlow *et al.* (2022) explicitly linked acute economic deprivation to transactional sex and survival-based exploitation. The qualitative findings from KIIs powerfully affirm this, identifying "Poverty and economic desperation emerged as a primary driver, as conflict-induced displacement often results in the loss of livelihoods and increased vulnerability to exploitation." FGD participants deepened this understanding, framing it as "poverty-driven vulnerability... where economic hardship pushes women and girls into exploitative or survival-based relationships." This economic desperation operates within a wider architecture of institutional failure. The collapse of community structures and the rule of law, identified as key factors, creates a "protection crisis" that aligns with reports from UNHCR (2019). KIIs highlighted "Displacement and social breakdown... with respondents

emphasizing the collapse of traditional family structures and community networks that once offered protection and support." This environment of impunity is further sustained by harmful patriarchal norms, a factor emphasized by Abdulgani (2024). FGDs revealed that a "cultural normalization of violence emerged as another significant issue, where some community members perceive GBV as socially acceptable or inevitable." Here, Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989) provides a critical lens. The study's demographic data showing a predominantly young, female, and poorly educated population reveals how gender, age, socio-economic status, and displacement status intersect to create unique and compounded vulnerabilities. The qualitative data vividly illustrates this intersectionality. KIIs revealed that "Gender and marital status further influenced vulnerability, as women and young girls especially those without husbands were perceived as targets for abuse." FGDs corroborated this, identifying "the lack of male protection for widows and single women was also identified as a major source of insecurity." As Abdulgani (2024) argued, these overlapping identities define risk profiles, and the current findings demonstrate that in Adamawa, it is the intersection of poverty, female gender, and displaced status that places individuals at the epicenter of vulnerability.

Conclusion

The study concluded 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 results clearly show that the current humanitarian efforts are not strong enough to stop this cycle. Therefore, there is a strong need for a complete and well-organized plan that focuses on the survivors and tackles the real causes of GBV such as poverty, weak laws, and harmful cultural beliefs. At the same time, there should be reliable and easily available health care, emotional support, and safety services for survivors. 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 policymakers and aid organizations should implement robust, scalable livelihood and

economic empowerment programs targeted at both women and men.

- ii. Government and NGOs should address the root causes of poverty and economic dependency, by introducing empowerment programs, these programs can reduce the desperation that fuels survival sex, transactional relationships, and other economically-driven violence.

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