

From Displacement to Resilience: Exploring Livelihood Recovery and Social Reintegration Among Internally Displaced Persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>Internal displacement has emerged as one of the most enduring humanitarian, developmental, and social issues facing modern societies. Adamawa State, despite its agricultural potential and strategic significance, has experienced considerable displacement, with internally displaced persons (IDPs) facing difficulties in rebuilding their livelihoods and socially reintegrating into host communities. This situation highlights the necessity to investigate pathways from displacement to resilience, emphasizing livelihood recovery and social reintegration. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. The research utilizes a quantitative design to systematically explore the recovery of livelihoods and social reintegration among internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study's population comprises both male and female internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Adamawa State, Nigeria, along with representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies that are directly engaged in IDP support and management. The study includes a sample of 200 participants drawn from the population of internally displaced persons, NGO representatives, and officials from government agencies. A random sampling technique was utilized to ensure that each individual in the population had an equal opportunity to be selected, thereby improving the representativeness and generalizability of the results. The primary tool for data collection in this research is a structured questionnaire consisting of 16 items, which was employed to gather data from a representative sample of displaced persons. This enables statistical analysis that facilitates objective measurement of key variables related to resilience and reintegration. The data gathered for the study were analysed using mean scores to address the research questions posed in the study. In summary, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria primarily utilize strategies such as launching small businesses, participating in farming or agriculture, and pursuing formal employment to restore or diversify their livelihoods. These approaches are generally more attainable and effective than less frequently employed alternatives like vocational training and dependence on aid. Based on the above conclusion, the paper recommends: Create accessible microcredit options, savings programs, grants, and revolving funds for individuals who have been displaced and financial initiatives must incorporate business training and mentorship to enhance long-term viability.</i> Keywords: Internal Displacement; Livelihood Recovery; Social Reintegration; Resilience; Social Development; Internally Displaced Persons; Nigeria.
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Introduction

Internal displacement has emerged as one of the most enduring humanitarian, developmental, and social issues facing modern societies. Internally displaced persons

(IDPs) are individuals or groups compelled to flee or abandon their homes, primarily due to armed conflict, widespread violence, human rights abuses, disasters, or

other circumstances, yet they remain within the internationally recognized borders of their nation. In contrast to refugees, IDPs do not cross international boundaries and thus remain under the jurisdiction and protection of their national government.

However, staying within national borders does not inherently ensure access to protection, livelihoods, essential services, or social rights. Current strategies addressing internal displacement increasingly acknowledge that it is not solely a humanitarian crisis but also a long-term development and peacebuilding issue that necessitates pathways toward sustainable recovery and lasting solutions (Global Protection Cluster [GPC], 2025; IDMC, 2026). On a global scale, internal displacement has reached unprecedented levels.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported that by the end of 2025, 82.2 million individuals were living in internal displacement, with conflict and violence causing 32.3 million new displacements that year. The ongoing nature of displacement illustrates that humanitarian aid alone is inadequate to tackle the underlying conditions that perpetuate displacement. Sustainable solutions demand initiatives that empower displaced communities to rebuild their livelihoods, gain access to essential services, engage in community life, and exercise their rights in a safe and dignified manner (IDMC, 2026).

Nigeria serves as a crucial context for analyzing these issues. The internal displacement within the country has been fueled by a mix of armed conflict, terrorism, communal violence, banditry, flooding, environmental challenges, and various other forms of insecurity. This situation is particularly acute in North-East Nigeria, where the Boko Haram insurgency and the actions of related non-state armed groups have led to extended displacement in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) States.

According to the Global Protection Cluster, around 2.3 million individuals remained internally displaced in the BAY States as of early 2025, while countless returnees continued to encounter challenges related to reintegration, security, housing, land, property, and access to essential services (GPC, 2026). Internal displacement has emerged as one of the most urgent humanitarian crises in Nigeria, especially in northeastern states like Adamawa.

The Boko Haram insurgency, along with communal strife and climate-related pressures, has displaced millions from their homes, thrusting them into vulnerable living situations and disrupting their socio-economic stability (IOM, 2025). Adamawa State, despite its agricultural potential and strategic significance, has experienced considerable displacement, with internally displaced persons (IDPs)

facing difficulties in rebuilding their livelihoods and socially reintegrating into host communities (ReliefWeb, 2025). This situation highlights the necessity to investigate pathways from displacement to resilience, emphasizing livelihood recovery and social reintegration.

Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the recovery of livelihoods and the social reintegration of internally displaced persons in Nigeria, as well as to analyze how these processes foster resilience within displaced communities.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. explore the strategies adopted by IDPs to recover their livelihoods of the internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria
2. assess the extent to which livelihood recovery contributes to self-reliance and resilience in Adamawa State, Nigeria;
3. identify the factors that constrain livelihood recovery and social reintegration among internally displaced persons in Nigeria

1.4 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the strategies adopted by IDPs to recover or diversify their livelihoods of the internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
2. What is the extent to which livelihood recovery contributes to self-reliance and resilience in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
3. What are the factors that constrain livelihood recovery and social reintegration among internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The study holds significance at theoretical, empirical, policy, and practical levels. From a theoretical standpoint, it will enhance the understanding of displacement through a resilience-oriented lens. Instead of viewing internally displaced persons (IDPs) solely as vulnerable groups in need of assistance, the study acknowledges their agency, coping mechanisms, social connections, and economic strategies. This viewpoint aligns with evidence indicating that IDPs in Northern Nigeria actively organize, advocate for their rights, and develop alternative sources of income and support (Ekezie, 2022).

Empirically, the research will offer insights into the connection between livelihood recovery and social

reintegration. By analyzing both aspects concurrently, it may yield a more thorough understanding of the circumstances under which displaced individuals transition from dependency to resilience.

For policymakers, the results may aid federal, state, and local governments in enhancing policies and programs aimed at supporting IDPs. Nigeria's National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons identifies durable solutions as a key goal; findings from this study could assist in translating that policy aim into more effective livelihood, social protection, reintegration, and community-based initiatives (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021).

For humanitarian and development organizations, the research may offer valuable insights for crafting interventions that merge economic recovery with social cohesion. This is particularly pertinent as current strategies in Nigeria increasingly focus on integrating livelihood support, social cohesion, local governance, and sustainable solutions (IOM, 2024; IOM, 2026).

For host and return communities, the study may enhance the understanding of how inclusive economic opportunities, social networks, participation, and community dialogue can alleviate tensions and promote peaceful coexistence. For researchers and students, the study will contribute to the growing body of literature on internal displacement, resilience, livelihoods, social capital and reintegration in Nigeria and may provide a basis for further research.

Review Of Related Literature

Strategies adopted by IDPs to recover or diversify their livelihoods of the internally displaced persons

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria face significant disruptions to their traditional means of livelihood due to conflict, communal violence, insecurity, natural disasters, and extended periods of displacement. As a result, the recovery of livelihoods among IDPs often necessitates that individuals and families modify their existing skills, embrace new economic ventures, and leverage available social and institutional resources.

Research conducted in Northern Nigeria indicates that IDPs have proactively established alternative income streams and community-oriented strategies for resource management, showcasing their ability to serve as agents of their own recovery (Ekezie, 2022). Some of the strategies they have implemented include: Agricultural Activities and Small-Scale Farming, Informal and Home-Based Enterprises, Participation in Community-Based Economic Activities (IOM, 2024–2025), Small-Scale Trading and Entrepreneurship (IOM, 2024), Utilizing Cash Assistance as Productive Capital (UNHCR, 2026), Social Networks and Social Capital (Kolade et al. 2022 and Ekezie 2022),

and Collaboration with Humanitarian and Development Organizations (Ekezie, 2022).

The extent to which livelihood recovery contributes to self-reliance and resilience;

Livelihood recovery plays a crucial role in the shift from displacement to self-sufficiency and resilience for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria. Displacement often leads to the loss of jobs, agricultural land, livestock, businesses, productive assets, and social connections. Research from Nigeria indicates that livelihood recovery is vital for fostering self-reliance and resilience, although its effectiveness is affected by factors such as insecurity, access to productive resources, market conditions, social networks, and the ongoing support from institutions. Notable contributions of livelihood recovery include: Reduction in Dependence on Humanitarian Assistance (UNHCR, 2025), Enhancement of Household Income and Economic Security (Kolade et al. 2022), Diversification of Livelihoods and Strengthening of Household Resilience (Ekezie, 2022), Improvement in Income and Economic Security for Households (Babangida et al., 2026), Fortification of Social Capital and Collective Resilience (Ekezie, 2022), and Restoration of Dignity and Agency (Ekezie, 2022).

Factors that constrain livelihood recovery and social reintegration among internally displaced persons in Nigeria

Research on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria reveals a complicated interaction of structural, security, socio-economic, and political elements that obstruct sustainable livelihood recovery and efficient social reintegration. Among these elements are: Ongoing Insecurity and the Loss of Productive Assets: (Ibrahim & Saleh, 2021), Limited Access to Land and Natural Resources (Joint Data Center, 2024), Dependence on Aid and Insufficient Financial Resources (Ba-Ana-Itenebe & Edo, 2023), Gender Inequalities and Economic Vulnerability (Joint Data Center, 2024), Intensified Social Divisions and Conflict Dynamics (Okon, 2018), Stigmatization and Safety Issues (Collado, 2020), Loss of Documentation and Claims to Property Rights, along with Institutional Gaps and Deficiencies in Policy Implementation (Oraegbunam, 2024).

Research Methodology

The research utilizes a quantitative design to systematically explore the recovery of livelihoods and social reintegration among internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria. This methodology involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to uncover patterns, relationships, and trends.

The study's population comprises both male and female internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Adamawa State,

Nigeria, along with representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies that are directly engaged in IDP support and management. This varied population provides a comprehensive understanding of the processes of livelihood recovery and social reintegration from multiple viewpoints.

The study includes a sample of 200 participants drawn from the population of internally displaced persons, NGO representatives, and officials from government agencies. A random sampling technique was utilized to ensure that each individual in the population had an equal opportunity to be selected, thereby improving the representativeness and generalizability of the results.

Table 1: *The strategies adopted by IDPs to recover or diversify their livelihoods of the internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria*

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	DECISION
1	Starting a small business	2.8	Accepted
2	Engaging in farming/agriculture	2.5	Accepted
3	Participating in vocational training	2.9	Accepted
4	Relying on aid or support	2.7	Accepted
5	Seeking formal employment	2.6	Accepted

From the analysis in table one it is clear that the strategies adopted by IDPs to recover their livelihoods of the internally displaced persons Adamawa State, Nigeria are: Starting a small business, engaging in farming/agriculture, participating in vocational training, relying on aid or support and seeking formal employment. This assertion is supported with

The primary tool for data collection in this research is a structured questionnaire consisting of 16 items, which was employed to gather data from a representative sample of displaced persons. This enables statistical analysis that facilitates objective measurement of key variables related to resilience and reintegration. The data gathered for the study were analyzed using mean scores to address the research questions posed in the study.

Results And Discussions

Research Question One: What are the strategies adopted by IDPs to recover their livelihoods of the internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

calculated mean scores of 2.8, 2.5, 2.9, 2.7 and 2.6 respectively.

Research Question Two: What is the extent to which livelihood recovery contributes to self-reliance and resilience in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Table 2: *the extent to which livelihood recovery contributes to self-reliance and resilience in Adamawa State, Nigeria*

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	DECISION
1	improved your ability to support yourself	2.5	Accepted
2	improved your ability to support your family	2.7	Accepted
3	managing future economic challenges	2.5	Accepted
4	cope with the impacts of displacement and related hardships	2.8	Accepted
5	maintaining your independence and resilience over time	2.9	Accepted

The summary of the analysis in table 2 shows that the extent to which livelihood recovery contributes to self-reliance and resilience in Adamawa State, Nigeria is: improved your ability to support yourself, improved your ability to support your family, managing future economic challenges, cope with the impacts of displacement and related hardships and maintaining your independence and resilience over time. This is supported

with calculated mean scores of 2.5, 2.7, 2.5, 2.8 and 2.9 respectively

Research Question Three: What are the factors that constrain livelihood recovery and social reintegration among internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Table 3: *factors that constrain livelihood recovery and social reintegration among internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria*

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	DECISION
1	Lack of capital,	2.9	Accepted
2	limited skills or education,	2.7	Accepted
3	insecurity	2.5	Accepted
4	lack of access to land or resources,	2.6	Accepted
5	discrimination,	2.5	Accepted
6	poor health,	2.8	Accepted

The analysis in table three shows that: Lack of capital, limited skills or education, insecurity, lack of access to land or resources, discrimination, and poor health, are the factors that constrain livelihood recovery and social reintegration among internally displaced persons in Adamawa State, Nigeria. This finding is supported with calculated mean scores of 2.9, 2.7, 2.5, 2.6, 2.5, and 2.8 respectively.

Discussions of the Findings

From the analysis in table one it is clear that the strategies adopted by IDPs to recover their livelihoods of the internally displaced persons Adamawa State, Nigeria are: Starting a small business, engaging in farming/agriculture, participating in vocational training, relying on aid or support and seeking formal employment. This finding agreed with the findings of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). (2025), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2024), News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). (2026), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). (2025) and Adamawa State Civil Service Commission (2026).

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Conclusion and Recommendations

In summary, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria primarily utilize strategies such as launching small businesses, participating in farming or agriculture, and pursuing formal employment to restore or diversify their livelihoods. These approaches are generally more attainable and effective than less frequently employed alternatives like vocational training and dependence on aid. The results highlight the necessity for focused interventions to improve access to and awareness of various livelihood opportunities, especially vocational training and support services, to bolster the resilience and self-sufficiency of IDPs. Enhancing these strategies will greatly aid in achieving

sustainable livelihood recovery and social reintegration for displaced communities.

Based on the above conclusion, the paper recommends:

1. Create accessible microcredit options, savings programs, grants, and revolving funds for individuals who have been displaced.
2. Financial initiatives must incorporate business training and mentorship to enhance long-term viability.
3. Government and humanitarian organizations should transition from immediate relief efforts to sustainable livelihood strategies.
4. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) should receive support through vocational training, agricultural resources, small business grants, apprenticeships, and market access.
5. Livelihood initiatives should align with the skills, requirements, and local economic prospects present in communities hosting IDPs.
6. Particular focus should be directed towards women, youth, individuals with disabilities, and other economically disadvantaged groups.

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