

Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State and the Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria: Need for Social Work Intervention

**Chukwuma, Onyekachi Gift (Ph.D)¹, Okah, Paulinus Sunday²
and Aghedo, Gabriel Usiagu³**

¹Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Email: onyekachi.chukwuma@unn.edu.ng

²Department of Social Work, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Email: okahsunny4real2017@gmail.com

³Department of Social Work, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Email: gabbyaghedo@yahoo.com

³**Corresponding Author**

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Abstract

One of the areas of convergence between social work and religion is in the aspect of social welfare. Even though approached from different angles, social work practitioners and religious bodies offer social welfare services which are aimed at alleviating the problems of the populace. In Nigeria today, there are many social problems occasioned by the activities of Boko Haram terrorists, Fulani herdsmen, armed robbers, kidnappers and ritualists. Consequently, these activities have made a good number of Nigerians to become internally displaced persons (IDPs). In Nigeria, the plights of the IDPs alarm social work practitioners, religious groups, health institutions and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This qualitative paper investigates the responses of the Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State towards the plights of the IDPs in Nigeria. It is observed that there are problems associated with these responses largely because they are carried out by non-social work professionals. The data for this research was drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Semi-structured interview method was used to solicit information from some pastors /members of Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka. The secondary sources included journal articles, books, newspapers and internet materials. This study employs the descriptive analysis method; this methodology examines things as they present themselves and suspends judgement on any issue under discussion. This paper advocates that there should be collaboration between Pentecostal churches and social work professionals in their subsequent interventions to the plights of the IDPs in Nigeria. Moreover, the Nigerian government should understand the place of social workers and in turn utilize them in addressing the social problems facing the country.

Key Words: Pentecostal Churches, Internally Displaced Persons, Social Work Intervention.

Introduction

In contemporary Nigerian society, there are many social problems occasioned by the activities of Boko Haram terrorists, Fulani herdsmen, armed robbers, kidnappers and ritualists. Some other social problems are the outcome of natural disasters such as flooding and fire outbreak. It cannot be overstated that these social problems hamper unity and development both at national and individual levels. More so, one can appreciate why security-related issues receive daily patronage on most Nigerian dailies. The fact remains that as a result of the many security and environmental challenges, the developmental height in Nigeria is really at very low ebb.

As a result of these social problems evident in the Nigerian society, a good number of Nigerians have become internally displaced persons (IDPs). In Nigeria, the plights of the IDPs alarm social work practitioners, religious groups, health institutions and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Among all the religious groups who have made some contributions to the challenges of the internally displaced persons in Nigeria, this paper investigates the responses of the Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State towards the plights of the IDPs in Nigeria. The semi-structured interview method was used to gather information from some Pentecostal church leaders /members in Nsukka on how they have contributed to the plights of the internally displaced persons in Nigeria.

As a part of their social action evangelism strategy, the Pentecostal churches in Nsukka have made some contributions to ease the plights of the internally displaced persons in Nigeria. The research carried out indicates that these churches see this social problem as an opportunity to carry

the “Good news” to the uttermost part of the earth as commanded by Jesus in the Great commission (Matt 28:19). In addition, the intervention of these churches is premised on the fact that social action evangelism is an effective way of propagating the good news of Jesus Christ. However, there are problems associated with the responses largely because they are carried out by non-social work professionals. They are carried out by people who have the willingness and some resources but lack the fundamentals of social welfare system and practice.

In view of this, this paper discovers that the gaps evident in the intervention of the Pentecostal churches have some implications on social work practice in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper advocates and recommends that there should be collaboration between concerned Pentecostal church leaders and social work professionals in their efforts to give better lives to the internally displaced persons in Nigeria. More so, this work places a clarion call to the Nigerian government to effectively utilize the professionalism of social workers in the many contemporary social problems in the country.

Clarification of Concepts

I Internally Displaced Persons

The African Union Convention for Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention, 2009) defines internally displaced persons as persons or group of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border. Similarly, Obikaeze and Onuoha (2016) note that the internally displaced persons are citizens of a country who are displaced within the territory of a country as a result of natural disasters such as erosion, desertification and flooding. People can also be displaced as a result of human-made disasters such as civil war, internal armed conflict and terrorism. According to Hamzat (2013), those classified as internally displaced persons are mostly victims of the inhumanity of man against man. They are victims of various kinds of injustices or violent confrontations perpetrated either by their own government against them or by others such as communal clashes, terrorism, riots, religious conflicts and insurgency. Durosaro and Ajiboye (2011) explain that there are two major components of the IDPs: the coercive and involuntary character of movement and the fact that such movement takes place within national borders. Therefore, as the displaced persons do not cross international borders, they are considered as IDPs and not refugees.

When families are displaced, their utmost concern becomes the survival of family members. In most cases, the displaced persons do not take anything with them, thereby making them face untold economic hardship, psychological trauma and social disengagement. Internally displaced persons are vulnerable in many respects, and often times, they are not welcomed by their hosts probably as a result of limitation of resources and other risks which their presence may place on their host communities. In such situations, they need the intervention of the government and other humanitarian groups to cushion the effects of hardship and bring succor to them.

II Pentecostal Church

Pentecostal churches take their name from the Jewish Feast of Weeks known as “Pentecost”. The spectacular thing which occurred on the day of the Pentecost as recorded in Acts

2:1-4 was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which enabled the twelve (12) apostles to speak in new tongues. Therefore, Pentecostalism is a renewed movement in Christianity which places much emphasis on a personal experience of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit. Robbins (2018) notes that the main belief of Pentecostal churches is that Christians have the grace to receive the same Holy Spirit which the early disciples received; they can be baptized with the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in other tongues. Furthermore, Pentecostal Christians believe that they can receive and manifest various spiritual gifts such as interpretation of tongues, miracles, healing and prophecy. In his book, Anderson (2010) recapitulates that “Pentecostalism is a movement concerned primarily with the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts” (p. 3). Pentecostal Christians put much emphasis on the third person of the Trinity (Holy Spirit) and his manifestations in the individual and corporate lives of Christians.

Examining the Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

In Nigeria, many people have lost their lives, exposed to different abuses, abandoned their homes, properties and families as a result of Boko Haram attack, political disorder, civil conflicts, natural or economic disasters, herdsmen/farmers conflicts (Sambo, 2017). Consequently, the inhumane activities of Boko Haram and herdsmen have forced many Nigerians to flee their homes, seeking shelter in different camps across the country. Msughter (2017) reiterates that these inhumane activities have resulted in an unprecedented crisis in the North east as thousands of people have become homeless. The internal displacement monitoring centre (IDMC) estimates that there are about 2, 152, 000 IDPs in Nigeria due to conflict in the North east, and about 4, 600 due to natural disasters and communal clashes as at December, 2015 with the vast majority of IDPs originating from the North east region of the country (Mohammed, 2017). This number was found in thirteen states and twenty-seven Local Government Areas across the country. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2016), from the total figure of IDPS in Nigeria, the assessment indicates that 13.33 percent were displaced due to communal clashes, 0.99 percent by natural disasters and 85.68 percent as a result of insurgency attacks by Islamists. Between October 2017 and July 2018, about 130,000 people are estimated to have been newly displaced in the North east alone largely as a result of insecurity triggered by operations between the Nigerian Joint Forces and the insurgents (UNHCR, 2018). Clashes between farmers and herdsmen coupled with the ongoing anti-terror operations by the military orchestrated by Boko Haram insurgents have displaced about 80,000 persons in Nigeria since the beginning of 2018 (Okonkwo, 2018). Obikaeze and Onuoha (2016) reiterate that the number of IDPS is on the increase as a result of Boko Haram insurgency particularly in the North eastern part of Nigeria. They further state that as the IDPs are returning to their habitual residences, others are still being displaced thereby making it difficult to accurately have reliable statistics of IDPs in Nigeria.

Causes of Internal Displacement in Nigeria

Armed conflicts, violence, poverty, effects of climate change, scarcity of resources, political instability, demolition of houses, riots, flooding, windstorm, weak governance and justice system could turn individuals to IDPs (Kellenberger, 2009; Atenaga, 2018).

Religious Crisis: The dreaded Islamic group otherwise known as Boko Haram has continued to cause havoc in the North east Nigeria. This group is behind many of the problems between the Christians and Muslims especially in North eastern Nigeria. For instance, religious violence

between Muslims and indigenous Christians in Plateau State displaced 60,000 persons in 2001. Furthermore, several attacks perpetrated by the Boko Haram have internally displaced more than three million persons across Nigeria especially in the North east, and have rendered about three hundred thousand people refugees in the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republic.

Ecological Factors: Oil exploration and spillage have been factors behind displacement in Nigeria especially in the Niger Delta areas. People in the affected areas are at risk of health issues, access to food and clean water, thereby compelling thousands of persons to flee their homes. Such factors also make their farmlands highly polluted and unproductive. According to Laden (2011), thousands of people are annually displaced as a result of natural disasters such as flooding in the North and West, erosion in the East, and oil spillage and developmental projects in South-South (Niger Delta).

Herdsmen/Farmers Clashes: About seven thousand persons have been displaced in the crisis between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Agatu communities of Benue State. Also, states in Nigeria's middle belt have been attacked by herdsmen in a new wave of violence which primarily stemmed from disputes over grazing areas for cattle. In January 2018, attacks in Benue State left seventy-three (73) people dead with communities razed and buildings destroyed thereby leading to the displacement of not less than forty thousand (40,000) persons. Crisis between herdsmen and farmers are prevalent in Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Taraba, Plateau and Enugu State. For instance, in Enugu state, herdsmen attacked Okpanku and Nimbo communities in Aninri and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas of Enugu State where more than forty (40) people were killed and thousands of people displaced over grazing land.

Ethnic Conflicts: Some of the internal displacements in Nigeria are caused by ethnic violence. For instance, ethnic crisis between the Tivs and Hausa-speaking Azaras in Nasarawa State displaced about fifty thousand (50,000) persons; twenty-five thousand (25,000) persons in Taraba, and one thousand, eight hundred (1,800) persons in Benue State.

Communal/Land Clashes: In Nigeria, there is always a dichotomy between indigenous land owners and those considered as settlers. The settlers may have lived there for ages but will continue to face discrimination and unequal access to land usage and other communal benefits unlike their indigenous counterparts. For instance, many people were killed and thousands displaced in Ezza community as a result of the communal crisis that broke out between the Ezza and their Ezillo neighbors in Ishielu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Similarly, more than two hundred (200) people were recently killed and thousands displaced in Plateau State over communal violence. Again, more than three thousand (3,000) people have been displaced as a result of renewed communal violence between the Hausa-Fulani and Yandang communities in Lau Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Demolition of Houses and Properties by Government Authorities: During the tenure of Governor Babatunde Raji Fashola, over one million (1,000,000) houses belonging to people were demolished and thousands of people displaced in Ijora, Ajegunle, Makoko, Oshodi and other communities in Lagos State. Similarly, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Bala Mohammed demolished over one hundred and twenty six thousand (126,000) houses in FCT, while his predecessor, Nasir Elrufai reportedly demolished over three thousand (3,000) houses during his leadership as Federal Capital Territory (FCT) minister between the years 2003 and 2007, displacing about 1.5 million people. The same thing happens in most states of the federation without compensation.

Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

Because the IDPs often leave home involuntarily /unprepared and hardly take any reasonable thing with them for sustenance, they always face lots of challenges in the camps or host communities trying to fend for themselves and those of their families. Some of the challenges they face include:

Inadequate /Lack of Help from the Government: It is a known fact that the Federal Government of Nigeria does not give adequate support to the IDPs. Most of the support for the IDPs comes from religious groups, individual volunteers, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. This makes it seem that the IDPs in Nigeria are mostly recognized by the international organizations and not the government of the country. The IDPs face a lot of hard times especially as they do not always benefit fully from assistance provided by international agencies.

Lack of Financial Support: Many Nigerians have been internally displaced from their homes and are being sheltered in neighboring communities and camps provided by the governments and non-governmental organizations. However, neither the government nor volunteers provide them with sufficient financial support needed to take care of their needs. Therefore, these people have difficulties not only with finding a place to live but also lack money to feed their children. The government, non-governmental organizations and volunteers often give food and other relief materials to the IDPs. They seldom give them physical cash and even when they do, the amount given to each person is usually a peanut as it is insufficient to take care of their immediate financial needs and those of their family members.

Lack of Tolerance: Some Nigerian communities deny the IDPs shelter in both their homes and communities because of religious, ethnic, and other reasons. This poses great danger to the IDPs as they cannot go back to their homes as a result of the cause of their displacement. It is more dangerous especially when the government or other humanitarian agencies have not provided them with camps. In Nigeria, citizens may find it difficult to accommodate fellow citizens whom they do not know. For instance, during the Ezza and Ezillo crisis of Ebonyi state in 2018, the Ezzas were denied shelter by their Okpoto and Ntezi neighboring communities but gave shelter to the Ezillos because of long time hatred for the Ezzas by these communities.

Lack of Medical Supplies: In Nigeria, one of the main contributors of medical supplies for the IDPs is international organizations. The United Nations for example continue to provide humanitarian aids to the conflict zones in Nigeria. The ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and other humanitarian agencies also provide medical assistance to reduce the problems of IDPs in Nigeria. However, these are never enough considering the number of displaced persons in various camps. As a result of lack of medical supplies, some IDPs who eventually survive the trauma sometimes die of one form of ailment or another. For instance, victims of armed conflicts, riots, communal war, floods and earthquake may sustain injury while fleeing for their lives. It is therefore natural that such persons will need some medical attention, which is hardly accessed in many camps in Nigeria.

Violence: In various camps, there are issues of violence towards the IDPs which are perpetrated by host communities on the basis of religion, ethnicity and gender. Most IDPs are usually treated with contempt as if they deserve what they are going through. Some other Nigerians see IDPs as a threat to them, believing that their presence will bring about attacks to their host communities. Atenaga

(2018) notes that when the show of contempt does not seem to scare the IDPs as intended by the host communities, they resort to violence to show the IDPs that they are not welcomed.

Emotional and Psychological Challenges: The IDPs are not just homeless but in most cases helpless. Most IDPs suffer from such traumas which can lead to death or psychological problems. Apart from financial needs, IDPs also need emotional support; they need to be valued and cared for. So many IDPs have not seen their family members since they were displaced, and this affects them emotionally. They are traumatized and frustrated because of the situation they find themselves.

Insecurity: There is lack of adequate security in various camps across the country. There have been attacks in some of the camps by armed bandits, hoodlums and other criminal activities leading to the loss of lives and rape. Among the internally displaced persons, the most vulnerable groups include women, children and the elderly ones.

Hunger: it is an obvious fact that the IDPs face severe hunger in their various camps across the country. The government, religious groups, non-governmental organizations and individual volunteers provide food items for them but undoubtedly, the food supply is always inadequate considering the number of people in the camp. Therefore, the IDPs are bound to be angry whenever they are hungry and this leads to complaints, protests, demonstrations, and even riots in the camps in a bid to attract the attention of the government and public to their plights.

Lack of Basic Amenities: Lack of social amenities affects the living conditions of the IDPs. In fact, the IDPs lack the basic necessities of life (food, shelter and clothing). In addition to that, they are not disposed to good water supply and power supply. They lack good living environments as shelters provided for them are mostly schools, churches, mosques, halls, tents, uncompleted or abandoned buildings etc.

Sexual Harassment: Women and girls are been raped on regular basis because of lack of adequate security in the camps. Those who are victims of rape are further exposed to unwanted pregnancies /health risks and emotional trauma.

Contributions of Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka LGA to the Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

In Nsukka Local Government Area, there are about thirty-five (35) registered Pentecostal churches (Ekoru, Personal communication, 1st July, 2018). Among these, about twenty-seven (27) granted interview to the researchers. From these twenty seven (27) churches, about seven (7) noted that they do not know about the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria talk more of being abreast of their challenges. Most of them stated that what they know about is Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen. From the views given by those who are aware of the challenges of the IDPs, the researchers observed that most of information elicited is not peculiar to any particular Pentecostal Church in Nsukka but rather common to some of them. More so, the researchers observed uniformity in the responses given by various parishes of a given Pentecostal church.

The common view of the Pentecostal church leaders who were interviewed is that the issue of the internally displaced persons in Nigeria is another opportunity for them to engage in social action evangelism which they consider a very effective method of evangelism. According to Ononogbu (2011), social action evangelism is a social theology which includes everything the church does to create justice in the public space because evangelism is about creating a world which cannot deny the reign of God” (p. 41). For instance, when a hungry person is given some

bread to eat, it is not only attractive to them; making them ponder over such an act of compassion also brings the reign of God over them. Social action evangelism encompasses a declaration of God's kingdom in our words and deeds. Likewise, the Pentecostal pastors who were interviewed admitted that their contributions towards easing the challenges of the Internally Displaced Persons is like using one stone to catch two birds. By implication, their material contributions to the IDPs might also make them accept the Good News of the Christian faith when it is presented to them.

A majority of the Pentecostal Church leaders in Nsukka acknowledge that the problem of the internally displaced persons in Nigeria is a call to align to the demands of Jesus (giving succor and hope to people) which he exemplified in his earthly ministry. The earthly ministry of Jesus is a challenge to Christians, pastors and evangelists as regards a holistic approach to evangelism. Christians should embark on evangelism through social actions and economic rehabilitation. Carrol (2012) agrees that in every dimension of personal and corporate expressions of faith within Christianity, there exists an evolving relationship between social action and evangelism as a recognized and accepted norm of practice. On this, Onwu (2004) asserts that "Christians are called to go out and go forward in the evangelistic steps of the unchanging but ever onward moving Christ" (p. 275). As Jesus went about proclaiming the good news of salvation, he healed the sick; he raised the dead and fed the hungry. Therefore, there is no gain say that the fullness of the Church's mission, which was explicitly modeled by the life and ministry of Jesus, involves evangelism through social actions.

The various dimensions in which the Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka Local Government Area are engaged in social action evangelism towards easing the challenges of the internally displaced persons in Nsukka are as follows:

Contribution of Money /Relief Items

A majority of the Pentecostal pastors in Nsukka who were interviewed stated that they have made a remarkable mark with regards to sending relief materials to the IDPs in various camps. Ndu (Personal communication, 6th May, 2018) states that in his church, members are urged to contribute items such as cloths, foot wears and food items. When such calls are made, the turn out is always impressive especially as regards relief materials. A handful of members also make cash donation; however little it may be. Ndu further explains that members of his church are always very willing to give because they consider their acts of giving as their contribution to the work of God; propagating the Kingdom of God on earth. He also avers that apart the voluntary giving which members are all encouraged to take part in, he formed what is known as "Third Week Offering". According to him, "Third Week Offering" which is taken every third Sunday of the month is sent to various IDP camps in Nigeria. The money and other relief materials are sent to the IDP camps through their church Zonal IDP representative.

In like manner, Onah (Personal communication, 3rd June, 2018) opines that in his church, he always informs his members that the only way they can evangelize those in various IDP camps is through their willful sacrificial giving; since they may not be able to go the IDP camps to preach the gospel. He further told the researchers that he developed a card known as "IDPs Weekly Support Card" which he circulated among all his adult members who are expected to put something in it and return every Sunday. He joyfully stated that through these approaches, in year 2017, the church was able to send three (3) full 'ghanamustgo' bags of clothings, ten (10) bags of rice and a total sum of ₦19, 700 to the IDPs in Nigeria.

Ezike (Personal communication, 27th May, 2018) states that “in previous years, the members of his church were reluctant to contribute towards the needs of the IDPs until he formed a group known as “IDP Support Group” in 2016 whose duty it is to sensitize members of the church on the predicaments of the IDPs in their various camps”. He continued that on regular basis, members of the IDP Support Group are given an opportunity to inform the church of the plights of IDPs. The IDP Support Group has captivated the interest of the church as they make use of projected pictorials to show the extent of suffering in various IDP Camps. As a result of the commitment of the members of IDP Support Group, the church was able to send three (3) full bags of clothing, twenty (20) bags of rice, five (5) bags of beans and ₦ 48,000.00 from 2016 till date.

Free Medical Outreaches

The Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka have made some significant strides as it concerns organizing free medical outreaches in various IDP camps. Worthy of mention is the free medical outreach organized by the Redeemed Christian Church of God as part of the programme for the 2016 Annual Sisters’ Convention held at the Borno Provincial Headquarters. During the medical outreach, The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) treated people with cases of malaria, hypertension and diabetes etc. The treatments were conducted at the Borno Provincial Headquarters. Free drugs were also given out based on prescriptions. The church sees what it did as part of the community relations programme of the church owing to the fact that many people cannot afford to treat themselves of these ailments (Olugbode, 2016). On the above, Ndukwe, Ezema and Ononye state that their respective RCCG parishes made some donations /contributions which led to the success of the free medical outreach.

According to Obichukwu (Personal communication, 29th July, 2018), as part of their community development programme, corp members who studied health related courses and are members of Christ Embassy always organize free medical outreaches in various IDP camps in Nigeria. He stated that from 2016 till date, these corp members have always solicited the support of his church each time they want to embark on a medical outreach. He also said that some of those who participate in the outreaches are his church members and that they have also made tangible financial contributions towards that. Likewise, Nnubia (Personal communication, 27th May, 2018) avers that in year 2016, two of his church members who were resident doctors in Abuja were sent to Kuje IDP Camp at Abuja to represent his church branch in a free medical outreach which was organized by the Deeper Life Bible Church. Furthermore, Eze (Personal communication, 20th May, 2018) notes that in January 2018, he got a letter from the Headquarters of his church informing him about a free medical outreach which was being organized at Lugbe IDP camp in Abuja and also solicited financial support. He continues that his parish members contributed ₦20, 000.00 which was sent towards the success of the medical outreach.

Prayer

Majority of the pastors who were interviewed affirm that prayer is the most powerful tool which can be used to salvage the situations which the internally displaced persons have seen themselves in their various camps. According to Nnaji (Personal communication, 15th July, 2018), during the prayer sessions in our some of our Sunday services, the prayer coordinator raises prayer points on behalf of the internally displaced persons in Nigeria which the entire congregation actively participates in. He concludes that first Friday of every month is set aside by the church for

fasting and praying; one of the prayer focuses during the fast is the increasing rate of conflicts, violence and insecurity in Nigeria. The issue of the internally displaced persons is also tackled through prayer in the presence of God. In the same vein, Iddris (Personal communication, 20th July, 2018) states that whatever contributions which one makes to the IDPs should be anchored on prayer. Prayer is the most powerful key which can settle all the challenges of life including the issue of the IDPs in Nigeria. In my parish, we hold vigil every last Friday of the month and special prayers are made for the internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Okolo (Personal communication, 20th July, 2018) who toed the line of Iddris states that his parish youth department have also made some significant marks in the plights of the IDPs in Nigeria. He argues that a good number of the persons in various IDP camps in Nigeria are young people of the society. The young people of any country are the country's most valuable assets such that if their lives are ruined, then the country's future is devastated. A popular maxim says that "youths are the leaders of tomorrow". The youth department of the parish holds vigils every first Friday of the month and in this occasion, the youths make special prayers for their fellow youths and others in various IDP camps all over the country.

According to Ekoro (Personal communication, 1st July, 2018), during the midweek prayer service, the church prays for the peace of the nation. During the prayers, prayers are said for the leaders at various levels of the government, the IDPs and those who are being persecuted for their faith. He continues that Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries worldwide is on an annual prayer and fasting program which started on 6th August, 2018 and would last for seventy (70) days. The organizers of this annual prayer and fasting program have mapped out several prayers for the nation on issues related to insurgency, insecurity, economic crisis, internally displaced persons etc. Similarly, Eze (Personal communication, 15th July, 2018) mentions that his church has never sent relief materials to the IDPs but when it comes to prayer, they are not found wanting. Eze notes that prayer is the sure way to tackle all the challenges of life including the social problems in the country. He mentions that apart from his personal prayer schedules, during Sunday services, mid-week prayer hour, and monthly vigils (fasting and praying program), his church intercedes on behalf of the nation on issues related to the IDPs, Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen and other problems in the country. Other informants who asserted that they do not relent in prayers for the internally displaced persons in Nigeria are Ofor, Ezeudu, Ifesinachi, and Okafor. They assert that their prayers are often targeted at tackling the various situations which make people to become internally displaced in Nigeria. They believe that it is not enough to send money and other items to the internally displaced persons. In as much as the IDPs need money and other materials for their upkeep and survival, it is very important to make earnest prayers so that more Nigerians will not be displaced. More so, prayers are said on behalf of those who are currently displaced so that God will protect, provide and sustain them.

Problems Associated with the Intervention of Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka to the Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria.

A careful study of the various dimensions in which the Pentecostal churches in Nsukka Local Government Area have intervened in the plights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria reveals the following problems:

1. There was little or no awareness and sensitization done in the different Pentecostal churches. Nsukka Local Government Area has about thirty-five (35) Pentecostal churches with several parishes in the various villages. From the analysis, only few parishes sensitized their

members by the use of weekly support cards, support groups and projected pictorials of the horrible conditions of the IDPs. If all the pastors had used these and many other methods in their churches, Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka Local Government Area would have contributed more remarkably than they have done.

2. The Non-existence of IDP Camps in Nsukka Local Government Area is a serious barrier. Christians are always willing to donate generously to charity if only they will be involved in the delivery of the gift items directly to the beneficiaries. The fact that IDPs camps are far away from Nsukka Local Government Area, donated items pass through many administrative channels – Zonal and Provincial Headquarters of churches before getting to the camps is a limitation to the contributions of the Pentecostal churches. In this way, there is usually skepticism as to whether the materials will actually get to the people they are meant for. This no doubt, has negative effect towards the churches' contributions to the challenges of IDPs.

3. Similarly, the media (radio, television and newspapers) have been inundated with news of how relief materials and money meant for IDPs were carted away by the politically appointed managers of some IDP camps. News of this nature affects the spirit and willingness of church members to freely donate to ameliorate the sufferings of the displaced persons.

4. Majority of the IDP Camps are located in the interior areas of some states in the Northern Nigeria; and most of these states are Moslem dominated. In view of these, members are more willing to contribute than visit the IDP Camps. Members of the Pentecostal churches usually expressed security based fear whenever pastors call for volunteers to convey donated welfare items to the IDPs in their camps.

5. It was observed that there was no effective co-ordination of the Pentecostal churches in Nsukka Local Government Area towards their contributions to the challenges of the IDPs. This was evident in the manner different churches remit their contributions directly through their individual church provincial/ headquarters leaders without reference to the leadership of the Church organization (e.g. Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, Nsukka branch).

6. Cultural difference, particularly language barrier was another major factor why the Pentecostal church members could not visit any of the camps to evangelize. Church members who would have volunteered to visit the camps do not understand the language of the people there and therefore, may not communicate effectively. Ironically too, the churches did not consider the hiring of an interpreter as part of their arrangements for visit to the IDP Camps.

7. It was also noticed that there were no proper or accurate records of some of the churches' contributions to the IDPs as regards date, the benefiting IDP Camp (s) and the persons through whom the items were sent. When church members observe some of these irregularities, further call for contributions/assistance are usually not hearkened to.

8. Apart from the two resident doctors sent to Kuje IDP camp by the Deeper Life Bible Church, no other human service professionals, particularly social workers, were involved in the whole processes of intervention by the Pentecostal churches in Nsukka Local Government Area. This accounted for the neglect of very serious problems of the IDPs such as emotional /psychological trauma and unfavorable government policies.

Implications of the Study to Social Work Practice in Nigeria / Recommendations

Undoubtedly, the findings of this study have significant implications for social work practice in Nigeria; these implications are also considered as the recommendations of the work. The nature and low level of response by the members of the Pentecostal churches in Nsukka Local government area to the challenges of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria, underscores the non-involvement of social work professionals in the whole processes of their intervention. To a very large extent, this was due to lack of knowledge of the professional services which social workers can offer to the public and how these services can be accessed. To this end, there is therefore, urgent need for social work professionals in Nigeria to carry out extensive enlightenment campaigns, community workshops, door to door sensitization and the use of other communication channels to create awareness of their noble profession.

Social workers should collaborate with Pentecostal churches in Nsukka Local Government Area and other churches in Nigeria in matters relating to the welfare of vulnerable individuals, families, groups or organizations within and outside the church. A church welfare committee which includes social worker (s) will always have holistic plans and implementation approaches of its obligations, programmes and projects. This is because social workers are equipped with good knowledge base, skills, techniques, approaches etc. needed to tackle all manners of social problems and life challenges. More often than not, by the virtue and nature of their profession, social workers are abreast of other members of the society in knowing the nature of the problems which beset individuals and groups in the society. Social work profession addresses social concerns that threaten the structures of the society and redresses social conditions that adversely affect the well-being of people and society (Dubois & Miley, 2008). In addition, social workers are grounded with the proper language skills of communicating a social problem to appropriate groups of the society.

In the case of the Pentecostal churches' contributions to the internally displaced persons, the social worker (if consulted) would have first ensured that contacts were made to the various IDP camps to ascertain their problems which would be prioritized and translated into needs. Then, he sensitizes and appeals to the church members to donate generously while allaying their fears to visit the camps. This would have ensured huge success in the Pentecostal churches' interventions to the challenges of the internally displaced persons.

The study also highlights the needs for professionalism at all levels in the country whereby social workers will be licensed to engage in private practice like law and medical professions. This will also help in the creating awareness of this all-important profession.

Findings suggest the need for the Nigerian government to acknowledge the importance of social work profession by placing social workers in their rightful positions in relevant places such as ministries, hospitals, schools, communities, courts, prisons, police etc. in order to enable them exercise their responsibilities effectively.

The executive and legislative arms of the Nigerian government should collaborate with social work professionals in the improvement and development of social policies that will impact positively on the IDPs; the improved social policies would in turn address social injustices and human rights abuses in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Among all the social problems in Nigeria which are occasioned by the inhumane activities of Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen and other natural factors, this work examines the Internally displaced persons while investigating the causes of displacement and the challenges of the IDPs in Nigeria. This research paper also notes that various individuals and groups have made some marks in order to lessen the problems of the IDPs in the various camps in Nigeria. However, the crux of this work is to investigate the responses of the Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State to the challenges of the IDPs in Nigeria in which it was noted that the Pentecostal Churches in Nsukka have made some bold attempts to ease the plights of the IDPs through three diverse means: relief materials, healthcare services and prayer.

While appreciating the contributions made by these churches, this work emphatically notes that the Pentecostal churches in Nsukka would have made more remarkable strides if they partnered with social workers who by the virtue and nature of their profession are abreast of other members of the society in the knowing the particular nature of the problems which beset individuals and groups in the society. Moreover, they are grounded with the proper language skills of communicating a social problem to appropriate groups of the society. The lacuna which this work fills is that there is need for collaboration between Pentecostal churches in Nsukka and social workers in the earlier's subsequent responses to the problems of the IDPs. Therefore, alongside the concerted efforts of various governmental and non-governmental establishments to improve the conditions of life of the IDPs, academic contributions which seek to attain the same goal are apt.

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Oral Interview**Note: Pseudonyms were used.**

S/No.	Name of Informant	Age	Pentecostal Denomination	Date of Interview	Name of Interviewer
1	Ekoru, J.	34	Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries	1/7/17	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
2	Eze, H.K.	54	New Life Bible Church	20/5/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
3	Eze, O.P.	48	Believers Bible Church	15/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
4	Ezema, P	30	Redeemed Christian Church of God	6/5/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
5	Ezeudu, E.	44	Divine Grace Liberation Assembly	1/7/17	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
6	Ezike, C.	35	End Time Believers Church	27/5/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
7	Iddris, M.	41	Redeemed Christian Church of God	20/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
8	Ifesinachi, G.	30	Light of the World Ministries	15/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
9	Ndu, S.	46	Abiding Christians Ministries	6/5/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
10	Ndukwe, K	38	Redeemed Christian Church of God	15/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
11	Nnaji, T.	28	Pneuma Domain	15/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
12	Nnubia, I.	45	Deeper Life Bible Church	27/5/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
13	Obichukwu, B	50	Christ Embassy	29/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
14	Ofor, S.	39	City of Purpose Ministries	20/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
15	Okolo, C.	32	Redeemed Christian Church of God	20/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
16	Okafor, N.	34	Apostolic Faith Church	15/7/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
17	Onah, C.	37	The Apostolic Church	3/6/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.
18	Ononye, S.T.	49	Redeemed Christian Church of God	3/6/18	Chukwuma, Onyekachi G.