

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF DISPLACEMENT CAUSED BY BANDITRY IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Banditry, characterized by violent attacks, kidnapping, and widespread insecurity, has led to mass displacement in the region, disrupting livelihoods, causing economic hardships, and creating profound psychological distress among affected populations. This study explores the socio-economic and psychological impacts of displacement caused by banditry in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data and qualitative insights from interviews and focus group discussions. A total of 400 displaced respondents were surveyed and the findings revealed that displacement has significantly altered the economic landscape for many, with the majority of respondents reporting a substantial decline in income and a shift away from traditional farming to reliance on humanitarian aid, petty trading, and temporary jobs. The loss of farmland, limited access to markets, and insecurity in new locations were identified as major challenges to economic recovery. Psychologically, the study highlights the emotional toll of displacement, with high levels of anxiety, trauma, fear, and depression observed among displaced individuals. Factors such as family separation, social isolation, and the uncertainty of their future have further exacerbated mental health challenges. Recommendations include livelihood restoration programs, enhanced security measures, family reunification efforts, mental health services, and the provision of basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare. A comprehensive response from the government, local agencies, and humanitarian organizations is essential to support the long-term recovery and integration of displaced populations in Sokoto State.*

**Keywords:** Impact, Displacement, Socio-economic, Psychological, Banditry and Sokoto State.

### Introduction

Banditry has emerged as a significant security challenge in Northern Nigeria, particularly in states such as Sokoto, where its impact has been devastating. Originally characterized by cattle rustling and petty theft, banditry has evolved into a complex phenomenon involving armed attacks, kidnappings, and widespread violence. This crisis has not only resulted in the loss of lives and properties but has also forced thousands of individuals and families to flee their homes in search of safety, creating a growing population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Abdu and Umar, 2020). Sokoto State, with its predominantly agrarian economy and strategic location near international borders, has been particularly vulnerable to banditry. Many rural communities have been uprooted, with residents seeking refuge in urban centers, IDP camps, or neighboring states. The socio-economic impacts of this displacement are profound. In addition, the psychological toll on victims is immense. Ado (2020) maintained that many individuals suffer from trauma, anxiety, depression, and other mental



health challenges due to the violence they have witnessed and the uncertainties of displacement. Despite various interventions by the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the challenges persist, exacerbated by inadequate resources, weak policy implementation, and the complex nature of the crisis. Understanding the socio-economic and psychological impacts of displacement caused by banditry is crucial for designing effective interventions and policy responses (Alobo and Abaji, 2022). This paper examined the dual impacts of socio-economic disruption and psychological distress on displaced populations in Sokoto State. It also highlights the coping strategies employed by these individuals and evaluate the effectiveness of current efforts by stakeholders to mitigate the crisis. By doing so, this study provides a foundation for informed decision-making and collaborative action to address the displacement challenges in Sokoto State.

Banditry has become a pervasive security challenge in Sokoto State, disrupting lives, livelihoods, and communities (Musa 2019, Agbiboa 2021 and NEMA 2020) armed groups frequently target rural communities, engaging in violent activities such as raids, kidnappings, and destruction of property. As a result, thousands of residents have been forced to flee their homes, creating a significant population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who live in precarious conditions (UNCHR 2021). The displacement caused by banditry has led to profound socio-economic disruptions and many suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression due to their exposure to violence and the uncertainties of displacement (Adeola and Oluyemi 2019). These psychological effects are often overlooked in policy responses, leaving victims without adequate mental health support. Limited resources, weak implementation of policies, and the persistent threat of banditry hinder sustainable solutions Amnesty International, (AI) 2020, International Crisis Group (ICG) (2021), International Displacement Monitoring Group, (IDMG) (2022). Moreover, the lack of comprehensive data on the socio-economic and psychological impacts of displacement further complicates efforts to design effective responses. This study addresses these gaps by examining the socio-economic and psychological effects of displacement caused by banditry in Sokoto State. This study focuses on the socio-economic and psychological impacts of displacement caused by banditry in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The research was conducted in Sokoto State and specifically focuses on areas most affected by banditry and displacement. The study covers displacement caused by banditry over the past five years (2019-2024). This period is chosen to capture the escalation of banditry and its growing impact on displacement in the region.

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The literature review examined existing studies and theoretical frameworks on displacement, the socio-economic impacts of displacement, the psychological effects of displacement, and the specific dynamics of banditry in Sokoto State and Northern Nigeria. The goal is to understand the broader context of displacement, identify gaps in current research, and highlight the specific challenges faced by displaced persons due to banditry. Displacement refers to the forced movement of individuals or communities from their habitual residences due to violent conflict, natural disasters, or human-made crises. In the context of this study, displacement is driven primarily by banditry, which forces people to flee their homes in search of safety. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2021), displacement caused by conflict often leads to a loss of livelihoods, access to basic services, and long-term insecurity. Banditry, in the context of this study, refers to violent criminal activities carried out by armed groups for economic gain, often involving kidnapping, cattle rustling, and attacks on civilians. While banditry is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria (World Bank, 2021), its recent escalation in the Northwest, particularly in Sokoto, has been linked to the collapse of traditional security structures (NEMA, 2020, SOSG 2021) and the rise of criminal syndicates. Scholars like Akinola (2021) and Mohammed (2020) have pointed out that



banditry has evolved from localized criminal activity into organized violent groups terrorizing entire regions.

### **Psychological Impacts of Displacement**

The psychological consequences of displacement are profound, with displaced individuals often experiencing trauma, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of exposure to violence, loss of loved ones, and the stress of living in uncertain and unsafe environments. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2022) and Human Rights Watch (2021), mental health issues among displaced populations are often exacerbated by poor living conditions, lack of social support, and the disruption of familiar environments.

### **Socio-Economic Impacts of Displacement**

The socio-economic impacts of displacement are far-reaching, affecting both displaced persons and host communities. Literature on the socio-economic consequences of displacement reveals that loss of livelihoods, poor access to education, and reduced access to healthcare services are common outcomes (NBS 2021, Relief Web, 2023). In their study on displacement in Northern Nigeria, Olayinka and Akinola (2019) highlighted that many displaced individuals rely heavily on humanitarian aid and often struggle to regain self-sufficiency.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

#### **Human Security Theory**

Human security, as defined by the United Nations, goes beyond traditional notions of security that focus on military threats, to include economic, food, health, and environmental security. In the context of displacement caused by banditry, human security theory emphasizes the need to address the vulnerability of individuals and communities through a holistic approach that includes economic empowerment, health care, education, and protection from violence.

#### **Push-Pull Migration Theory**

This theory explains migration through two forces: "push" factors, which compel individuals to leave their homes, and "pull" factors, which attract them to new areas. In the case of displacement due to banditry, "push" factors include violence, fear of death, and the destruction of property, while "pull" factors include the search for safety and the hope for better living conditions in urban centers or IDP camps (Bello 2021 and Yusuf 2022).

#### **Trauma Theory**

Trauma theory is relevant to understanding the psychological effects of displacement, particularly as displaced individuals often experience severe emotional distress. Trauma theory posits that exposure to violence and conflict leads to long-lasting psychological effects that can hinder an individual's ability to recover. According to studies by van der Kolk (2014) and Doctors without Borders (2020), displacement caused by violence often leads to long-term mental health challenges such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety.

### **Banditry and Displacement in Sokoto State**

The escalation of banditry in Sokoto State and the broader Northwest region of Nigeria have been well-documented in recent years. According to reports by the International Crisis Group (2021), NEMA (2020) and Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster and Social



Development (FMHADSD) (2022) banditry in Sokoto and neighboring states like Zamfara and Katsina has led to an alarming rise in internally displaced persons. In Sokoto state, the violence has driven thousands of people from rural areas, particularly in the northern and western parts of the state, toward urban centers such as Sokoto City and neighboring states (This Day Nigeria, 2022,). One key study by Ibrahim et al. (2020) focuses on the impact of rural banditry on agricultural livelihoods in Sokoto, highlighting how displacement disrupts food production and local economies. This displacement further exacerbates poverty, making it difficult for communities to recover or rebuild (FAO 2022). Additionally, research by Abubakar (2022) reveals that banditry has intensified during the past decade, with more frequent raids leading to large-scale displacements. This trend has prompted calls for more robust policy responses and targeted interventions to address the root causes of banditry and the subsequent displacement.

### **Socio-Economic Impacts of Displacement**

Studies on the socio-economic impacts of displacement highlight how displaced populations suffer significant economic losses. In Sokoto State, many displaced persons were previously farmers, traders, or artisans, and their displacement has meant the loss of income sources. Olayinka (2019) found that 85% of displaced persons in IDP camps across Sokoto were unable to resume their pre-displacement livelihoods, creating a high dependency on humanitarian aid. Furthermore, access to education and healthcare is severely limited, with displaced children often unable to attend school and displaced families struggling to access basic medical care. Research by Akinola (2021) also explores the economic burden placed on host communities as they absorb large numbers of displaced persons. These communities often face increased pressure on local resources, which can lead to tensions between IDPs and host populations.

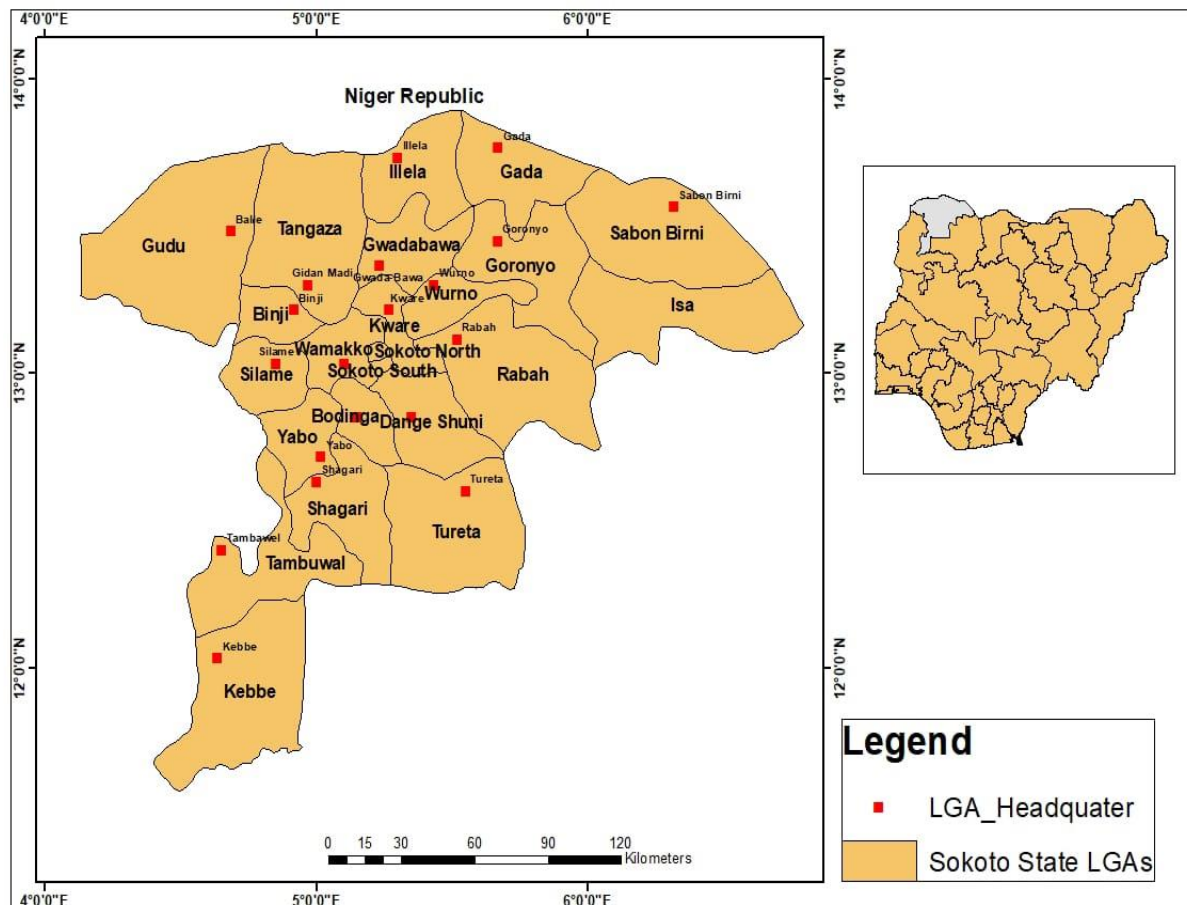
### **Psychological Effects of Displacement**

The psychological toll of displacement is another critical area of concern. Several studies, including those by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2020), show that displacement caused by conflict and violence leads to a high incidence of mental health issues among affected individuals. In Sokoto, displaced persons have reported feelings of hopelessness, fear, and anxiety as they deal with the trauma of violence and the uncertainty of their future. Research by Aliyu (2022) found that over 70% of displaced individuals in Sokoto exhibited symptoms of anxiety and depression, with little access to mental health support. This literature review provides a solid foundation for understanding the context, impacts, and responses to displacement caused by banditry in Sokoto State.

### **The Study Area**

Sokoto State is located in the northwestern part of Nigeria and shares borders with several key regions and countries. It is bordered by the Niger Republic to the north, Zamfara State to the east, Kebbi State to the south, and the state of Katsina to the southeast. Sokoto is one of the 36 states of Nigeria and is the seat of the Sokoto Caliphate, a historic and cultural region with deep Islamic heritage. Sokoto State covers an area of approximately 25,973 square kilometers (Abubakar, 2021), making it one of the largest states in Nigeria. The state is predominantly characterized by a semi-arid climate, with a mix of savanna grasslands and desert landscapes in its northern parts. The state has a gently undulating topography with some hilly areas in the central and eastern regions. Sokoto's geography is influenced by its proximity to the Sahara Desert, which results in high temperatures and seasonal rainfall. The state is crisscrossed by several important rivers, including the Sokoto River and the Rima River. These rivers serve as critical sources of water for agriculture, domestic use, and livestock. The presence of water bodies is vital for supporting the agricultural economy of the state. Sokoto State is divided into 23 local government areas (LGAs), each with its own administrative

structure. These include major urban centers such as Sokoto City, the state capital, and several rural communities in the northern and western parts of the state that have been most affected by banditry. Many rural areas such as Illela, Sabon Birni, and Tangaza have been heavily affected by banditry, with large numbers of people displaced as a result of frequent attacks by armed groups. The state is heavily dependent on agriculture, with major crops such as millet, maize, sorghum, groundnuts (peanuts), cotton, and livestock farming. The Rima River Valley, in particular, is a critical agricultural zone. However, the growing insecurity due to banditry has disrupted agricultural activities, forcing farmers to abandon their fields and contributing to the displacement of rural populations.



**Figure 1: Map of the Study Area**  
Source: Author's Work (2024)

### Materials and Methods

The materials and methods outlines the research design, data collection techniques, and analysis procedures used to study the socio-economic and psychological effects of displacement caused by banditry in Sokoto State. The approach combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Structured surveys and questionnaires were used to collect numerical data on key socio-economic variables such as income loss, access to education and healthcare, and employment status. Similarly, Semi-structured interviews and focus





group discussions (FGDs) were used to explore the psychological effects of displacement, coping strategies, and the lived experiences of displaced persons. The population of the study consists of internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in various locations within Sokoto State, including IDP camps, temporary shelters, and host communities. Additionally, local community leaders, representatives of humanitarian organizations, and government officials who are involved in addressing displacement issues were also involved in the interview.

### **Sample Size and Techniques and Procedures**

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 400 participants from the four selected local government areas (LGAs) in Sokoto State (Illela and Sabon Birni outside the metropolis and Sokoto North and South From the metropolis) these two Local Government Areas outside the metropolis were the two LGAs most affected by banditry in the state and the metropolis is where most of the displaced persons are residing. Purposive sampling technique was however used for the administration of the questionnaire in the four selected area. For the qualitative data, purposive sampling was employed to select key informants, such as community leaders, displaced persons with varied experiences, and representatives from NGOs and government agencies. This sampling technique ensures that participants with relevant knowledge and experience are included.. The data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (such as frequencies, percentages, and means) to quantify the socio-economic impacts of displacement. The qualitative data collected from interviews and FGDs were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves coding the data and identifying recurring themes related to the socio-economic and psychological impacts of displacement. The analysis focuses on understanding the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of displacement.

### **Socio-Economic Impact of Displacement**

The socio-economic impact of displacement due to banditry in Sokoto State is profound and far-reaching, affecting various dimensions of life for the displaced population. Forced displacement disrupts livelihoods, dismantles social networks, and creates economic hardships that amplify existing vulnerabilities. This section examines the socio-economic challenges faced by displaced individuals and communities.

### **Displacement for Respondents**

The data on the duration of displacement among respondents offers insights into the long-term impact of displacement due to banditry in Sokoto State highlighting the extent to which displacement has become a protracted issue, indicating the need for both short-term aid and long-term solutions. The small percentage 4.75% indicates that recent displacement is relatively low, suggesting that the peak of displacement occurred earlier (Table 1). Data also revealed that 14.5% of respondents have been displaced for between six months to one year. A significant 53.75% of respondents have been displaced for over two years. This large percentage indicates that the majority of displaced individuals have been in a state of prolonged or chronic displacement. The long-term impact on livelihoods, social connections, and psychological well-being is severe, as many have been unable to return to their original homes or find permanent solutions. The findings on the duration of displacement highlight the chronic nature of forced displacement in Sokoto State due to banditry. With a majority of respondents having been displaced for over two years, there is an urgent need for sustainable interventions that address both the socio-economic and psychological challenges of displacement. Without concerted efforts from the government, humanitarian organizations, and community stakeholders, displaced persons may continue to face prolonged hardship, instability, and uncertainty regarding their future.

## Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Socio-Economic Impact of Displacement**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Duration of Respondents after Displacement</b>		
Less than 6 months	19	4.75
6 months – 1 year	58	14.5
1 – 2 years	108	27
More than 2 years	215	53.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Type of House Occupied by the Respondents</b>		
IDP camp	200	50
Host family community	89	22.25
Rented accommodation	108	27
Temporary shelter	03	0.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Primary Source of Income Before Displacement</b>		
Farming	280	70
Trading	56	14
Paid employment	08	2
Hand crafts/Artisan work	56	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Source of Income After Displacement</b>		
Farming	40	10
Trading	110	27.5
Paid employment	06	1.5
Humanitarian aid	101	25.25
No income	143	35.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Effect of Displacement on Income</b>		
Significantly decreased	298	74.5
Slightly decreased	52	13
Remained the same	40	10
Increased	10	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Challenges Faced in Earning a Livelihood after Displacement</b>		
Lack of employment opportunities	12	03
Loss of farmlands	292	73
Limited access to market	89	22.25
Insecurity in new location	07	1.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Assistance Received after Being Displaced</b>		
Food aid	216	54
Shelter support	60	15
Medical assistance	40	10
Education for children	06	1.5
Financial assistance	70	17.5
None	08	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Way of Meeting Basic Needs</b>		
Personal income	216	54
Humanitarian aid	64	16
Support from relatives	98	24.5
Bartering/Trade	22	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Work (2024)



### **Current Housing Types Occupied by Respondents**

The data on the type of housing currently occupied by displaced respondents provides a snapshot of their living conditions and reflects the broader challenges faced due to displacement in the study area. From the research, Data revealed that 50% of respondents are currently living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. This significant percentage indicates that half of the displaced population relies on camps as a primary source of shelter. However, living conditions in camps can be challenging due to overcrowding, limited resources, inadequate sanitation, and restricted economic opportunities. Similarly, 22.25% of respondents are residing with host families or within local communities. Another 27% of respondents are currently in rented accommodations. This category includes individuals who have found some level of stability by renting homes or apartments. The findings highlight the urgent need for sustainable housing solutions for displaced persons in Sokoto State. While IDP camps provide immediate refuge, long-term displacement requires more durable housing strategies. Without proper intervention, displaced individuals will continue to face housing insecurity, economic hardship, and health risks. Addressing this issue requires a multi-sectorial approach, involving government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and local communities to ensure the safety, dignity, and well-being of displaced populations.

### **Primary Sources of Income before Displacement**

Understanding the primary sources of income before displacement provides crucial insights into the economic structure of the displaced population in Sokoto State. This analysis reveals the traditional economic activities that were dominant before the displacement crisis, helping to identify the loss of livelihoods and the impact of displacement on the local economy. Findings of the research revealed that 70% of respondents relied on farming as their primary source of income. This indicates that agriculture was the backbone of the local economy, with the majority of the population engaged in farming activities. Sokoto State, being largely rural, is heavily dependent on agriculture for livelihood, including crop cultivation and livestock rearing. The high percentage of farmers highlights the significant impact of displacement on agricultural productivity. As they Abandoning farmland due to insecurity results in a direct loss of income, disruption of food supply, and potential long-term damage to agricultural infrastructure. Another 14% of respondents were involved in trading before displacement. The 14% of respondents relied on handcraft or artisan work, such as carpentry, tailoring, pottery, and blacksmithing. These artisanal activities are important for rural economies, providing income to those with specific skills. The displacement would have forced many artisans to abandon workshops, lose tools, and leave behind customer bases, resulting in a significant loss of income and livelihood. Before displacement, the economy of Sokoto State's rural communities was heavily reliant on farming, with a smaller proportion engaged in trading and artisanal work. The banditry crisis has led to widespread economic disruption, forcing people out of their primary livelihoods and into a state of financial insecurity. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions aimed at restoring economic activities, improving security, and providing displaced persons with sustainable income opportunities to rebuild their lives.

### **Sources of Income after Displacement**

The shift in income sources after displacement provides crucial insight into the economic impact of the crisis on the affected population in Sokoto State. It highlights how displacement has forced individuals to change or lose their primary means of livelihood, often leading to increased reliance on external support. Only 10% of respondents continue to rely on farming as their primary source of income after displacement. This sharp drop from 70% pre-displacement to 10% post-displacement reflects the severe disruption to agricultural activities due to displacement. Many farmers have lost





access to their land, tools, and resources, and are unable to maintain their traditional agricultural livelihoods. Some 27.5% of respondents now rely on trading as their primary source of income, nearly doubling from the pre-displacement figure of 14%. This increase suggests that many displaced individuals have turned to small-scale trading as a coping mechanism in the absence of their traditional livelihoods. Similarly, 25.25% of respondents now rely on humanitarian aid as their main source of income. A significant 35.75% of respondents reported having no income source after displacement. This situation is indicative of extreme vulnerability, heightened poverty, and potential food insecurity among the displaced. The absence of income-generating activities suggests that many are completely dependent on external aid, family support, or informal networks for survival. The findings reveal that displacement has severely disrupted livelihoods, with a significant decline in farming, increased reliance on informal trade, and a large proportion of people left without any income. While humanitarian aid provides temporary relief, long-term solutions must focus on livelihood restoration, job creation, and economic resilience to ensure that displaced persons regain financial independence and stability.

### **Effect of Displacement on Income**

The effect of displacement on income offers insight into the economic consequences of forced displacement for the affected population in Sokoto State. This data reflects the financial challenges and adjustments faced by displaced individuals, highlighting the extent to which displacement has affected their economic stability. 74.5% of respondents reported that their income significantly decreased due to displacement. This overwhelming majority indicates that displacement has had a profound negative impact on the financial well-being of most affected individuals. Factors contributing to this significant decrease likely include the loss of access to land for farming, the inability to continue previous trades or occupations, loss of assets, and the need to flee quickly without proper preparations. The findings highlight that displacement has had a devastating impact on the income levels of affected individuals, with the vast majority experiencing significant financial loss. While some have managed to maintain or slightly reduce their income losses, a large proportion remain economically vulnerable. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that includes livelihood restoration, financial support, and economic empowerment to help displaced persons recover and rebuild their lives.

### **Challenges Faced in Earning a Livelihood after Displacement**

Displacement has affected the ability of individuals to earn a livelihood in Sokoto State, with a variety of challenges impacting economic stability. These challenges highlight the difficulties displaced populations face in rebuilding their lives and finding sustainable means of income. The loss of farmland is the most significant challenge, with 73% of respondents identifying it as a primary barrier to earning a livelihood post-displacement. This overwhelming figure reflects the central role of agriculture in the livelihoods of many individuals in Sokoto State. Displacement has often meant leaving behind fertile land, crops, and agricultural equipment, leading to a sharp decline in the ability to produce food and generate income. The inability to access traditional farming land has resulted in economic hardship and food insecurity for displaced populations. A significant 22.25% of respondents highlighted limited access to markets as a major challenge. Market access is crucial for trading agricultural produce, selling goods, and engaging in economic activities. The findings indicate that loss of farmland is the most critical challenge faced by displaced persons, followed by limited access to markets and employment opportunities. Without urgent intervention, these challenges will continue to deepen poverty, food insecurity, and economic instability. Sustainable livelihood support programs, combined with security measures and market rehabilitation



efforts, are essential to helping displaced persons regain economic independence and rebuild their lives.

### **Ways Displaced Individuals Meet Their Basic Needs**

This research explores the methods displaced individuals in Sokoto State use to meet their basic needs following displacement. The data provides insights into the sources of support and strategies that displaced populations rely on, highlighting the challenges they face in securing essential resources. 54% of respondents rely on personal income as their primary means of meeting basic needs while about 24.5% of respondents rely on support from relatives to meet their basic needs. This reliance on family networks indicates that displaced individuals often depend on social connections and traditional safety nets during crises. 16% of respondents depend on humanitarian aid for meeting their basic needs. Humanitarian aid, which includes food, shelter, medical care, and other forms of support, plays a key role in providing immediate relief to displaced populations.

### **Psychological Impact of Displacement**

Displacement due to banditry in Sokoto State has a lot of psychological consequences for affected individuals and communities. The experience of being uprooted from one's home, facing violence, and enduring the loss of security, livelihoods, and loved ones can lead to a wide array of psychological and emotional challenges. These impacts are often overlooked in humanitarian responses, which tend to focus more on physical and economic needs, yet addressing the psychological toll of displacement is crucial for holistic recovery and long-term resilience.

### **Emotional State after Displacement**

The emotional impact of displacement due to banditry in Sokoto State is a crucial aspect of understanding the broader psychological toll on affected individuals. Displacement, often triggered by sudden and violent events, leads to a complex mix of emotions, from stress and anxiety to rare cases of relief. A significant majority, 72.5% of respondents, reported feeling very stressed after displacement (Table 2). This overwhelming stress level likely reflects the traumatic experiences associated with displacement, including exposure to violence, loss of property, family separation, and the abrupt disruption of daily life. 25% of respondents reported feeling somewhat stressed after displacement. This category indicates individuals who, while not overwhelmed, are still facing significant emotional and psychological strain. Only 0.75% of respondents felt somewhat relieved after displacement. This small percentage may include individuals who experienced a certain level of relief by escaping areas of intense violence or insecurity. The results highlight that displacement due to banditry in Sokoto State has left a majority of affected individuals in a state of severe stress. Economic hardship, loss of social networks, and trauma from violence contribute to the overwhelming emotional burden. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, combining mental health support, economic empowerment, and community reintegration efforts to improve the well-being and resilience of displaced persons.

### **Coping Strategies Adopted After Displacement**

The coping strategies adopted by displaced individuals are crucial in understanding how they manage the psychological and social impacts of displacement. These strategies reveal the resources and mechanisms displaced people turn to in order to cope with the stress, trauma, and challenges they face in their new circumstances. 40% of respondents identified family support as their primary coping strategy. This highlights the strong role of familial bonds in helping individuals navigate the challenges of displacement. In many African communities, family ties are vital for emotional and

social support, particularly during times of crisis. The reliance on family support suggests that displaced individuals often turn to their closest kin for comfort, resources, and emotional reassurance. Families can offer shelter, food, and emotional care, mitigating the psychological strain caused by displacement. 36% of respondents rely on religious and spiritual practices as a means of coping with displacement. This is a common coping mechanism in many African cultures, where religious beliefs provide solace, hope, and a sense of control in the face of adversity. The findings highlight that displaced individuals in Sokoto State adopt various coping strategies, with family support and religious practices being the most common. However, economic and psychological challenges persist, and limited access to professional counseling services remains a major gap. Strengthening community networks, mental health support, and livelihood programs is essential for helping displaced persons regain stability and resilience in their new environments.

**Table 2: Psychological Impact of Displacement**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Emotional State After Displacement</b>		
Very stressed	290	72.5
Somewhat stressed	100	25
Neutral	05	1.25
Somewhat relieved	03	0.75
Very Relieved	02	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Emotional Experience After Displacement</b>		
Anxiety	90	22.5
Depression	50	12.5
Fear	140	35
Sadness	70	17.5
Anger	30	7.5
Helplessness	20	5
None	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Coping Strategies Adopted After Displacement</b>		
Support from family	180	40
Religious/spiritual practices	120	36
Counseling therapy	20	4
Community support group	80	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Greatest Psychological Challenge Faced as a Result of Displacement</b>		
Trauma from violence	50	12.5
Anxiety about the future	130	32.5
Separation from family	120	30
Loss of property/livelihood	70	17.5
Social isolation	30	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Work (2024)



## Greatest Psychological Challenges Faced as a Result of Displacement

The data regarding the greatest psychological challenges faced by displaced individuals highlights the profound emotional and psychological toll of displacement, particularly when coupled with violence and loss of livelihood. 32.5% of respondents reported anxiety about the future as their greatest psychological challenge and another 30% cited separation from family as a major psychological challenge. While 17.5% of respondents pointed to the loss of property or livelihood as a significant psychological challenge another 12.5% of respondents identified trauma from violence as one of the most significant psychological challenges. In the case of displacement due to banditry or conflict, many displaced individuals have witnessed or experienced violent acts, including killings, abductions, or assaults. The impact of such trauma can lead to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety, all of which are difficult to address without professional mental health care. The results reveal that anxiety about the future, separation from family, and loss of livelihoods are the greatest psychological challenges faced by displaced persons in Sokoto State. Trauma from violence and social isolation further worsen their emotional struggles. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach, combining mental health support, economic empowerment, family reunification, and community integration. Without such interventions, the long-term well-being and stability of displaced individuals will remain at risk.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has examined the socio-economic and psychological impacts of displacement caused by banditry in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that the displacement has severely disrupted the lives of many individuals, leading to significant socio-economic and emotional challenges. On the socio-economic front, the data highlights the sharp decline in income sources and changes in occupation, with many respondents moving from farming to alternative forms of livelihood, such as trading and humanitarian aid. The income levels of displaced persons have significantly decreased, with over 70% reporting a substantial decline in their earnings. The challenges faced in earning a livelihood after displacement reflect the deep economic disruption caused by the violence, which has exacerbated poverty levels and dependency on humanitarian aid. On the psychological side, the emotional toll of displacement is profound. Anxiety about the future and separation from family were identified as the most pressing psychological challenges. Many individuals have experienced trauma due to violence, resulting in anxiety, depression, and fear, which are compounded by the uncertainty of their situation. In conclusion, displacement caused by banditry in Sokoto State has profound and far-reaching impacts that affect not only the socio-economic conditions but also the mental health of the affected populations. A multi-faceted approach that addresses both the immediate and long-term needs of displaced individuals is essential for their recovery and reintegration into society.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the socio-economic and psychological challenges faced by displaced individuals in Sokoto State due to banditry:

- 1. Livelihood Restoration and Economic Empowerment:** It is crucial to provide displaced individuals with opportunities to restore their sources of income. Given the high percentage of respondents who were previously farmers, agricultural support programs, including seed distribution, farming tools, and land rehabilitation, should be prioritized. Additionally, skills training and access to micro-credit for small businesses can empower displaced persons to generate income and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid.



2. **Family Reunification and Social Support:** A significant proportion of displaced individuals reported the trauma of separation from their families. There is a need for family tracing and reunification efforts to ensure that displaced people can reconnect with their loved ones. This could involve collaboration with local and international agencies specializing in family reunification and social services.
3. **Mental Health and Psychological Support:** Given the psychological toll of displacement, particularly due to violence, there is an urgent need for mental health services. Psychological support should be provided in the form of counseling and trauma therapy to address issues such as PTSD, anxiety, and depression.
4. **Strengthening Security and Protection:** An improved security measure, the root cause of displacement in Sokoto State is banditry and violence. A long-term solution to displacement involves addressing the security situation. Collaborative efforts between the Federal, State, and Local governments, as well as international partners, are necessary to curb banditry and ensure the safety of affected populations. This may include community policing, better-equipped security forces, and peace-building initiatives.





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