

Impact of Government Policies and Programmes Addressing Modern Slavery Among Internally Displaced Persons in Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Modern slavery remains a pervasive human rights violation, with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT) facing heightened vulnerability due to displacement-induced poverty, fractured social networks, and limited access to protection mechanisms. This study evaluates the impact of government policies and programmes addressing modern slavery among IDPs in FCT camps, drawing on primary data from 400 respondents across four selected camps Durumi Area 1, Wassa, New Kuchingoro, and Karmajiji. Findings reveal moderate awareness of anti-slavery policies, with 32% of respondents aware of the National Policy on Human Trafficking, 28% acknowledging NAPTIP's anti-trafficking efforts, and 24% recognising IDP camp management policies. However, significant implementation gaps persist, with 40% of respondents indicating that while policies are effective on paper, implementation remains the primary challenge, hampered by corruption (25%), inadequate capacity (20%), and lack of funding (35%). Chi-square analysis confirms statistically significant relationships between forced migration variables and modern slavery experiences ($p < 0.05$ across geographical zone, mode of travel, duration, and reason for displacement). The study concludes that despite a robust legal framework including the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015 policy impact is severely undermined by implementation deficits, corruption, and limited reach to intended beneficiaries. Recommendations emphasise increased funding allocation, strengthened anti-corruption measures, capacity building for implementing agencies, enhanced awareness campaigns targeting IDPs, and strengthened collaboration with NGOs, community leaders, and international organisations to bridge the gap between policy architecture and lived protection realities in displacement settings.

KEYWORDS

Modern slavery, government policies, internally displaced persons, policy implementation, FCT Abuja, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern slavery, encompassing forced labour, human trafficking, debt bondage, forced marriage, and sexual exploitation, remains a pervasive global human rights violation. The International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimate that 50 million people were living in modern slavery in 2021, with women and children disproportionately affected. In Nigeria, the 2023 Global Slavery Index reports approximately 1.6 million people living in modern slavery on any given day in 2021,

ranking the country 38th globally and 5th in Africa in terms of prevalence (7.8 per 1,000 people). This vulnerability is exacerbated among internally displaced persons (IDPs), who face heightened risks due to displacement-induced poverty, disrupted social networks, and limited access to protection mechanisms.

Nigeria has experienced protracted internal displacement driven by insurgency (particularly Boko Haram in the Northeast), communal clashes, banditry, and natural disasters. As of recent IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) assessments in 2025, millions remain displaced, with significant populations in informal camp-like settings across the country, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Informal IDP settlements in Abuja, such as Durumi Area 1, New Kuchingoro, Wassa, and Karmajiji, host thousands displaced primarily from the Northeast and North Central regions. These camps are often makeshift, lacking formal government recognition or adequate infrastructure, leading to precarious living conditions.

IDPs are particularly susceptible to modern slavery. Displacement disrupts livelihoods, increases economic desperation, and weakens community safeguards, creating opportunities for exploitation. Reports indicate forms of modern slavery in displacement contexts, including sexual exploitation, forced labour in informal sectors, and debt bondage. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has reported cases of trafficking and exploitation linked to displacement, with irregular migrants and displaced populations facing coercion or deception.

Despite policy attention to modern slavery in Nigeria, limited empirical research has examined the actual impact of government policies and programmes on addressing exploitation among IDPs. The Nigerian government has established a robust legal and institutional framework, including the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPLEAA) 2015, the National Policy on Human Trafficking, and NAPTIP as the lead agency for anti-trafficking efforts. Additionally, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) oversees IDP camp management and protection. However, the gap between policy formulation and effective implementation remains poorly understood, particularly in the context of informal camps in the FCT.

Evaluating the impact of government policies and programmes addressing modern slavery is crucial for several reasons. First, it provides evidence-based insights into what works and what fails in anti-slavery interventions, enabling targeted reforms. Second, it shifts focus from policy existence to policy effectiveness, holding government accountable for implementation outcomes. Third, in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 (ending modern slavery by 2030), assessing policy impact contributes to evidence-based strategies for building slavery-free communities. Fourth, understanding implementation gaps informs resource allocation, capacity building, and coordination mechanisms among government agencies, NGOs, and humanitarian actors.

Existing literature reveals significant gaps in FCT-specific research on policy impact. While Northeast IDP camps have been studied for slavery-related abuses, Abuja's informal settlements receive less attention. These camps, often self-established since 2014, face unique urban dynamics: proximity to opportunities yet exclusion from formal services,

stigma from host populations, and risks of secondary displacement due to development pressures. Furthermore, limited research has systematically evaluated how IDPs themselves perceive government policies and the effectiveness of protection services. Without this understanding, interventions risk being top-down, culturally inappropriate, or ineffective, undermining efforts to design sustainable and inclusive anti-slavery responses tailored to displace populations in the FCT.

This study evaluates the impact of government policies and programmes addressing modern slavery among IDPs in FCT camps, exploring awareness levels, effectiveness perceptions, implementation challenges, and opportunities for enhancement.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Modern slavery persists as a grave violation of human rights, disproportionately affecting populations already exposed to socio-economic and political marginalisation. Internally displaced persons are particularly vulnerable due to displacement-induced poverty, weakened social support systems, and limited access to justice. In the Federal Capital Territory, IDPs often reside in camps characterised by inadequate livelihoods, insufficient protection, and weak institutional oversight conditions that heighten exposure to forced labour, trafficking, and other forms of exploitation. Despite growing policy attention to modern slavery in Nigeria, limited empirical research has examined the actual impact of government policies and programmes on addressing exploitation among IDPs. Existing studies have largely focused on the macro-level legal framework or humanitarian service delivery, neglecting systematic evaluation of policy implementation, effectiveness, and reach to intended beneficiaries. Specifically, there is a gap in understanding:

- The level of awareness among IDPs of existing anti-slavery policies and programmes;
- The perceived effectiveness of these interventions from the perspective of IDPs.
- The implementation challenges that undermine policy impact; and
- The relationship between forced migration variables and experiences of modern slavery.

Without an understanding of policy impact from the perspective of IDPs themselves, interventions risk being ineffective, poorly targeted, or culturally inappropriate. This knowledge gap undermines efforts to design sustainable and inclusive anti-slavery responses tailored to displaced populations in the FCT. Furthermore, the lack of evidence on implementation challenges including funding constraints, corruption, capacity deficits, and bureaucratic bottlenecks prevents the development of targeted reforms to strengthen policy effectiveness. This study addresses these gaps by systematically evaluating the impact of government policies and programmes addressing modern slavery among IDPs in the FCT.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Government Policies and Programmes against Modern Slavery*

There is consistent evidence that government and non-governmental organisations have been involved in the fight against modern slavery. May (2016) draws attention to how NGOs

addressing trafficking undertake a combination of activities, including shelter services, health, education, advocacy, hotlines and referral services, capacity building, lobbying, research, and consulting. Several organisations have created international networks and referral processes, something which to date has not been implemented by state governments.

The Council of Europe (2024) used a literature review methodology to understand the roles of civil society organisations in reducing modern slavery. The study disclosed that civil societies play important roles in implementing conventions through awareness raising, research, training, detecting victims of trafficking, providing accommodation and other assistance, and supporting them through the criminal justice process and in claiming compensation. The input of civil society in evaluating the implementation of conventions is therefore crucial.

In Nigeria, the legal and institutional framework for addressing modern slavery includes the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPLEAA) 2015, which prohibits all forms of human trafficking and prescribes penalties. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) serves as the lead agency for enforcement, victim protection, and prevention. Additionally, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) oversees IDP camp management and protection coordination. The National Policy on Human Trafficking provides strategic direction for anti-trafficking efforts, while the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking (2022–2026) coordinates responses across government agencies and civil society.

However, existing research has highlighted significant implementation challenges. Ogunniyi (2024) notes that the traditional state-centric approach to human rights protection becomes problematic where non-state armed groups exercise territorial control, as they are often perpetrators of forced labour and recruitment among displaced populations. The Global Slavery Index 2023: Nigeria Country Study notes Nigeria's strong criminal justice mechanisms but also points to areas for improvement in survivor support, suggesting a gap between policy and lived experience.

Studies have shown NGOs engage in activities and research to inform and enhance understanding of communities affected by modern slavery, guiding intervention programmes, advocacy efforts, and collaborative partnerships. For example, Free the Slaves (2023) demonstrated how NGOs engaged in Community Liberation Trainings (CLTs) to build the capacity of civil society organisations and NGOs to effectively combat modern slavery. In Cambodia, the training focused on ensuring access to social and economic services, equipping community members with strategies to mobilise communities against modern slavery. In Senegal, capacity building equipped local actors with the skills necessary to support survivors, including training for Bajenu Gox, safety and security workshops for shelter staff, and media training workshops.

B. Policy Implementation Challenges

Research on policy implementation in displacement contexts has identified several persistent challenges. First, funding constraints remain a major barrier, with humanitarian responses often underfunded relative to needs. The International Organization for Migration (2022)

reported that support for livelihood activities declined from 44% to 27% of camps, while support for education declined from 66% to 65%, reflecting resource constraints. Second, corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks undermine effective service delivery, with reports of aid diversion, exploitation by camp officials, and weak accountability mechanisms. Third, inadequate capacity and technical expertise among implementing agencies limit the quality and reach of interventions. Fourth, the informal and unauthorised status of many IDP camps in the FCT creates a protection gap, as these camps lack formal government recognition and thus receive limited support.

The lack of trust in official protection services further compounds implementation challenges. The Policy and Evidence Centre (2021) noted that many local communities simply do not trust the police, and social norms discourage people from interfering in matters that involve other families. Schulze (2017) found a culture of silence around sexual exploitation of children and reluctance to intervene, particularly when the issue pertains to children from other families. Gardner, Northall, and Brewster (2020) reported that although many anti-slavery resilience assets exist such as welfare benefits, the National Referral Mechanism, and anti-slavery legislation modern slavery victims and survivors are frequently denied access to those benefits through immigration or social exclusion, or are simply unable to access them for reasons of geography.

C. Empirical Studies on Modern Slavery and Displacement

Khan and Heywood (2024) studied financial inclusion as a path to recovery and resilience for survivors of modern slavery in Ukraine, finding that while financial inclusion can strengthen resilience, many survivors remained unbanked. Ekezie (2022) relied on the IOM Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situation (PRDS) framework to understand resilience actions of IDPs in northern Nigeria, noting that despite resource shortages, IDPs adapted by setting up techniques for managing their affairs and available resources, finding innovative ways to cater for themselves, advocating for their needs, and supporting each other. The Policy and Evidence Centre (2021) carried out a study to build resilience against exploitation in Kenya in the context of COVID-19, commending local leadership for its ability to increase anti-trafficking awareness in communities, report concerns through local leaders, and engage influential local chiefs on the issue.

However, the study noted that personal resilience factors impacting exploitation included low awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking, making it hard to engage communities. Gardner, North all and Brewster (2020) adopted a qualitative approach to develop a resilience framework for building slavery-free communities, reporting that individuals outside the safety net remain vulnerable without advocacy and intervention, and action benefits from civic leadership and a supportive, cohesive community. Weitzer (2020) worked on modern slavery and human trafficking, reporting that victims can be recruited and enslaved in various ways using Nigeria as a case study. The study noted that Nigerian females arriving in Italy grew from about 1,500 in 2014 to 11,000, with most originating from Edo State and trafficked into European sex markets. Chukwudi (2022) carried out a qualitative study on migration and dynamics of modern slavery in Nigeria, noting that political instability and poor governance contributed immensely to militia groups and criminal syndicates taking advantage of illegal migrants.

D. Study Area

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) lies in central Nigeria, between latitudes 8°25'N and 9°20'N and longitudes 6°45'E and 7°39'E. It spans approximately 7,315 square kilometres and comprises six Area Councils: Abaji, Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, and Kwali. The FCT features a tropical savanna climate with distinct wet and dry seasons, with annual rainfall averaging around 1,400 mm and temperatures ranging from 25°C to 30°C.

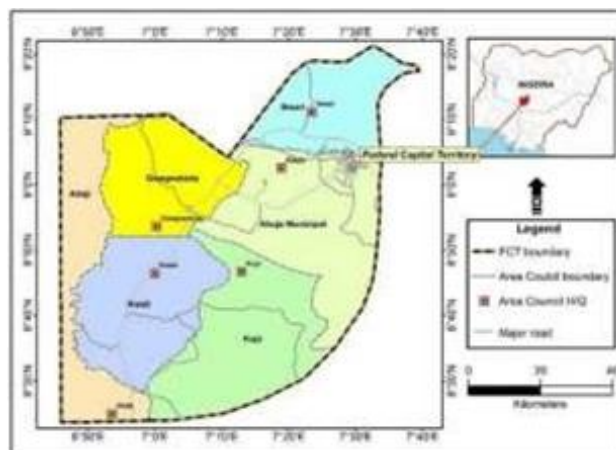


Figure1: Map of FCT-Abuja Source, Google Image, 2025

As Nigeria's capital, Abuja acts as the political hub with opportunities in government, services, and informal sectors. Yet it faces urban poverty, unemployment, and inequality, heightening IDP vulnerabilities to exploitation. Many IDPs flee conflicts like the Boko Haram insurgency and reside in informal camps, often unauthorised and lacking formal support. The FCT hosts a significant number of IDPs in camps such as Durumi Area 1, Wassa, New Kuchingoro, and Karmajiji, which were selected for this study due to their high concentration of displaced persons and reported cases of trafficking and forced labour.

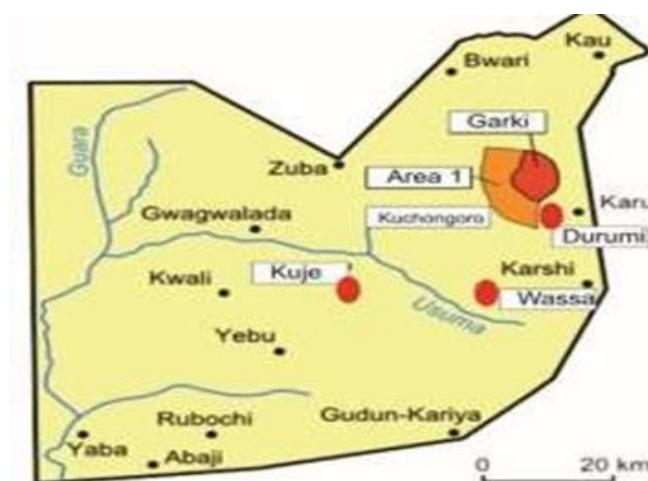


Figure2: Map of Abuja showing the IDP camp



Plates I: a, b, c: IDPs Camp at Durumi Area 1, Abuja, Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025



Plates II: IDPs Camp at Wassa Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025



Plate III: IDPs Camp at New Kuchingoro Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. *Types and Sources of Data*

Primary and secondary data were utilised. Primary data were collected directly from IDPs via structured questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs). A questionnaire was administered to 400 IDPs across selected camps to quantify awareness of policies, perceived programme impacts, and experiences of exploitation. FGDs were conducted with 20 IDPs and camp residents to explore personal encounters with government interventions. KIIs involved stakeholders including NAPTIP officials, camp managers, NGO representatives, and government agency staff to assess policy implementation and effectiveness.

Secondary data were sourced from reports by NAPTIP, IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) assessments, Walk Free Global Slavery Index, and U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Reports, providing contextual information on national anti-slavery frameworks, IDP vulnerabilities, and programme evaluations.

B. *Sample and Sample Size Determination*

Out of the 18 formal and informal IDP camps spread across the FCT, four were selected for sampling: Durumi Area 1 (population 2,730), Wassa (7,000), New Kuchingoro (2,700), and Karmajiji (1,250).

Camp	Population	Category of Camp
Karmajiji	1,250	Informal
Wassa	7,000	Formal
New Kuchigoro	2,700	Formal
Gongola	1,926	Informal
Karshi	2,204	Informal
Kabuba	1,157	Informal
Zinda	1,243	Informal
Takushara	1,642	Informal
Abaji	815	Informal
Area 1 Durumi	2,730	Formal
Dakwa	780	Informal
Bwari	1,650	Informal
Kuje	315	Informal
Kwali	120	Informal
Dako, Dogon Gada	430	Informal
Malaysia Garden	300	Informal
TOTAL	26,262	

The determination of the sample size for this study was critical to ensuring that the sample was representative. Given the diverse population of IDPs in FCT, Abuja, the study adopted Taro Yamane's formula to calculate the sample size:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where: n = required sample size

N = estimated population size of the selected IDPs camps in FCT Abuja

e = margin of error, set at 0.05 (5%)

For this study, the total population of IDPs in selected camps are Durumi Area 1, Wassa, New Kunchingoro, and Karmajiji in FCT Abuja is estimated at 20,000 (NBS, 2022). Using the formula: 20,000

$$n = \frac{20,000}{1 + 20,000(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{20,000}{1 + 20,000(0.0025)}$$

$$= 392.156$$

$$\simeq 400$$

The estimated sample size was 392 participations to mount for non-responses or incomplete questionnaires 8% buffer was added bringing the total sample size to roughly 400 respondents

Thus, a sample of 400 respondents was selected for questionnaire survey. Also, 20 participants were selected for in depth interviews and FGDs, and for Key Infomart Interview (KII) ensuring diversity and depth of perspectives.

C. *Procedure for Data Collection*

Data collection occurred from February to May 2025. Ethical approval was obtained from relevant authorities, including NCFRMI. Informed consent was secured, emphasising voluntariness, confidentiality, and anonymity. Trained research assistants, fluent in local languages, administered questionnaires in person, assisting with literacy issues. Interviews were conducted in private settings within camps, audio-recorded with permission, and lasted 45–60 minutes. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) summarised respondent characteristics and programme impacts. Chi-square tests examined associations between forced migration variables and modern slavery experiences, with significance set at $p < 0.05$. Qualitative data from transcriptions underwent thematic analysis using NVivo software.

V. **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A. *Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

A survey was conducted among 400 respondents drawn from various IDP camps in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria. The first part of the presentation is the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of their respondents that were studied, while the other parts

were on IDPs perception on the impact of government policies and programmes addressing modern slavery among IDPs.

Table 1: Age Distribution of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age:		
1-10 years	8	2.0
11-20 years	112	28.0
21-30 years	176	44.0
31-40 years	92	23.0
50 years and above	12	3.0
Total	400	100

B. Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Finding on sex (Table 1) shows that majority of respondents were male 54%, while female respondents accounted for 46%. This indicates that the IDPs population in this study is predominantly male 54%. However, it is crucial to note that females face unique vulnerabilities, particularly in terms of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence, making them a high-risk group for modern slavery in the camp environment. Women were found to be significantly more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence within IDPs camps.

Table 2: Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	216	54.0
Female	184	46.0
Total	400	100

C. Marital Status of the Respondents

The analysis of marital status among the 400 respondents (Table 2) reveals that a significant proportion were single, accounting for 42.0% of the sample. This was closely followed by married individuals at 40.0%, while widowed respondents constituted 18.0%. This distribution indicates that nearly half of the respondents were unmarried. The relatively high percentage of single individuals 42.0% suggests that a substantial portion of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the study belong to a young and potentially economically active population. Such individuals may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation and modern slavery due to limited family support structures and heightened economic instability. Furthermore, the 18.0% of respondents who were widowed may face compounded economic and emotional challenges, particularly when responsible for dependents with minimal support systems.

Table 3: Marital Status of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Marital Status		
Single	168	42.0
Married	160	40.0

Widowed	72	18.0
Total	400	100

D. *Educational Background of the Respondents*

The educational profile of the respondents (Table 3) reveals a predominantly secondary-level attainment, with nearly half 46.0% having completed secondary school. This category constitutes the most common educational level among the surveyed population. Primary school education follows, reported by 23.0% of respondents, while university degree holders account for 13.0%. Post-secondary qualifications representing tertiary education below degree level comprise 11.0% of the sample. A further 7.0% of respondents indicated having no formal education.

Table 4: Educational Background of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Educational Background:		
No Formal Education	28	7.0
Primary School	92	23.0
Secondary School	184	46.0
Post-Secondary	44	11.0
University Degree	52	13.0
Total	400	100



Plate 4: Poor educational facilities at New Kuchingoro IDPs Camp

E. *Awareness of Policies and Programmes Addressing Modern Slavery*

The results (Table 1) showed that 32% of respondents demonstrated awareness of the National Policy on Human Trafficking, describing it as a good initiative but emphasising the need for effective implementation. NAPTIP was acknowledged by 28% of respondents for its efforts in combating human trafficking, though they emphasised the need for more efforts to address forced labour. Additionally, 24% of respondents recognised the Federal Government's IDP Camp Management Policy as a step in the right direction but called for

more comprehensive and inclusive approaches to address the complex issues of modern slavery.

Table 6: Awareness of Policies and Programmes Addressing Modern Slavery (n=400)

Variable/Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
National Policy on Human Trafficking	128	32
NAPTIP's Anti-Trafficking Efforts	112	28
IDP Camp Management Policy	96	24
Other Policies/Programmes	48	12
None	16	4
Total	400	100

The moderate level of policy awareness (32–28%) indicates that while some IDPs have been reached by government information campaigns, the majority remain unaware of existing protections. This finding aligns with the Policy and Evidence Centre (2021), which noted that awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking was very low in Kenya, making it difficult to engage communities in prevention efforts. The communication gap and lack of information on modern slavery create additional risks for exploitation, leaving people more vulnerable than they might otherwise be.

F. Effectiveness of Policies and Programmes

The findings (Table 2) revealed mixed views on the effectiveness of policies and programmes addressing modern slavery. About 40% of respondents believed that policies were effective, but implementation was the main challenge. As one respondent noted: "I think the policies are effective, but the implementation is the problem. There is a lot of corruption and bureaucracy." In contrast, 30% of respondents felt that policies were good but not reaching the intended beneficiaries, highlighting the need for more awareness and sensitisation. Meanwhile, 20% of respondents were unsure about the effectiveness of policies and programmes, indicating a lack of clear understanding or visibility of their impact, while 10% considered them not effective.

As one respondent noted,

"I think the policies are effective, but the implementation is the problem. There is a lot of corruption and bureaucracy". (A Female Discussant in the FGD in New Kuchigoro IDPs camp)

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents on Effectiveness of Policies and Programmes (n=400)

Variable/Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Effective, but implementation is a challenge	160	40
Good policies, but not reaching beneficiaries	120	30
Not effective	40	10
Unsure	80	20
Total	400	100

The finding that 40% of respondents identified implementation as the primary challenge, despite policy effectiveness on paper, is consistent with broader literature on policy

implementation gaps in displacement contexts. Gardner, Northall, and Brewster (2020) reported that although many anti-slavery resilience assets exist, victims and survivors are frequently denied access due to immigration status, social exclusion, or geography. This study extends this finding to the Nigerian context, demonstrating that even when policies exist, implementation deficits including corruption, inadequate funding, and weak accountability undermine their impact.



Plate: 5 - Solar powered learning hub donated to New Kuchigoro IDPs Camp by an NGO

G. *Challenges in Implementing Policies and Programmes*

The results (Table 3) identified several challenges hindering the implementation of policies and programmes addressing modern slavery. The majority (35%) cited lack of funding as a major concern. One discussant stated: "Lack of funding is a major challenge; we don't have enough resources to implement the policies effectively." Corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks were mentioned by 25% of respondents, while 20% highlighted inadequate capacity and technical expertise as significant obstacles, emphasising the need for capacity building and training to address modern slavery.

With one discussant stating;

"Lack of funding is a major challenge; we don't have enough resources to implement the policies effectively". (A Male FGD Discussant in the Wassa IDPs camp)

Table 8: Challenges in Implementing Policies and Programmes (n=400)

Variable/Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of Funding	140	35
Corruption and Bureaucratic Bottlenecks	100	25
Inadequate Capacity and Technical Expertise	80	20
Other Challenges	60	10
None	20	5
Total	400	100

The identification of funding constraints (35%), corruption (25%), and capacity deficits (20%) as primary implementation barriers aligns with national and global patterns. The International Organization for Migration (2022) reported declining support for livelihood activities (from 44% to 27% of camps) and education (from 66% to 65%), reflecting resource constraints. Furthermore, the finding on corruption echoes reports from Human Rights Watch (2022) detailing sexual abuse and exploitation by camp officials and security forces, as well as general impunity within and around camps.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the impact of government policies and programmes addressing modern slavery among IDPs in the FCT, Nigeria. The findings reveal a critical implementation gap between Nigeria's robust legal and institutional framework including the TIPLEAA 2015, NAPTIP, and NCFRMI and the lived reality of IDPs in informal camps. While 32% of respondents demonstrated awareness of the National Policy on Human Trafficking and 28% acknowledged NAPTIP's efforts, the majority remain unaware of existing protections, and even among those aware, perceived effectiveness is severely undermined by implementation failures.

The study concludes that modern slavery is a pervasive reality in FCT IDP camps, with 74% of respondents confirming its prevalence and 79% feeling personally vulnerable. The primary driver's poverty (38%) and poor education (34%) are exacerbated by displacement and compounded by a catastrophic failure of protection systems. The finding that 54% of IDPs find protective services inaccessible and 51% rate them as less effective empirically validates the link between institutional abandonment and heightened vulnerability. The most significant conclusion is the profound implementation gap: while policies exist on paper, their impact is undermined by lack of funding (35%), corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks (25%), and inadequate capacity (20%). The chi-square analysis confirms significant relationships between forced migration variables and modern slavery experiences, indicating that displacement dynamics directly shape exploitation risk.

Critically, the study reveals that the inaccessibility and perceived ineffectiveness of formal protection services have left IDPs with no credible recourse, creating an environment of impunity for perpetrators. This institutional vacuum forces IDPs to rely on their own diminishing social networks (33%) and spiritual faith (30%) as primary resilience strategies that, while valuable, are insufficient against structural drivers of exploitation. Ultimately, while Nigeria has established a commendable legal and institutional framework, eradicating modern slavery demands a shift from policy formulation to effective implementation. Without addressing implementation deficits including funding shortfalls, corruption, capacity constraints, and limited reach to beneficiaries' modern slavery will continue to undermine the dignity and security of displaced populations in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

Given that 35% of respondents identified lack of funding as a major implementation challenge, the Nigerian government and international donors must significantly increase

funding for anti-slavery programmes, including victim identification, protection services, livelihood support, and awareness campaigns. Funding should be directed towards the most vulnerable camps, particularly informal settlements in the FCT that lack formal recognition and receive limited support. With 25% of respondents citing corruption as a major obstacle, anti-corruption mechanisms must be strengthened, including regular audits of camp management, transparent aid distribution systems, and accountability mechanisms for camp officials and security personnel. Whistle-blower protection and confidential reporting channels should be established to enable IDPs to report exploitation without fear of retaliation.

Given that 20% of respondents highlighted inadequate capacity and technical expertise as significant obstacles, government should invest in training for NAPTIP officials, camp managers, social workers, and law enforcement personnel on victim-centred approaches, trauma-informed care, and identification of modern slavery indicators. With only 32% awareness of the National Policy on Human Trafficking and 28% awareness of NAPTIP's efforts, sustained, accessible rights-based education campaigns should be launched within IDP camps. These campaigns should be delivered in local languages through trusted channels including camp leaders (36%) and word of mouth (26%) and focus on identifying trafficking signs, labour rights, and safe reporting mechanisms.

Given that respondents identified effective camp management (33%), collaboration (31%), and intelligence gathering (33.5%) as important additional protection measures, government should strengthen partnerships with NGOs, community leaders, and international organisations to leverage resources, expertise, and community trust. A community-based protection model should be adopted, training and empowering IDP leaders and establishing community watch groups for early detection and response.

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