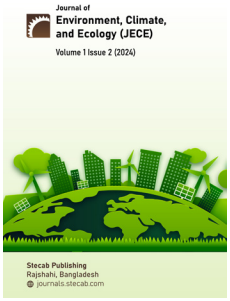

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Will They Continue to Endure: How Conflict and "Climate-Induced" Migration is Affecting the Lake Chad Region

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

The effects of climate change are undoubtedly global. Reports show that West Africa is in a precarious position, regarding some of the worst consequences of climate change, occasioning extreme events, such as violent conflict, insecurity, and loss of livelihoods in the Lake Chad region. The impact on human lives is full-blown as 'climate-induced' migration results in drought, desertification, and the intensifying water stress has on human migration in the region. Notably, the deterioration of individual and local living conditions has compelled inhabitants of the region in Nigeria to migrate to neighboring states as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) or 'environmental refugees" in neighboring countries. However, existing studies focused on the impact and patterns of migration in West Africa thereby creating a "knowledge gap" on how 'climate-induced' migration is affecting the Lake Chad region. This paper employs secondary data collection, analyzing dynamic trends and patterns of climate change and challenges management. Findings revealed that while the activities of terrorists and insurgent groups have strongly impacted migration within the Lake Chad region, the continuous "dryness" and the ever-changing climate conditions, such as rising temperature, desertification, flooding, and drought have dramatically worsened and contributed to the mass decision to leave the region.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Within the intricate fabric of global difficulties, few matters assume as significant a presence as the intricate interrelationship between conflicts, climate change, and how the consequences of climate change are causing "climate-induced' or forced migration. The Lake Chad region, nestled at the intersection of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, has become a significant convergent point for the confluence of problems such as conflict and insecurity (Albert, 2017), environmental degradation, reduced precipitation, and population growth (Kamta *et al.*, 2021). The area, which has been traditionally renowned for its abundant biological resources and cultural variety, has recently gained significant international attention as a result of the far-reaching consequences of conflict and migration driven by climate change (Africa Climate Mobility Report, 2023). According to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2023), the population residing in the Lake Chad region is mostly rural and is among the most economically disadvantaged globally. However, the Sahel region itself is seeing a notable increase in temperatures, surpassing the world average by a factor of 1.5. Projections indicate that by the year 2080, temperatures in the Sahel are expected to rise within the range of 2.0 to 4.3°C.

While the study of Pham-Duc *et al.,* (2020) found that Lake Chad exhibits significant natural fluctuations, both on a seasonal basis and over a longer time span, recent studies by Gao *et al.*, (2011) and Pham-Duc *et al.*, (2020) indicate that the surface area of the lake has undergone periods of both decline and subsequent recovery, with a fluctuation ratio ranging from one to ten. The inhabitants of the region depend on natural resources for their sustenance; yet the climate of the region exhibits significant variability and is susceptible to the consequences of climate change like drought, intense heatwaves, and floods. The combination of enduring drought conditions and the escalation of armed conflict, including rebel factions and extremist organizations, has compelled, and induced a significant number of people or citizens to migrate and seek shelter within the vicinity of Lake Chad, which spans over the borders of four nations.

Owonikoko and Momodu (2020) posit that the confluence of intensifying conflicts, deterioration of the environment, and shifting climate patterns has initiated a period characterized by significant change and unpredictability. Hence, the residents of this geographical area are now considered to be facing the harsh truth of depleting resources, heightened competition for land grazing, and water, and the severe repercussions of armed conflict. Extensive research by Tabe (2019) and Brzoska and Frohlich (2016), reveal that a significant number of families are expected to have challenges in adapting to the consequences of climate change, potentially leading to substantial population relocation. The emergence of these multifaceted problems has engendered pertinent research that extends far beyond the boundaries of the Lake Chad region: Will or would the citizens or communities in this area persist in their endurance? This article seeks to add to the existing studies on climate change and its attendant consequences in the Lake Chad region. It seeks to examine the ecological transformation and resource scarcity in the Lake which has been consistently affected by climate change-induced factors, including drought and desertification. These environmental changes have led to reduced water resources, increased conflict over water and land, and socio-economic challenges, potentially contributing to political instability in the region. This paper also aims to examines identify the drivers of conflict and climate change in the Lake Chad region and also examines the debate on climate-induced migration vs conflict-driven displacement. Lastly, the paper examines the impacts of climate change and forced migration and humanitarian crisis and the plight of displaced populations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The ecological transformation and resource scarcity in lake chad

One of the objectives of this paper is to examine the ecological transformation and resource scarcity in Lake Chad and how this is currently or have consistently affected the Lake. It is important to know that climate and its variabilities are significant elements that influence environmental landscapes, the way of life, and social stability (Prokopová *et al.*, 2019). Lake Chad which was once doubled as an oasis of ecological richness was seen nourishing the land and supporting the diverse communities that relied on it for sustenance. The significance of Lake Chad, according to World Bank (2015), lies in the ecological services it offers, which are especially valuable in the surrounding desert area with unpredictable water resource availability. However, studies by Magrin (2016) and Okpara *et al.,* (2016) explained that this region has seen significant ecological changes in the last decades, notwithstanding its previous status as a thriving ecological hotspot.

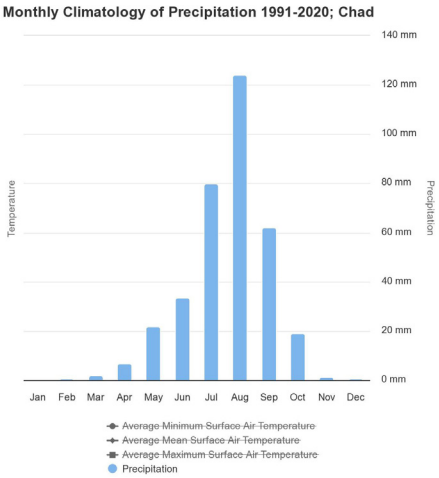

Figure 1. Monthly Climatology of Precipitation 1991-2022

Source: *Climate Change Knowledge Portal*

The Sahel area of Africa saw increased precipitation during the 1950s-1960s, referred to as the wet era, followed by a transition to a drier climate with regular droughts from the 1970s to the 1990s, known as the dry period. Belete *et al.*, (2017) discovered a rising pattern in yearly precipitation over the lake basin by analyzing grid-like gauge monthly time series data from 1970 to 2010. Conversely, Nour *et al.*, (2021) observed a substantial reduction in yearly precipitation in the center region of the basin by examining an extended rainfall dataset obtained from

rain gauges spanning the years 1961 to 2021. Water input into the Lake Chad basin varies from year to year, and this variation is attributed to climate variability (Shaofeng *et al.,* 2017). According to Yunana et *al.,* (2017), the characteristics of Lake Chad changed significantly from 1963 to 2015. Both the water volume and surface area of the Lake decreased significantly during this time. Furthermore, the area has been dealing with a drying out of the climate, with precipitation dropping dramatically since the 1960s. Interestingly enough, the Lake has been steadily threatened and reduced in size due to drought, a result of climate change, from 1960 to 2022.

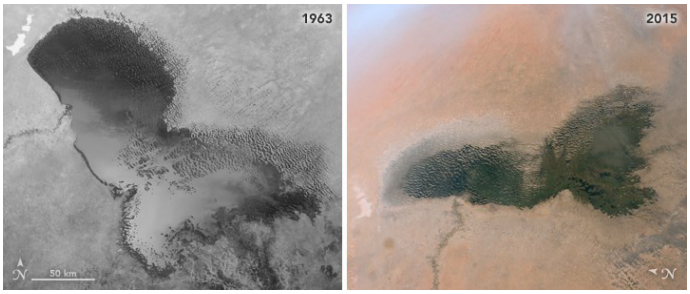

Figure 2. Lake Chad Basin in 1963 and 2015

Source: Landsat Image Gallery

The reduction in the size of the lake has significant ecological and social consequences, resulting in environmental degradation and enhanced struggle for water supplies (Ugwu, 2018). Following a period of severe and extended droughts in the region throughout the 70s and 80s, which were widely recognized as significant manifestations of climate change, there were a notable rise in the average annual precipitation since the early 1990s (Mahmood *et al.,* 2019). The present phenomenon of climate change appears to exert a greater influence on the region manifesting as heightened interannual variation in precipitation levels during the rainy seasons. Consequently, the regional economy, which primarily relies on agricultural and pastoral actions, is experiencing an escalating vulnerability.

Desertification, which refers to the expansion of dry and semi-arid territories into formerly productive regions, is another ecological transformation and urgent concern in the Lake Chad region, mostly influenced by the effects of climate change. Nwilo *et al.*, (2019) observed that the entire surface area of the water in the Lake saw a massive reduction throughout the period spanning from 1973 to 2017. This substantial reduction in this water is a matter of significant concern not only for the nations that occupied the Lake, but also for scientists and international bodies (Griffin, 2020). Further investigations by Ehiane and Moyo (2022) established that the lowering of the lake surface is further exacerbated by demographic pressure. While the current population is unknown, it is predicted that the population in the region is likely to increase by a significant value. The population residing in the vicinity of the lake according to Owonikoko and Momodu (2020) has seen a significant growth, rising from 13 million in 1960 to an estimated 27 million in 2007. Agricultural intensification, fishing, and overgrazing have all contributed to human population growth, which in turn has led to a greater depletion of the lake's natural resources. Warming temperatures and more erratic rainfall patterns are likely to hasten desertification, according to predictions. The aforementioned phenomena are gradually altering the terrain of the area, resulting in a steady increase in aridity and rendering it less habitable. The process of transforming fertile land into arid desert conditions results in a notable decrease in agricultural output, so presenting a considerable threat to both the stability of the food supply and the economic well-being of the Lake area (Musa *et al.,* 2022).

As revealed above, the repercussions of diminishing water sources and deserts are severe and persistent. As the ongoing ecological transformations develop, the issue of resource scarcity becomes more conspicuous, hence creating a backdrop for potential disputes pertaining to land, water, and other essential resources. The reduction in size of Lake Chad has intensified the conflict for the little water resources that remain. Pastoralists, farmers, and fishing groups, who are already experiencing significant challenges, are already engaged in conflicts pertaining to the allocation of water resources (Wakdok & Bleischwitz, 2021). A climate of uncertainty about water supply exacerbates the issue of resource scarcity and leads to heightened tensions among different groups as they battle for their existence.

As Silchenko and Murray (2022) rightly observed, desertification not only diminishes the availability of cultivable land, but also compels individuals to undertake migration in pursuit of more habitable environments. The process of migration sometimes gives rise to disputes between established communities and migrating individuals or groups, as they vie for the increasingly scarce productive land that remains available. In addition, local economies have been negatively affected by the increasing hardships experienced by fishers and pastoralists, which has caused major interruptions to their source of income (Akinyetun & Ogunbodede, 2023). The unpredictability of the economy may lead to a host of social and economic issues, such as poverty, food insecurity, and unemployment. If locals are already predisposed to engage in criminal activity or join militant organizations as a result of the poor conditions, the situation can deteriorate (Hamadou, 2020). The existence of limited natural resources and the resulting disputes over land and water might contribute to the escalation of political instability. The impact of the recent coup in the region, along with inadequate governance systems, may provide challenges in efficiently resolving conflicts, resulting in a lack of confidence in government institutions and a reduced belief in the state's capacity to fulfil the needs of its populace.

2.2. The debate on climate-induced migration vs conflict-driven displacement in lake chad

Conflict-driven displacement pertains to the act of individuals abandoning their residences due to the direct outcome of violence, lack of safety, and armed conflicts. The connection involving migration and the climate is not a new occurrence as environmental considerations have always affected population mobility. Human populations often exhibit a proclivity

to migrate in reaction to changes in their surroundings. Nevertheless, the nature, the patterns, and the scale of migration caused by environmental factors have undergone significant transformations in recent times. Migration movements are influenced by a combination of climatic and environmental elements. The Lake Chad region finds itself at a critical juncture of a multifaceted migration dilemma, whereby the interplay of climate change and conflict influences the migratory behaviors of its population. Climate-induced migration in the Lake Chad region is mostly characterized by individuals relocating from their residences as a result of the detrimental consequences of climate change, with repeated flooding, heatwaves, desertification, and the lack of resources (Mattar & Mbakwem, 2018). As the impacts of climate change become more evident, communities are confronted with the repercussions, compelling them to migrate and seek shelter in locations that provide more favorable conditions.

Hunter and Nawotka (2019) posits that there is a growing body of research that suggests a connection between climate change and conflicts. Several studies, including Hendrix *et al.,* (2019), have identified relationships involving changes in precipitation and temperature and the occurrence of conflict. However, similarity does not necessarily imply connection. Ide (2019) aver that the relationship between ecological and atmospheric change and migration or conflict in Africa is not direct, but rather indirect. Therefore, the absence of accurate data plus the indirect connections between climate change, conflict, and migration make it challenging to systematically evaluate their interactions using quantitative evaluation methods.

Privara and Privarová (2019) emphasize the connection between climate change and displacement, particularly in the context of sudden onset disasters prevalent in Africa. They argue that ecological events like drought, desertification, cyclones, and flooding illustrate this link, underlining the urgency of addressing climate change to mitigate the increasing frequency of such disasters and subsequent internal displacement. While looking at it from the context of instability and reduced food production, Caminade *et al.,* (2019) contend that climate change is expected to exacerbate political instability due to the decrease in food production, spread of diseases, and heightened pressure on water resources. Bettini and Gioli (2016) observed that the human impacts of climate-induced migration are most evident in instances of forced migration when individuals who are displaced are obliged to relocate for the sake of their safety and life. The impacted population faces the risk of losing their means of making a living, their houses, their family connections, their cultural heritage, and the potential breakdown of communal cohesiveness as individuals may migrate to other locations.

Furthermore, conflicts arising from climate change, namely those involving agricultural communities and herders, are causing internal displacement in the West African sub-region. The growing scarcity of natural resources, including water and grazing places along cycle travel routes, is causing conflicts between ranchers and agricultural individuals as they compete for access to new grazing spaces and water supplies. For example, in nations like Nigeria and Chad, conflicts have arisen between pastoralists and agricultural communities due to the scarcity of resources exacerbated by climate-related forces (Cabot & Cabot, 2017). The reduction of grazing lands in both nations prompts herders to migrate southwards into regions inhabited by agricultural populations, leading to violent conflicts and subsequent displacement.

Although there is growing discussion on the effect of climate change via the lens of gradual onset disasters, the connection between this aspect and internal displacement has not received significant attention. Nevertheless, a growing body of research indicates that population displacements, whether within a country or beyond borders, are caused by the gradual and long-term effects of climate change, such as drought, rising sea levels, cyclones, flooding and so on (Koubi *et al.,* 2016; McLeman, 2018). The signs of migration are clearly visible when combined with population problems, loss of income generation, and insufficient coping measures. Emerging indications of this phenomenon are becoming apparent across Africa.

The Lake Chad region has been plagued by long-lasting conflicts, including the insurgency spearheaded by Boko Haram and ISWAP and disputes around resources. The Boko Haram terrorist operation, originating in Nigeria but spreading to neighboring countries in the Lake Chad region, has resulted in substantial conflict-driven displacement caused by violence (Jedwab *et al.,* 2021). Residents residing in regions under the authority of Boko Haram encounter severe brutality and oppression, which forces them to abandon their homes as Internally Displaced Person (IDP) in pursuit of protection. Furthermore, heightened rivalry for land, water, and other crucial resources has resulted in localized conflicts, particularly between farmers and pastoralists. The conflicts fueled by limited resources strongly contribute to the displacement of populations in the Lake Chad region, as they are compelled to abandon their homes in order to avoid violence and find safer areas (Kamta *et al.*, 2021). Political unrest and internal strife in nations such as Nigeria have compelled individuals to abandon their homes. These disputes often arise from intricate, multi-faceted factors that may not be directly associated with resource constraints yet lead to substantial displacement.

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper employs secondary data collection which include journal articles, reports from credible institutions on climate change and so on. A total number of thirty-two (32) papers and reports were considered. However, only 27 of these research papers and reports were critically analyzed. The inclusion criteria for these papers include papers that discuss and analyze the themes in the analysis of the paper. Lastly, in this paper, the author ensured accurate acknowledgement and proper citation of the authors to avoid plagiarism. Also, the confidentiality and privacy of these authors were also respected, and the data and review were used for the original intentions to avoid misrepresentation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Drivers of conflict and climate change in the lake chad region

This article seeks to identify the drivers of conflict and climate change in the Lake Chad and how this is affecting the region.

The Lake Chad region according to Oyekanmi (2022) has seen substantial changes and challenges due to a combination of historical, political, economic, and ecological circumstances, resulting in a current crisis of considerable magnitude. He diligently explained that the complex volatility experienced in the region is a result of intensifying conflicts and the consequences of climate change. These issues are deeply based on historical, political, economic, and ecological dynamics.

Gbenenye (2016) raised a significant point by explaining that a crucial facet of the contemporary crisis in Lake Chad can be traced back to the colonial legacy. During the scramble for Africa, the colonial masters arbitrarily drew borders that disregarded the region's historical, ethnic, and cultural realities (Sanni, 2020). It is on this basis that some authors such as Aluede (2017) and Koter (2021) rightly explained that the process of nation-building in the Lake Chad, including Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, was carried out without enough regard for the indigenous populations and ecological systems reliant on the lake. The expeditious partitioning of the territory led to the formation of a complex network of transnational ethnic communities, hence posing significant difficulties in terms of regional administration and resource allocation. Over the course of time, the unsolved historical disputes have gradually subsided, and in some cases, escalated into acts of violence.

According to Akinyetun and Ogunbodede (2023), the Lake Chad area consistently experiences political instability, governance failures, and corruption. These issues persist due to the challenges faced by governments in the region in delivering essential amenities, ensuring equal distribution of resources, and maintaining security. Evidently, the absence of effective governance mechanisms has resulted in the disenfranchisement of several communities, leaving them susceptible to extremist ideologies which are often used as a substitute form of authority in the absence of governmental support. The recruiting techniques of armed rebel organizations, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria along with the Islamic State of West Africa (ISWA), are influenced by the insecurity of livelihoods in the Lake. This feeling of insecurity continues to increase and is further compounded by social and economic inequities, leading to sustained rates of retention within these armed terrorist organizations (Ugwueze *et al.,* 2022). Individuals who own livelihoods that are progressively more precarious are more prone to being influenced by the monetary inducements provided by armed factions as a means of recruiting. These individuals, who possess inherent susceptibility, have the capacity to contribute to economic advancement. Regrettably, they are susceptible to recruiting by terrorist organizations, and upon their return, they encounter social marginalization and stigmatisation.

Akov (2017) and Okpara *et al.,* (2016) also posit that the insufficient dedication of the government in the region as well as the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to adequately undertake mitigation as well as adaptation initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development in response to the diminishing lake has resulted in vulnerable young populations being susceptible to recruitment by extremist organisations. The frustration experienced by young individuals who seek to improve their lives stems from their inability to maintain sustainable livelihoods, leading them to ultimately engage in violent conflicts as a method of surviving and achieving their desired outcomes. In addition to that, the increase in temperatures and unpredictable precipitation patterns have resulted in heightened rates of evaporation and decreased water intake from the Chari River and its associated tributaries. The ecological revolution has had a profound impact on the local economy, resulting in a depletion of resources and causing economic instability. Concurrently, the progression of desertification, propelled by increasing temperatures and unpredictable precipitation patterns, presents an imminent threat. Moreover, a prominent and urgent driver of conflict in the region is the significant decrease in the level of water in the Lake (Ehiane & Moyo, 2022).

The convergence of historical, political, and ecological processes in the Lake Chad area has resulted in the emergence of a volatile environment characterized by the intersection of conflict and migration triggered by climate change (Abrahams & Carr, 2017). Displacement is a consequence of resource scarcity which is further intensified by environmental changes. As individuals endeavour to find sanctuary and access to essential supplies in other locations, tensions arise among groups vying for scarce goods.

4.2. Impact of conflict, and climate-induced displacement in the lake chad communities

Lake Chad has long been a microcosm of interconnected crises, but the most recent and pressing issue is the convergence of the consequences of climate change and conflict. The ecological upheaval caused by climate change has exacerbated resource shortages/scarcity, leading to disastrous effects. Simultaneously, the area has emerged as a focal point for conflicts, primarily as a result of the terrorism perpetrated by Boko Haram and its counterpart ISWAP (Cannon & Iyekekpolo, 2018). An undeniable fact is that the Lake Chad region has seen destabilization for over a decade due to the onslaught of Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) assaults.

Oluwadare (2016) rightly observed that the conflict in the Lake has led to substantial social repercussions and a dramatic impact on unemployment since it has adversely affected economic activities and halted development efforts. The instability has led to a situation where the military and local security forces have gained control over civilian authorities. This has resulted in a climate of suspicion and fear, which has greatly contributed to the escalation of ethno-religious and territorial disputes. The measures used by the government to counteract terrorism have greatly alienated some ethnic groups such as Buduma, Kanuri and Fulani the populations, as well as certain social groupings such as Koranic students and individuals engaged in begging for their livelihood (Gomment & Esomchi, 2017). For instance, the Kanuri farmers have been suspected of collaborating with the terrorists due to their refusal to adhere to the army's evacuation.

Within the communities in the Lake Chad, it is also evident that forced displacements and armed conflict have caused families to be separated, as some family members have joined the rebels while others have been recruited by the government for military

actions against the terrorist (Salleh *et al*., 2018). Simultaneously, conflicts sometimes arise among the local population, internally displaced individuals, and refugees. For example, in Nigeria and other states that make up Lake Chad, there are concerns about the potential incursion of Boko Haram terrorists into the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps where people are seeking refuge from the ongoing conflict. Additionally, more than 3 million people have been forced to leave their homes within these nations, with Nigeria seeing the biggest number of displacements (OCHA, 2023). In recent decades, there has been a rise in rivalry for land, water, and food, resulting in a surge in intercommunal conflict and forced migration. Meanwhile, prolonged internal displacement for an extended period of time presents unique difficulties. The majority of internally displaced populations may have no desire to return to their original place of abode and instead choose to stay in their displacement camps where they have been for an extended period of time. These individuals need tailored remedies that encourage sustainable development and independence, which should have been provided a long time ago.

In terms of climate change and its effect on human mobility in the region, the Africa Climate Mobility Report (2023) and the research conducted by Atapattu (2020) indicated that, it is anticipated that climate-induced migration would mostly take place in underdeveloped nations. According to a recent study, if no decisive action is taken to address climate change and development issues, it is projected that by 2050, nearly 32.0 million individuals in the West Africa sub-region may be forced to migrate within their own countries due to gradual climate-related problems such as water scarcity, reduced agricultural and ecological productivity, and the combination of rising sea levels and storm surges (Clement *et al*., 2021; Riguad *et al*., 2018). These geographical population movements have the potential to account for about 4.06 percent of the overall inhabitants of nations within this region by the year 2050.

However, people living in these nations or who already face hardship, poverty, social exclusion, inadequate medical care, and limited ability to adapt will experience worsened situations due to the effects of climate change. They will be compelled to leave their homes and relocate because of the loss of habitable land, declining livelihoods, scarcity of resources, and intensified health hazards. The convergence of these forces has created an ideal situation, compelling communities to grapple with a stark reality. Just like the like the inevitable impact of conflict in the Lake Chad region, the human impacts of climate-induced migration are particularly evident in situations of forced migration, as individuals who are displaced are obliged to migrate for reasons of shelter and sustenance (Ahsan, 2019). The affected population faces the risk of losing their means of making a living, their properties, their family connections, their cultural traditions, and the potential breakdown of community cohesiveness as individuals may scatter to various locations.

Overall, the ongoing conflict has worsened the impact of identity on displacements. Initially, the instability frequently disrupted the harmonious coexistence of different cultures and promoted the formation of segregated communities. Magrin and De Montclos (2018) rightly explained that in Nigeria, the rural communities of Borno are densely concentrated around Maiduguri (the capital) based on their indigenous ancestry. Their treatment is characterized by inequality, as demonstrated by the existence of Fertiliser Camp along the route to Dikwa and Gamburu. However, in 2016, the displaced individuals from a local village called Jere were provided with food assistance due to the continued functioning of their local authorities. This was not the situation for the residents of Konduga and Mafa neighbourhoods, as their civil servants had been dissipated and were consequently unable to send government aid (Magrin, 2016; Magrin & De Montclos, 2018).

Another instance pertains to the residents of Malkohi camp located in the outskirts of Yola, the capital of Adamawa. They were segregated based on their religious affiliation, with the Muslims accommodated in incomplete educational facilities and the Christians residing near a church in neighbouring villages. Magrin and De Montclos (2018) also highlighted that in Chad, there have been no observable conflicts in the Bol region amongst displaced individuals, refugees, and native residents, in spite of the increased competition for water resources. In contrast to Niger, there is a lack of documented confrontations involving the Buduma and Fulani communities. This may be attributed to the reduced pressure from the Fulani community and the fact that the Buduma Boko Haram fighters have stolen the cattle which were left in the lake's pool. In the face of these overwhelming challenges, the Lake Chad communities have demonstrated exceptional resilience and adaptability. Some individuals and groups have demonstrated remarkable ingenuity when confronted with challenges, actively pursuing fresh prospects, reorganizing their lives, and providing reciprocal assistance.

4.3. Humanitarian interventions and corruption among countries in lake chad

The Lake Chad region is beset with numerous challenges, rendering it a top priority for humanitarian intervention. The persistent Boko Haram activities in the region have caused substantial internal displacement, leaving millions of people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Simultaneously, the consequences of climate change, such as desertification, the reduction of water bodies, and unpredictable climate patterns, have forced people to leave their homes in order to find more suitable areas to live. Magrin and De Montclos (2018) explained that the approaches to the conflict in the region is in two phases, that is, military and humanitarian. With the exception of a few emergency organisations that joined when Nigeria proclaimed a state of emergency ten years ago, international humanitarian organizations started operating in the countries around the lake after an anti-terrorist alliance was formed in 2015. Olowoyeye and Kanwar (2023) contend that the infusion of financial resources and the arrival of humanitarian organizations may have effectively mitigated the looming food crisis in the region; however, they have also muddled intervention efforts and intensified corruption.

International assistance is commonly perceived as a substitute for oil earnings in regions that have limited or no production of commodities, especially in areas near lakes (Magrin & De Montclos, 2018). Undeniably, governments are not solely responsible for this matter. Displaced individuals affected by

the conflict have resorted to selling humanitarian assistance on the clandestine market when it fails to adequately serve their immediate necessities. Meanwhile, terrorists in the region do launched attacks on International Displaced People (IDP) camps immediately following the distribution of food. This was exemplified by the incident in Bosso, Niger.

In 2017, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo confirmed that half of the food assistance intended for victims in IDP centers did not reach them. Subsequently, the Senate chamber initiated an inquiry into corruption, specifically focusing on the absence of accountability and deceitful agreements regarding the misplacement of 2.5 billion naira within the committee overseeing the Presidential Initiative in the Northeast (PINE) (Adebayo, 2016). In a similar vein, the Borno State House of Assembly also initiated an inquiry into the misappropriation of funds allocated for the welfare of individuals residing in IDP camps.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to critically examine how conflict and climate change have encouraged climate-induced migration in the Lake Chad region. In the process, the researcher examined the ecological transformation and resource scarcity in the Lake and the debate on climate-induced migration vs conflict-driven displacement in Lake Chad. In the analytical approach, the researcher identified the drivers of conflict and climate change in the Lake Chad region and the impact of conflict, and climate-induced migration in the Lake Chad communities.

The ecological change and resource scarcity in Lake Chad are clear indications of the continuing struggle in the area. The once flourishing ecological hotspot has been negatively impacted by the continuous deterioration of Lake Chad, a situation exacerbated by drought, desertification, and erratic climatic patterns. Furthermore, the ongoing violence has further led to a rise in unemployment, hindered economic operations, and intensified tensions among various communities. The humanitarian response in the area encounters inherent obstacles such as corruption and a need for more accountability. The internal displacement camps in the area, which were set up to provide security, are sometimes subjected to assaults by extremist factions, therefore posing additional threats to the displaced communities. The paper concludes that the Lake Chad region embodies the intricate interplay of conflict, climate change, and their consequences. The article suggests that the way forward necessitates a multifaceted approach, addressing governance issues, building resilience, enhancing humanitarian responses, and finding sustainable solutions to both conflict and climate-induced displacement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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