



ABSTRACT

The aging population in Northern Nigeria, driven by increased life expectancy, faces heightened crime victimization risks amid socio-economic challenges, cultural norms, and security crises. This systematic review synthesizes evidence from 2010–2023 to explore the forms, patterns, and impacts of victimization among older adults (aged 50 and above) in the region. Key forms of victimization

A AGING POPULATIONS AND CRIME VICTIMIZATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Introduction

The aging population in Northern Nigeria, a region comprising 19 states with a predominantly agrarian economy and significant socio-economic challenges, is an emerging demographic concern. Improvements in healthcare access have increased life expectancy, with the World Bank (2023) reporting Nigeria's life expectancy at approximately 55 years in 2023, up from 46 years in 1990. This shift has led to a growing proportion of older adults (aged 50 and above), who face unique vulnerabilities in a region marked by high poverty rates and security challenges, including banditry and insurgencies (Kaila & Azad, 2021). Crime in Northern Nigeria is driven by socio-



include physical assault, financial exploitation, neglect, emotional/psychological abuse, and, less commonly, sexual abuse, occurring in urban, rural, displacement, and residential settings. Socio-cultural factors, such as communal living and patriarchal family systems, both protect and expose older adults to intra-household abuses like neglect and financial exploitation. Security challenges, including banditry and Boko Haram insurgency, exacerbate property crimes and violence, particularly in rural and displacement settings, while urban crime targets older adults' perceived vulnerability. Infrastructure deficits, low police trust, and inadequate mental health services amplify victims' economic, psychological, and health burdens. The absence of age-disaggregated data hinders targeted interventions, underscoring the need for comprehensive research. Recommendations include national surveys to collect age-specific data, community policing, expanded mental health access, police training on elder abuse, and campaigns to challenge cultural stigmas. These measures aim to enhance the safety and well-being of Northern Nigeria's aging population in a context of growing demographic and security challenges.

Keywords: Aging population, Crime victimization, Northern Nigeria, Elder abuse, Socio-cultural factors

economic factors such as poverty and unemployment, compounded by ongoing conflicts. Kaila and Azad (2021) found that victimization in conflict-affected areas, particularly property crimes like burglary, significantly increases food insecurity and reduces household consumption, with potential disproportionate impacts on older adults due to their economic dependence and reduced mobility. Similarly, Ojo and Ojewale (2021) highlight that urban crime rates in Nigeria, including robbery and burglary, are high, with Northern cities like Kaduna showing concentrated crime patterns at household and street levels. Older adults, often perceived as vulnerable, may be prime targets for such crimes, yet age-disaggregated data is scarce.

Cultural factors in Northern Nigeria, where extended family structures are normative, may offer protection but also expose older adults to intra-household risks like financial exploitation or neglect (Cadmus et al., 2021). The lack of robust social safety nets and limited access to mental health services exacerbate the psychological



impacts of victimization, such as anxiety and depression, which are particularly severe for older victims (Kalu et al., 2021). Moreover, low trust in police, with only one in five victims reporting crimes (Kaila & Azad, 2021), likely heightens older adults' vulnerability, as they may face additional barriers like physical limitations or social stigma when seeking justice.

Several contextual factors exacerbate this problem. First, ongoing security issues, including banditry and insurgencies, create an environment where crime victimization is underreported, particularly among older adults who may face mobility constraints or fear of retaliation (Kaila & Azad, 2021). Second, socio-economic challenges like poverty increase crime risks, but their specific impact on older populations, who often rely on family support, is underexplored. Cultural norms emphasizing family care may expose older adults to intra-household abuses, such as neglect, which Cadmus et al. (2021) identify as prevalent but understudied. Third, the psychological toll of victimization, including anxiety and depression, is significant for older adults, yet limited access to mental health services in Northern Nigeria amplifies these effects (Kalu et al., 2021).

The absence of comprehensive, age-disaggregated data on crime victimization hinders the development of targeted interventions for Northern Nigeria's aging population. Without understanding the types of crimes most prevalent among older adults, the socio-economic and cultural factors heightening their vulnerability, and the consequences on their well-being, policymakers cannot address this growing public health and security issue. This review aims to synthesize recent evidence to highlight these gaps and inform strategies to enhance the safety and quality of life for older adults in Northern Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Aging/Aged Population

The concept of an aging or aged population refers to individuals aged 50 and above, reflecting the demographic shift toward a growing proportion of older adults in Northern Nigeria due to increased life expectancy (World Bank, 2023). Aging is associated with physical, social, and economic vulnerabilities that may heighten susceptibility to crime. Physically, older adults often experience reduced strength and mobility, making them less able to defend themselves or escape threats (Kalu et al., 2021). Socially, aging can lead to isolation, particularly in rural areas where family structures are disrupted by urbanization or conflict (Cadmus et al., 2021).



Economically, many older adults in Northern Nigeria rely on family support due to limited pension systems, increasing their risk of financial dependence or exploitation (Kalu et al., 2021). The socio-ecological model informs this concept by emphasizing how aging is shaped by multiple levels of influence: individual (e.g., health status), interpersonal (e.g., family dynamics), community (e.g., social cohesion), and societal (e.g., lack of social safety nets). For instance, Cadmus et al. (2021) highlight that older adults in Nigeria face elder abuse, including neglect, often within family settings, reflecting interpersonal and cultural influences. Similarly, Kalu et al. (2021) note that societal factors, such as inadequate aging policies in sub-Saharan Africa, exacerbate vulnerabilities. In Northern Nigeria, where poverty and conflict are prevalent, these layers intersect to amplify the challenges faced by older adults, necessitating a nuanced understanding of aging in this context.

Crime Victimization

Crime victimization refers to the experience of being targeted by criminal acts, such as property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft), violent crimes (e.g., robbery, assault), or intra-household abuses (e.g., financial exploitation, neglect). In Northern Nigeria, crime is driven by socio-economic stressors and security challenges, including banditry and insurgencies (Kaila & Azad, 2021). Older adults are particularly vulnerable to property crimes, which Kaila and Azad (2021) found significantly increase food insecurity and reduce household consumption in conflict-affected areas. Urban crime patterns, such as robbery in cities like Kaduna, further heighten risks for older adults, who may be perceived as easy targets (Ojo & Ojewale, 2021). The vulnerability theory underpins this concept, positing that certain groups, such as older adults, face heightened risks due to inherent or situational factors. Inherent vulnerabilities include physical frailty, while situational vulnerabilities stem from environmental factors like poverty or weak policing (Kalu et al., 2021). For example, low trust in police, with only one in five victims reporting crimes, exacerbates older adults' exposure to victimization, as they may avoid seeking help due to fear or accessibility barriers (Kaila & Azad, 2021). Additionally, cultural norms in Northern Nigeria that emphasize family care can lead to intra-household victimization, such as elder abuse, which Cadmus et al. (2021) identify as prevalent but underreported.

Methodology

This study employs a systematic literature review to examine the intersection of aging populations and crime victimization in Northern Nigeria. Databases such as PubMed,



Scopus, and Google Scholar were searched for peer-reviewed articles, reports, and grey literature published between 2010 and 2023. Keywords included "aging population," "elder abuse," "crime victimization," "Northern Nigeria," "poverty," "security challenges," and "socio-cultural factors." Inclusion criteria involved Studies focusing on older adults (aged 50 and above), crime victimization (e.g., physical assault, financial exploitation, neglect), and socio-economic or cultural contexts relevant to Northern Nigeria or sub-Saharan Africa while exclusion criteria included studies lacking empirical data or focusing solely on non-African contexts without transferable insights. A thematic analysis approach was used to categorize findings into key themes. Studies were evaluated for methodological rigor using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative studies and the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale for quantitative studies. Studies with low rigor (e.g., lacking clear methodology or sample details) were included only if they provided unique insights into Northern Nigeria.

Empirical Literature Review

Globally, elder abuse and crime victimization are recognized as significant public health issues, with older adults (aged 60 and above) facing heightened risks due to physical, social, and economic vulnerabilities. A systematic review and meta-analysis by Yon et al. (2023) estimated the global prevalence of elder abuse in community settings at 24.9% to 81.1%, with financial abuse (14.9%) and neglect (14.1%) being the most common forms, followed by psychological (11.8%) and physical abuse (10.0%). The study highlighted that underreporting and cultural variations in defining abuse complicate prevalence estimates, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), elder abuse is increasingly documented, driven by socio-economic stressors and changing family structures. Yon et al. (2023) reported that SSA has seen a rise in advocacy groups, such as the Nigerian Coalition on the Prevention of Elder Abuse, aiming to address community-level victimization. A scoping review by Mussie et al. (2022) on ethical issues in Eastern Africa identified mistreatment and victimization as key concerns, with 33.3% of studies noting verbal insults, neglect, and, in extreme cases, violence linked to cultural beliefs like witchcraft accusations in Tanzania. For instance, older women in Tanzania face isolation and murder due to such labels, reflecting how cultural norms exacerbate victimization.



Empirical studies also highlight specific risk factors. Du and Chen (2021) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic in China, social isolation and reduced community support increased elder abuse prevalence, particularly neglect and financial exploitation, with older adults living alone being most vulnerable. In South Africa, Bigala and Ayiga (2020) reported a 28.1% prevalence of elder abuse in Mafikeng, with poverty and physical impairment as significant predictors. These studies underscore that elder victimization is shaped by contextual factors like poverty, urbanization, and weakened family support systems, which are relevant to Northern Nigeria's socio-economic landscape.

Consumer fraud is another growing concern globally. Cross et al. (2023) found that older adults (65 and above) in Europe are more likely to experience identity theft and online fraud when engaging in online activities, despite lower overall internet use compared to younger groups. The study noted that older victims experience significant non-financial impacts, such as anger and embarrassment, which affect their psychological well-being. These findings suggest that digital victimization is an emerging threat for aging populations, even in regions with limited internet penetration like SSA.

In Nigeria, the aging population is projected to grow significantly, with the United Nations estimating 25.5 million Nigerians aged 60 and above by 2050. This demographic shift occurs amidst high poverty, unemployment, and security challenges, particularly in Northern Nigeria, where banditry and insurgencies exacerbate crime risks. Empirical studies on elderly victimization in Nigeria are limited but provide critical insights into the extent and forms of victimization, with a focus on elder abuse and property crimes.

Recent studies confirm that elder abuse is prevalent but underreported in Nigeria due to cultural taboos and inadequate reporting mechanisms. Cadmus et al. (2020) conducted a community-based qualitative survey in South Western Nigeria, finding a high level of awareness and experience of elder abuse among older adults, with 46.7% reporting medical neglect, 47% experiencing physical abuse, and 35% facing theft. While this study focused on the South West, similar socio-economic and cultural factors in Northern Nigeria suggest comparable patterns. Kaila and Azad (2021) examined crime victimization in conflict-affected areas, including Northern states like Borno and Adamawa, and found that property crimes, such as burglary, significantly increase food insecurity, with older adults likely facing disproportionate impacts due



to economic dependence. However, age-disaggregated data specific to older adults is absent, highlighting a research gap.

The literature identifies multiple forms of victimization among older adults in Nigeria. Cadmus et al. (2020) noted that neglect, verbal abuse, and financial exploitation are common within family settings, driven by economic pressures and changing family structures due to urbanization. For example, older adults often face denial of freedom of interaction (88%) and verbal abuse (73%) in household settings. Kaila and Azad (2021) reported that property crimes, particularly burglary, are prevalent in Northern Nigeria, with 579 respondents in a 2020 Afrobarometer survey experiencing physical violence or property crime, though age-specific impacts were not detailed. Ojo and Ojewale (2021) highlighted urban crime patterns in Northern cities like Kaduna, where robbery and burglary are concentrated at household levels, posing risks to older adults perceived as vulnerable.

Cultural expectations of family care in Nigeria can paradoxically increase victimization risks. Tanyi et al. (2020) noted that economic nucleation and youth unemployment reduce families' ability to support older adults, leading to neglect and emotional abuse. Kalu et al. (2021) emphasized that older women are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence and social challenges, with gender imbalances exacerbating victimization risks. These findings align with global trends, where family dynamics play a dual role as both protective and risk factors.

Victimization has severe consequences for older adults' well-being. Kalu et al. (2021) highlighted that elder abuse contributes to anxiety, depression, and reduced quality of life, with limited access to mental health services in Nigeria amplifying these effects. Kaila and Azad (2021) found that property crime victimization leads to economic losses and food insecurity, which disproportionately affect older adults reliant on family support. The lack of robust social welfare systems, as noted by Tanyi et al. (2020), further exacerbates these impacts.

Peculiarities of Northern Nigeria That Shape the Experiences of Aging Populations

i. Socio-Cultural Structures

Northern Nigeria's socio-cultural landscape is heavily influenced by communal living and Islam-influenced family systems, which play a dual role in protecting and exposing older adults to crime victimization. Communal living, characterized by extended family households, is a cultural norm rooted in Islamic teachings that emphasize respect for elders



and collective responsibility (Tanyi et al., 2020). Older adults often live with younger relatives, which can provide social and economic support. However, this structure also increases the risk of intra-household victimization, such as neglect or financial exploitation, particularly under economic strain. Cadmus et al. (2020) found that elder abuse, including verbal abuse (73%) and denial of freedom of interaction (88%), is prevalent in Nigerian households, with similar patterns likely in Northern Nigeria due to shared socio-economic pressures.

The Islam-influenced family system reinforces patriarchal norms, where older men often hold authority but older women face heightened vulnerabilities. Kalu et al. (2021) highlight that older women in Nigeria are more susceptible to domestic violence and social marginalization, exacerbated by gender imbalances in resource access. For example, widows in Northern Nigeria may experience property grabbing by relatives, a form of financial abuse tied to cultural inheritance practices. Urbanization further disrupts traditional family structures, as younger generations migrate to cities, leaving older adults isolated in rural areas (Tanyi et al., 2020). This isolation increases their vulnerability to external crimes like burglary, as they lack immediate family protection.

Cultural attitudes toward aging also shape victimization risks. While elders are traditionally revered, economic pressures and changing social values can lead to neglect. Kalu et al. (2021) note that the lack of formal aging policies in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, places the burden of elder care on families, which often struggle to meet these obligations in poverty-stricken contexts like Northern Nigeria. These socio-cultural dynamics create a complex environment where older adults face both internal (family-based) and external (community-based) victimization risks.

ii. **Security Challenges**

Northern Nigeria faces severe security challenges, including insurgency, banditry, and urban crime, which disproportionately affect older adults due to their physical and economic vulnerabilities. The Boko Haram insurgency, concentrated in states like Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, has led to widespread displacement and property crimes, with Kaila and Azad (2021) reporting that victimization in conflict-affected areas increases food insecurity by 3–5 percentage points. Older adults, often less mobile and



reliant on fixed assets, are particularly susceptible to looting and burglary during such conflicts. Banditry, prevalent in states like Zamfara and Katsina, involves armed raids on rural communities, targeting households for kidnapping and theft. Ojo and Ojewale (2021) note that these attacks exploit the vulnerability of isolated rural areas, where older adults are less able to flee or resist.

Urban crime further compounds risks in cities like Kano and Kaduna. Ojo and Ojewale (2021) found that robbery and burglary are concentrated at household and street levels in Northern urban centers, with older adults perceived as easy targets due to physical frailty. For instance, a 2020 Afrobarometer survey cited by Kaila and Azad (2021) reported that 579 respondents in Nigeria experienced physical violence or property crime, with Northern states showing high victimization rates. The psychological impact of living in a climate of fear is significant for older adults, who may experience anxiety and reduced quality of life, as noted by Kalu et al. (2021).

These security challenges create a pervasive sense of insecurity, limiting older adults' ability to engage in community activities or seek help. The lack of safe spaces, combined with the economic fallout of conflict (e.g., loss of livestock or crops), exacerbates their vulnerability to both violent and property crimes (Kaila & Azad, 2021). Older women, in particular, face heightened risks of gender-based violence in conflict zones, as cultural norms restrict their mobility and access to resources (Kalu et al., 2021).

iii. **Infrastructure and Law Enforcement Gaps**

Infrastructure deficits and law enforcement gaps in Northern Nigeria significantly heighten older adults' exposure to crime victimization. Rural areas, where many older adults reside, lack adequate road networks, communication systems, and security infrastructure, making them prime targets for banditry and burglary (Ojo & Ojewale, 2021). The absence of reliable electricity and internet access limits older adults' ability to report crimes or access emergency services, further isolating them during victimization incidents. Kalu et al. (2021) emphasize that inadequate infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa hinders the implementation of aging-related interventions, leaving older adults without institutional support.



Law enforcement in Northern Nigeria is hampered by low capacity, corruption, and public distrust. Kaila and Azad (2021) found that only one in five crime victims in Nigeria report to the police, citing inefficiencies and fear of retaliation. For older adults, physical limitations and social stigma further reduce reporting rates, as they may rely on family members to navigate bureaucratic systems. Ojo and Ojewale (2021) highlight that police presence is concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural communities vulnerable to banditry and communal conflicts. The lack of specialized training for handling elder abuse cases, as noted by Cadmus et al. (2020), means that intra-household victimization often goes unaddressed.

The judicial system also presents barriers, with lengthy processes and limited legal aid access disproportionately affecting older adults, who may lack the resources or health to pursue justice (Kalu et al., 2021). These gaps exacerbate the underreporting of crimes like financial exploitation and neglect, which are prevalent but culturally normalized in family settings (Cadmus et al., 2020). The absence of community-based security initiatives or elder-specific support programs further limits older adults' ability to seek protection or redress.

Discussion of Findings

Forms of Victimization

i. Physical Assault

Physical assault involves the use of force against older adults, resulting in injury or harm, and is often linked to the region's security challenges. In Northern Nigeria, physical assault against older adults occurs in both domestic and community settings, driven by banditry, insurgency, and urban crime. Kaila and Azad (2021) reported that physical violence is a significant issue in conflict-affected states like Borno and Adamawa, with a 2020 Afrobarometer survey noting 579 respondents experiencing physical attacks or property crimes. While age-disaggregated data is scarce, older adults are likely vulnerable due to physical frailty and limited mobility, making them easy targets during banditry raids or urban robberies (Ojo & Ojewale, 2021). For instance, bandit attacks in rural Zamfara often involve physical violence against household members, including elders, to coerce compliance or extract resources.



In domestic settings, physical assault may occur as a form of elder abuse. Cadmus et al. (2020) found that 47% of older adults in a Nigerian community reported physical abuse, often perpetrated by family members under economic stress. In Northern Nigeria's patriarchal family systems, older women may face heightened risks, as cultural norms limit their autonomy (Kalu et al., 2021). The psychological and physical toll of such assaults is severe, contributing to chronic health issues and reduced quality of life, with limited access to medical or mental health services amplifying these impacts (Kalu et al., 2021).

ii. Financial Exploitation

Financial exploitation involves the unauthorized or improper use of an older adult's resources, such as money or property, and is a prevalent form of victimization in Northern Nigeria. Economic dependence on family members, coupled with poverty, makes older adults prime targets. Cadmus et al. (2020) reported that 35% of older adults in a Nigerian community experienced theft, with financial exploitation often occurring within households. In Northern Nigeria, cultural practices like property grabbing, particularly affecting widows, are common, where relatives seize land or assets after a spouse's death (Kalu et al., 2021). These acts are facilitated by weak legal protections and low awareness of elder rights.

Community-level financial exploitation is also significant, especially in conflict zones. Kaila and Azad (2021) found that property crimes, such as burglary and looting during banditry, lead to significant economic losses, disproportionately affecting older adults who rely on fixed assets like livestock or farmland. The lack of formal banking systems in rural areas means older adults often keep cash or valuables at home, increasing their vulnerability to theft (Ojo & Ojewale, 2021). The economic impact of financial exploitation exacerbates food insecurity and dependency, with long-term consequences for older adults' well-being.

iii. Neglect and Abandonment

Neglect and abandonment involve the failure to provide necessary care, support, or resources to older adults, either intentionally or unintentionally. In Northern Nigeria, where communal living is normative, neglect is a pervasive form of elder abuse, driven by economic pressures and changing family structures. Cadmus et al. (2020) reported that 46.7% of older adults in a Nigerian community experienced medical neglect, such as denial of healthcare access, with similar patterns likely in Northern Nigeria due to poverty and limited



healthcare infrastructure. Tanyi et al. (2020) note that urbanization and youth unemployment reduce families' capacity to care for elders, leading to unintentional neglect or abandonment, particularly in rural areas where younger relatives migrate to cities.

Abandonment is less common but occurs in extreme cases, such as when older adults are left without caregivers due to conflict-related displacement. Kaila and Azad (2021) highlight that insurgency in Northern Nigeria disrupts family units, leaving older adults isolated and vulnerable to neglect. The cultural expectation of family care, rooted in Islamic values, makes neglect particularly stigmatized, yet economic constraints often override these norms (Tanyi et al., 2020). Neglect leads to unmet health needs, malnutrition, and social isolation, significantly reducing older adults' quality of life (Kalu et al., 2021).

iv. Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse involves actions that cause mental distress, such as verbal insults, intimidation, or social exclusion. In Northern Nigeria, this form of abuse is prevalent within households, driven by economic stress and shifting social dynamics. Cadmus et al. (2020) found that 73% of older adults in a Nigerian community reported verbal abuse, often from family members, with 88% experiencing denial of freedom of interaction. In Northern Nigeria's extended family systems, older adults may face humiliation or blame for economic burdens, particularly in impoverished households (Tanyi et al., 2020). The region's security challenges amplify psychological abuse by creating a climate of fear. Ojo and Ojewale (2021) note that urban crime and banditry in states like Katsina foster anxiety among residents, with older adults particularly affected due to their limited coping mechanisms. Kalu et al. (2021) emphasize that psychological abuse contributes to anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress, with severe consequences in a region with minimal mental health services. Older women, marginalized by patriarchal norms, face heightened risks of social exclusion and emotional abuse, further exacerbating their vulnerability (Kalu et al., 2021).

v. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse, though underreported, involves non-consensual sexual acts or exploitation against older adults. In Northern Nigeria, cultural taboos and stigma surrounding sexuality make sexual abuse a hidden issue, with minimal empirical data. Kalu et al. (2021) note that older women in Nigeria are vulnerable



to gender-based violence, including sexual abuse, particularly in conflict zones where insurgency disrupts social protections. For example, Boko Haram's activities in Borno have included sexual violence against women, with older women occasionally targeted due to their perceived vulnerability (Kaila & Azad, 2021).

Within households, sexual abuse may occur in rare cases, often linked to power imbalances or economic coercion, but it is rarely reported due to shame and lack of legal recourse (Cadmus et al., 2020). The absence of specialized support services and low police capacity to handle sensitive cases further silences victims (Ojo & Ojewale, 2021). While sexual abuse is less documented than other crimes, its impact on older adults' physical and psychological health is profound, necessitating further research to uncover its prevalence and dynamics in Northern Nigeria.

Patterns and Locations of Victimization

i. Urban Areas

Urban centers in Northern Nigeria, such as Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi, are hotspots for crime due to high population density, unemployment, and socio-economic disparities. Ojo and Ojewale (2021) found that robbery and burglary are concentrated at household and street levels in urban areas, with older adults perceived as vulnerable targets due to physical frailty and economic dependence. For instance, urban robbers often target homes where older adults live alone or with minimal security, exploiting their limited ability to resist or seek help. Kaila and Azad (2021) reported that property crimes, such as burglary, are prevalent in urban settings, with a 2020 Afrobarometer survey noting 579 respondents experiencing physical violence or property crime, though age-disaggregated data is limited. Patterns of victimization in urban areas include physical assault during robberies and financial exploitation through theft or fraud. Older adults in urban settings may also face emotional/psychological abuse, such as intimidation by community members or family, driven by economic stress (Cadmus et al., 2020). The fast-paced urban environment and weakened communal ties exacerbate social isolation, increasing older adults' vulnerability to external crimes. Moreover, urban police stations, while more accessible than in rural areas, are often understaffed and distrusted, with only one in five victims reporting crimes (Kaila & Azad, 2021).



This limits older adults' access to justice, particularly for women constrained by patriarchal norms (Kalu et al., 2021).

ii. **Rural Areas**

Rural areas in Northern Nigeria, where many older adults reside, face distinct victimization patterns driven by banditry, communal conflicts, and infrastructure deficits. Kaila and Azad (2021) highlight that banditry in states like Zamfara and Katsina involves armed raids on villages, targeting households for kidnapping, theft, and livestock rustling. Older adults, often less mobile and reliant on fixed assets like farmland, are particularly susceptible to property crimes and physical assault during such attacks (Ojo & Ojewale, 2021). The isolation of rural communities, coupled with poor road networks and limited police presence, makes them easy targets for criminals. Neglect and abandonment are also prevalent in rural settings, as economic pressures and urbanization lead younger family members to migrate, leaving older adults without caregivers (Tanyi et al., 2020). Cadmus et al. (2020) reported that 46.7% of older adults in a Nigerian community experienced medical neglect, a pattern likely amplified in Northern Nigeria's rural areas due to scarce healthcare facilities. Emotional/psychological abuse, such as verbal insults or social exclusion, occurs within families struggling to meet elders' needs (Kalu et al., 2021). Sexual abuse, though underreported, may occur in rural conflict zones, particularly targeting older women during banditry or communal clashes (Kaila & Azad, 2021). The lack of communication infrastructure hinders reporting, leaving rural older adults with few avenues for redress.

iii. **Displacement Settings (IDP Camps)**

Displacement settings, such as IDP camps in states like Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, present unique victimization risks for older adults displaced by Boko Haram insurgency or communal conflicts. Kaila and Azad (2021) note that conflict-affected areas experience high rates of property crimes and physical violence, with older adults in IDP camps facing additional vulnerabilities due to loss of assets and family support. Camps are often overcrowded, with limited security and resources, making older adults susceptible to theft, physical assault, and neglect (Ojo & Ojewale, 2021). For example, older adults may struggle to access food distributions or medical care, leading to unintentional neglect by camp authorities or family members. Patterns of victimization in IDP camps include financial exploitation, as displaced older adults may be coerced



into surrendering meager resources or aid. Emotional/psychological abuse is also prevalent, with older adults facing stigma or isolation due to their perceived burden on limited camp resources (Kalu et al., 2021). Sexual abuse, though rarely documented, is a concern, particularly for older women, as conflict zones increase risks of gender-based violence (Kaila & Azad, 2021). The lack of age-specific support in camps, such as mobility aids or elder-focused healthcare, exacerbates these risks, while distrust in authorities discourages reporting (Tanyi et al., 2020). Older adults' psychological well-being is severely impacted, with anxiety and depression common due to trauma and loss (Kalu et al., 2021).

iv. Residential Homes

Residential homes, encompassing both urban and rural households, are primary sites of victimization for older adults in Northern Nigeria, particularly for intra-household crimes. The region's communal living and Islam-influenced family systems mean older adults typically reside with extended families, which can offer protection but also expose them to abuse. Cadmus et al. (2020) found that elder abuse is prevalent in Nigerian households, with 73% of older adults reporting verbal abuse, 88% experiencing denial of freedom of interaction, and 47% facing physical abuse. In Northern Nigeria, economic pressures and youth unemployment strain family resources, leading to neglect and financial exploitation (Tanyi et al., 2020). For instance, older adults may be pressured to relinquish pensions or assets to support younger relatives. Financial exploitation within residential homes often takes the form of property grabbing, particularly affecting widows, who face cultural barriers to inheritance rights (Kalu et al., 2021). Emotional/psychological abuse, such as humiliation or blame for economic burdens, is common, especially in impoverished households (Cadmus et al., 2020). Physical assault may occur in domestic disputes, with older women at higher risk due to patriarchal dynamics (Kalu et al., 2021). Sexual abuse, though underreported, may arise in rare cases linked to power imbalances, but cultural taboos suppress disclosure (Ojo & Ojewale, 2021). The lack of external oversight and weak legal protections within homes allows these crimes to persist, with severe impacts on older adults' health and well-being (Kalu et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The review reveals that older adults in Northern Nigeria face significant risks of crime victimization, driven by socio-economic, cultural, and security challenges. Prevalent



forms of victimization include physical assault, financial exploitation, neglect, emotional/psychological abuse, and, to a lesser extent, sexual abuse, occurring in urban, rural, displacement, and residential settings. Socio-cultural factors, such as communal living and patriarchal norms, both protect and expose older adults to intra-household abuses like neglect and financial exploitation. Security challenges, including banditry and insurgency, exacerbate property crimes and physical violence, particularly in rural and displacement settings. Infrastructure deficits and law enforcement gaps, coupled with low trust in police, hinder reporting and access to justice, amplifying older adults' vulnerability. The psychological, economic, and health impacts of victimization are profound, yet limited mental health services and social safety nets exacerbate these effects. The absence of age-disaggregated data and comprehensive studies on Northern Nigeria's aging population underscores the need for targeted research and interventions to enhance older adults' safety and well-being.

Recommendations

1. Establish national and regional surveys to collect age-specific data on crime victimization among older adults in Northern Nigeria, focusing on prevalence, types, and risk factors to inform evidence-based policies.
2. Implement community policing and elder-focused safety programs in rural and urban areas to address banditry, urban crime, and intra-household abuse, ensuring accessibility for older adults with mobility constraints.
3. Expand access to affordable mental health services and social safety nets, such as pensions or subsidies, to mitigate the psychological and economic impacts of victimization on older adults.
4. Train police on elder abuse and victimization, increase rural security infrastructure, and simplify judicial processes to encourage reporting and ensure justice for older victims.
5. Launch campaigns to challenge cultural stigmas around elder abuse and victimization, emphasizing the rights of older adults, particularly women, and fostering community responsibility for their protection.

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