ABSTRACT

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are some of the most neglected vulnerable populations in the world. They are often neglected due to lack of laws that protect them as the government will be the perpetrator of the displacement. This complicates the situation in that the government cannot be both the perpetrator and a protector. Food aid has become one of the major protection interventions provided to enhance stability in a displacement setting. However, one of the major challenges is how food aid affects IDPs. This study was therefore designed to investigate and evaluate how food aid affects the lives of displaced persons. The focus was to understand households' food security, migration trends and asset loss by displaced persons, and how food aid affects these aspects. The study used the sustainable livelihood framework in analyzing the role of food aid on IDPs. That means the relationship between food aid and the five livelihoods assets, and how the transforming structures could be linked to food aid interventions. The study results showed that food aid plays a significant role in cushioning the displaced households when it is integrated with other sustainable livelihood interventions, for example those that promote the value of household assets and land holding. It was noted that due to denied access to land, IDPs were dependent on food aid for their household food security. Social improvements in form of increased school attendance were noted because of food aid being provided to IDPs. Security of tenure is the most significant contributory factor hindering community driven effective alternatives to a food aid programme. If this is not addressed IDPs in Manicaland will have challenges in finding alternative ways to address their food insecurity.