

RESOURCE-BASED CONFLICT AND HUMAN SECURITY IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL OF COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES.

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Abstract

Resource-based conflicts constitute one of the most enduring threats to human security in Nigeria. Despite the country's vast natural resource endowment, competition over land, oil, water, and mineral resources has intensified violent conflict, environmental degradation, displacement, and socio-economic insecurity. This paper critically examines the relationship between resource-based conflict and human security in Nigeria, focusing on community experiences and institutional responses. Anchored in the human security framework, the study interrogates how structural inequalities, governance failures, and environmental mismanagement shape everyday insecurity for affected populations. Drawing on secondary qualitative data from academic literature, policy reports, and institutional documents, the paper reveals a persistent disconnect between state-led conflict responses and the lived realities of communities. Institutional interventions are often reactive, coercive, and insufficiently responsive to local needs. The study concludes that addressing resource-based conflict in Nigeria requires a shift towards people-centred security approaches, inclusive governance, and sustainable environmental management.

Keywords: Resource-based conflict, human security, community experience, institutional responses, environmental governance, Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria's natural resource wealth, rather than serving as a catalyst for development and stability, has increasingly become a major source of conflict and human insecurity across the country. In oil-producing regions, agrarian communities, mining areas, and water-stressed environments, disputes over access to and control of natural resources have escalated into violent confrontations that threaten livelihoods, social cohesion, and sustainable development. Although natural resources contribute significantly to national revenue and economic activity, the unequal distribution of benefits, environmental degradation, and weak governance structures surrounding resource management have intensified grievances among affected populations. Consequently, resource-based conflicts in Nigeria have evolved beyond isolated disputes into broader governance and security challenges with far-reaching implications for human wellbeing and national stability (UNDP, 2022).

Historically, many communities relied on customary institutions and informal mechanisms to regulate access to land, water, forests, and other shared resources.

Traditional rulers, community leaders, and local agreements often played critical roles in mediating disputes and maintaining coexistence among competing groups. However, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, climate-related pressures, urbanisation, and increasing commercial exploitation of natural resources have weakened these traditional systems. In many cases, the erosion of local conflict-resolution mechanisms, combined with poor regulatory oversight and political interference, has intensified competition over scarce resources and increased the likelihood of violent conflict. Across resource-rich regions of Nigeria, these tensions have manifested in the form of communal clashes, militancy, farmer–herder conflicts, illegal mining disputes, and violent resistance against extractive activities (Watts, 2021).

The consequences of these conflicts extend far beyond physical violence. Resource-based conflicts disrupt economic activities, destroy infrastructure, displace communities, and undermine trust in state institutions. In oil-producing areas, environmental pollution and livelihood losses have contributed to long-standing tensions between host communities, multinational corporations, and the government. Similarly, conflicts over land and grazing routes in agrarian regions have resulted in food insecurity, loss of income, and mass displacement. In mining communities, illegal extraction activities and contestation over resource ownership have generated insecurity and weakened local governance structures. These realities demonstrate that resource conflict in Nigeria is not merely a struggle over material assets, but also a reflection of deeper structural inequalities, environmental injustice, and institutional failures that threaten multiple dimensions of human security, including economic, environmental, food, health, and personal security (UNDP, 2022).

The persistence and intensification of resource-based conflicts suggest that existing institutional responses have not effectively addressed the root causes of insecurity. Despite numerous policy initiatives, development programmes, and security operations introduced to manage conflict and protect national economic interests, many affected communities continue to experience violence, marginalisation, and environmental degradation. Institutional responses are frequently criticised for weak enforcement mechanisms, fragmented implementation, delayed interventions, and excessive dependence on militarised approaches. In several instances, state actions have prioritised revenue protection and political stability while neglecting the socio-economic and environmental grievances of local populations. Such responses have often deepened perceptions of exclusion and injustice, thereby reinforcing cycles of resistance and violent contestation (Okoli & Nwankwo, 2023; International Crisis Group, 2023).

A critical concern underlying this situation is the persistent disconnect between institutional conflict-management strategies and the lived realities of affected communities. Communities hosting extractive and land-intensive activities frequently bear disproportionate environmental and livelihood costs while remaining excluded from meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to resource governance. This exclusion has weakened public trust in institutions and contributed to recurring tensions between communities, corporations, and the state. Furthermore, the failure to adequately address structural inequalities and environmental grievances has exposed the limitations of state-centric and coercive approaches to conflict management. Increasingly,

scholars and policy analysts argue that sustainable peace in resource-rich but conflict-prone areas requires governance frameworks that prioritise inclusion, accountability, environmental justice, and community participation (Watts, 2021; Acharya, 2021).

Against this backdrop, the continued escalation of resource-based conflict despite policy interventions reveals a significant problem: existing governance and security responses have not effectively addressed the structural, socio-economic, and environmental dynamics driving conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. Persistent violence, displacement, environmental degradation, and livelihood disruptions demonstrate a widening gap between policy intentions and the realities experienced by affected populations. This underscores the urgent need for empirically grounded studies capable of critically examining both the human consequences of resource conflict and the effectiveness of institutional responses. Situating resource-based conflict within broader debates on governance, environmental justice, and institutional accountability, the present study seeks to illuminate the complex relationship between resource competition and human security in Nigeria (Acharya, 2021).

In response to this problem, the present study aims to critically examine the impact of resource-based conflict on human security in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the human security implications of resource-based conflict, explore community experiences of insecurity and marginalisation, assess institutional responses to resource-based conflicts, and analyse the effectiveness of these responses in addressing human security challenges. Guided by these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions: How does resource-based conflict affect human security in Nigeria? What are the experiences of communities affected by resource-based conflict? How have institutions responded to resource-based conflicts in Nigeria? And to what extent do institutional responses address human security concerns?

By addressing these questions, the study makes important contributions at practical, policy, and theoretical levels. Practically, it provides valuable insights for peacebuilders, humanitarian organisations, and development practitioners seeking to design interventions that are more context-sensitive, participatory, and sustainable in conflict-affected communities. By foregrounding the lived experiences and vulnerabilities of local populations, the study highlights the importance of community-centred approaches to peacebuilding, resilience, and recovery. At the policy level, the study contributes to ongoing debates on natural resource governance and internal security in Nigeria by demonstrating the limitations of reactive and militarised policy responses that prioritise short-term stability over long-term human wellbeing. The findings underscore the need for preventive, inclusive, and human-centred policy frameworks capable of strengthening institutional legitimacy and improving conflict prevention mechanisms.

Theoretically, the study contributes to the application of the human security framework in analysing resource-based conflict in Nigeria. By moving beyond conventional state-centric understandings of security, the study foregrounds the everyday realities of individuals and communities affected by conflict. It further demonstrates that resource-based violence emerges not only from competition over material resources, but also

through the interaction of environmental pressures, governance failures, institutional fragility, and social exclusion. In doing so, the study reinforces the relevance of human security as a robust analytical framework for understanding conflict dynamics in resource-rich but institutionally fragile societies, while also bridging the gap between theory, policy, and practice.

Literature Review

Research on the Niger Delta consistently demonstrates that the interaction between environmental degradation and inequitable governance of oil resources has generated entrenched poverty, deep mistrust of the state, youth militancy, and long-term insecurity. The degradation caused by oil spills, gas flaring, and sustained pollution has undermined traditional farming and fishing livelihoods, intensifying socio-economic inequalities within host communities (Udoh, 2020; Bornu, 2025; Siloko, 2024). These conditions have created fertile ground for armed mobilisation, particularly among young people who perceive exclusion from the benefits of oil wealth. Although state responses such as the amnesty programme have temporarily reduced open violence, they have largely failed to address underlying grievances related to benefit-sharing, environmental justice, and community participation in resource governance (Larry & Torru, 2025; Osawe & Uwa, 2023).

Studies on farmer–herder conflicts reveal strikingly similar dynamics. While climate change–induced land and water scarcity, fodder degradation, and seasonal migration increase contact between farmers and pastoralists, the persistence and escalation of violence are primarily linked to weak land-use governance, exclusionary policies, and ineffective conflict-resolution mechanisms (Alkali, 2025; Duyile & Gowon-Adelabu, 2025; Tukur et al., 2024). In this context, climate change operates as a “threat multiplier”, intensifying competition over scarce resources where institutions already lack the capacity or legitimacy to manage disputes fairly (Paper et al., 2025). As with the Niger Delta, governance failures rather than environmental pressure alone explain why resource competition so often turns violent.

Across both cases, the literature converges on the conclusion that resource-based conflicts in Nigeria are rooted in poor governance, elite capture of resource benefits, and weak political leadership. These dynamics have implications that extend beyond local communities, negatively affecting national security, democratic accountability, and the protection of rights (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2019). The parallel trajectories of the Niger Delta and farmer–herder conflicts thus underscore the structural nature of Nigeria’s resource-conflict challenge.

From a human security perspective, resource-based conflicts generate multidimensional harms that go far beyond physical violence. Affected communities experience loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, health risks arising from environmental pollution, forced displacement, and the erosion of dignity and basic rights (Udoh, 2020; Bornu, 2025; Siloko, 2024). In the Niger Delta, environmental degradation associated with oil extraction directly undermines economic, health, environmental, and personal security.

Communities face livelihood collapse and environmental exposure alongside heavy security presence and repression, reinforcing perceptions of injustice in the context of continued oil wealth extraction (Osawe & Uwa, 2023; Bornu, 2025).

Similarly, farmer–herder violence in North Central Nigeria has had devastating consequences for rural development and social cohesion. Recurrent clashes have displaced populations, disrupted agricultural production, and deepened poverty and inequality, particularly among already vulnerable rural households (Duyile & Gowon-Adelabu, 2025; Paper et al., 2025). Climate-linked conflicts have also contributed to internal displacement and cross-border migration, extending human insecurity beyond Nigeria’s borders and placing additional strain on host communities and neighbouring states (Alkali, 2025).

While much of the existing literature focuses on structural drivers and macro-political dynamics, fewer studies systematically foreground community perceptions of injustice, institutional bias, and procedural unfairness. Where such perspectives are examined, they reveal deep-seated grievances related to land rights, compensation practices, environmental remediation, and the conduct of security forces (Nwankwo, 2025; Ohadiugha & Gado, 2025; Siloko, 2024). These perceptions play a critical role in shaping local responses to conflict and help explain why similar structural pressures can produce divergent outcomes across communities. Incorporating community voices therefore addresses a key analytical gap in understanding the persistence and variability of resource-based conflicts in Nigeria.

The literature supports the argument that governance failures, environmental harm, and socio-economic inequality jointly drive resource-based conflicts and multidimensional human insecurity in Nigeria. Evidence from both the Niger Delta and farmer–herder conflicts underscores the limitations of top-down and security-heavy responses, while highlighting the need for more grounded, community-centred analyses of institutional practices. Such an approach is essential for understanding conflict dynamics more fully and for developing responses that are both effective and socially legitimate.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Human Security Theory, a framework that reconceptualises security by shifting attention from the protection of the state to the protection of individuals and communities. Unlike traditional state-centric approaches that prioritise territorial integrity, military power, and national sovereignty, the human security perspective focuses on safeguarding people from both direct violence and chronic structural threats that undermine wellbeing and dignity. The framework emerged prominently through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report, which identified security as multidimensional and interconnected, extending beyond physical safety to include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security (UNDP, 2025).

A central strength of the human security framework lies in its recognition that insecurity is experienced in everyday life through poverty, environmental degradation, displacement, exclusion, violence, and weak institutional protection. Economic security refers to access

to sustainable livelihoods, income, and economic opportunities necessary for survival and wellbeing. Food security relates to reliable access to sufficient and nutritious food, while environmental security concerns protection from environmental degradation, pollution, and resource depletion that threaten human survival. Personal security focuses on protection from physical violence, conflict, crime, and abuse, whereas community security emphasises the preservation of social cohesion, cultural identity, and communal relationships. These dimensions are deeply interconnected, such that the erosion of one aspect of security often contributes to broader patterns of vulnerability and instability (UNDP, 2025).

In the Nigerian context, resource-based conflicts significantly undermine these interconnected dimensions of human security. Conflicts linked to oil extraction, mining, land use, and resource competition have contributed to environmental degradation, destruction of livelihoods, displacement, and recurring violence across several communities. Environmental pollution associated with oil exploration and illegal mining activities threatens environmental and health security by contaminating water sources, reducing agricultural productivity, and exposing communities to hazardous living conditions. Similarly, violent conflicts over land and natural resources disrupt farming and pastoral activities, thereby undermining food security and economic security through the loss of livelihoods, income, and productive assets (Okafor, 2025).

Beyond material deprivation, resource-based conflicts also threaten personal and community security in Nigeria. Violent confrontations frequently result in deaths, injuries, forced migration, and psychological trauma, exposing individuals and communities to persistent fear and insecurity. In many affected areas, repeated attacks and displacement have weakened social cohesion, eroded trust among groups, and disrupted traditional systems of coexistence and conflict resolution. These realities demonstrate that resource-based conflict affects not only physical survival, but also the broader social and psychological wellbeing of communities. The human security framework is therefore particularly relevant because it captures the multidimensional and interconnected harms experienced by affected populations, which are often overlooked within conventional state-centric interpretations of security (Siloko, 2024).

The theory is also useful for analysing institutional responses to resource-based conflicts in Nigeria. Human security emphasises that the wellbeing of individuals is closely tied to governance quality, institutional accountability, and equitable access to resources and protection. However, institutional responses in Nigeria have often prioritised militarised security operations, revenue protection, and macroeconomic interests over the everyday needs and vulnerabilities of affected communities. In many instances, weak regulatory enforcement, corruption, delayed interventions, and limited community participation have contributed to perceptions of exclusion, injustice, and marginalisation. By foregrounding the experiences and perceptions of local populations, the human security framework helps to explain how governance failures and institutional deficits contribute to recurring cycles of insecurity and violence (Siloko, 2024).

Furthermore, the framework provides an analytical basis for understanding the relationship between structural governance challenges and community experiences of insecurity. It demonstrates that resource-based conflict persists not merely because of

competition over natural resources, but because institutional systems often fail to equitably manage resource distribution, address environmental grievances, mediate disputes, and protect vulnerable populations. Consequently, insecurity becomes embedded within the everyday realities of affected communities. Through this lens, the study is able to critically examine both the lived experiences of communities affected by resource-based conflict and the effectiveness of institutional responses in addressing human security concerns in Nigeria.

Overall, the Human Security Theory provides a robust conceptual foundation for this study because it links resource-based conflict to broader issues of governance, environmental justice, institutional accountability, and human wellbeing. By integrating economic, food, environmental, personal, and community security into the analysis, the framework enables a comprehensive understanding of how resource conflicts affect individuals and communities while also offering a basis for evaluating whether institutional responses are capable of promoting sustainable peace and human security in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive exploratory research design to examine the complex relationship between resource-based conflict and human security in Nigeria. The choice of this design was informed by the nature of the subject matter, which involves interconnected political, environmental, socio-economic, and institutional dynamics that are difficult to isolate or investigate through experimental methods. Resource-based conflict in Nigeria is highly context-specific and shaped by varying local realities, governance structures, and community experiences. Consequently, a descriptive exploratory approach was considered appropriate because it allows for in-depth understanding and contextual interpretation of issues that are multidimensional, evolving, and insufficiently explored in existing scholarship (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The descriptive component of the design enabled the systematic examination and documentation of patterns of resource-based conflict, their human security implications, and the institutional responses developed to manage them. Through description, the study was able to identify recurring forms of insecurity, including displacement, livelihood disruption, environmental degradation, violence, and social exclusion affecting communities in conflict-prone areas. The exploratory component, on the other hand, provided the flexibility needed to critically investigate emerging governance concerns, institutional practices, and gaps in conflict-management approaches that remain underexplored within the Nigerian context. This approach was particularly useful because the study sought not merely to establish causal relationships, but to understand processes, lived experiences, institutional behaviour, and the broader implications of resource conflict for human security (Yin, 2024).

The suitability of the descriptive exploratory approach is further strengthened by its relevance in conflict, governance, and human security research, where emphasis is often placed on context, interpretation, and the interaction between structural conditions and

human experiences. Resource-based conflicts in Nigeria are influenced by multiple factors, including environmental pressures, governance failures, unequal resource distribution, weak institutional accountability, and socio-political exclusion. These realities require a methodological approach capable of capturing the complexity of conflict dynamics while allowing for critical engagement with both community-level experiences and institutional responses. The design therefore enabled the study to analyse how conflict is experienced by affected populations and how institutional interventions are perceived, implemented, and contested within different contexts (UNDP, 2022).

From a human security perspective, the descriptive exploratory design also supported a people-centred analysis by foregrounding everyday vulnerabilities and lived realities in conflict-affected communities. The approach made it possible to examine how resource-based conflicts affect economic, environmental, food, personal, and community security, while simultaneously assessing the extent to which institutional responses address or fail to address these insecurities. In this regard, the design provided an appropriate framework for analysing both the experiences of affected communities and the broader institutional dynamics shaping conflict management and governance in Nigeria.

Data Sources

The study relied exclusively on secondary sources of data, consistent with the descriptive exploratory nature of the research. Secondary data were considered appropriate because they provided extensive empirical and contextual information on resource-based conflict, governance practices, institutional responses, and human security conditions across different regions of Nigeria. The use of secondary materials also enabled the study to draw from diverse perspectives and documented experiences that would have been difficult to capture within the limitations of a single primary field investigation.

Data were obtained from a wide range of credible and authoritative sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic textbooks, policy documents, government publications, conference papers, and reports produced by reputable international organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, Amnesty International, and the International Crisis Group. These sources were purposively selected based on their relevance to the study objectives, their credibility, and their contribution to understanding the dynamics of resource conflict and human security in Nigeria.

The study adopted purposive selection of secondary materials, focusing specifically on literature and policy documents addressing resource-based conflicts, environmental governance, institutional responses, and human security concerns within the Nigerian context. Priority was given to recent and empirically grounded studies to ensure that the analysis reflected contemporary realities and policy debates. This purposive approach allowed the study to capture both community-level experiences of conflict and institutional perspectives regarding conflict management and security interventions.

Method of Data Analysis

The paper employed qualitative content analysis to systematically examine secondary data from academic literature, policy documents, and institutional reports. This method enabled the identification and categorisation of recurring patterns related to environmental degradation, livelihood insecurity, institutional failure, and community vulnerability (Krippendorff, 2019; Schreier, 2024).

Texts were coded and analysed to generate key themes, which were interpreted in relation to the research questions and the human security framework. By examining both explicit and underlying meanings within the data, content analysis supported a coherent and theory-informed understanding of how institutional responses shape community experiences of resource-based conflict in Nigeria (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The findings of this paper indicate that resource-based conflict has profound and multidimensional effects on human security in Nigeria, confirming that insecurity extends well beyond physical violence. Across oil-producing, agrarian, and mineral-rich communities, conflicts disrupt livelihoods, undermine food systems, degrade the environment, and expose populations to chronic vulnerability. Loss of access to land, water, fishing grounds, and grazing routes has weakened household economies and increased poverty, while environmental pollution from extractive activities has heightened health risks and reduced life chances. These outcomes demonstrate that resource-based conflict simultaneously threatens economic, environmental, food, health, and personal security, reinforcing the human security argument that insecurity is cumulative and structural rather than episodic (UNDP, 2022; Watts, 2021).

At the community level, the findings reveal deeply human experiences of exclusion, frustration, and erosion of dignity. Affected communities consistently report limited participation in decisions concerning resource management, compensation, and environmental remediation. In the Niger Delta, for example, oil-producing communities describe a sense of dispossession, where environmental harm and livelihood loss coexist with visible wealth extraction. Similarly, in farmer–herder conflict zones, rural populations recount recurring displacement, destruction of farms, and fear of renewed violence. These experiences have weakened social cohesion and traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms while also fuelling distrust toward state institutions and private actors perceived as complicit in injustice (Bornu, 2025; Siloko, 2024; Duyile & Gowon-Adelabu, 2025).

Institutional responses to resource-based conflicts have been found to be largely reactive, fragmented, and security-heavy. Government interventions frequently prioritise military deployment, emergency responses, or short-term stabilisation efforts over preventive governance reforms. While such measures may temporarily suppress violence, communities often perceive them as biased, delayed, or ineffective, particularly where security forces are accused of excessive force or selective protection of economic interests. Development initiatives and amnesty programmes have also been criticised for being top-down, elite-driven, and insufficiently responsive to local grievances around benefit-sharing, land rights, and environmental justice (Okoli & Nwankwo, 2023; International Crisis Group, 2023).

Crucially, the findings suggest that institutional responses only partially address human security concerns and, in some cases, exacerbate insecurity. By neglecting structural drivers such as inequitable resource governance, weak regulatory enforcement, and exclusionary decision-making, institutions fail to tackle the root causes of conflict. As a result, insecurity becomes normalised in everyday life, with communities adapting to chronic risk rather than experiencing meaningful protection. This disconnect between policy intent and lived reality highlights the limitations of state-centric and militarised approaches to conflict management and underscores the need for people-centred strategies that integrate environmental justice, inclusive governance, and community participation into security planning (Acharya, 2021; UNDP, 2022).

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that resource-based conflicts in Nigeria are best understood as governance and human security crises rather than isolated security threats. The persistence of violence and vulnerability reflects not only competition over resources but also institutional failure to protect rights, manage environmental risks, and build trust with affected populations. Addressing these challenges requires a fundamental shift from coercive control to inclusive, accountable, and preventive approaches to resource governance and human security.

Interpretation of Findings Through Theory

Interpreted through the human security framework, the findings reveal that resource-based conflicts in Nigeria simultaneously undermine multiple interconnected dimensions of security — economic, environmental, food, health, and personal security. Human security theory contends that threats to fundamental aspects of people's lives are relational and cumulative, meaning that insecurity in one domain (e.g., loss of livelihood) intensifies vulnerability in others (e.g., food insecurity, displacement). In the Nigerian context, environmental degradation from oil extraction, land dispossession, and recurrent violent confrontations have eroded traditional means of subsistence and community resilience, illustrating how resource-based conflict produces sustained and overlapping human insecurities (UNDP, 2025; Okafor, 2025).

The human security lens also highlights that institutional responses orientated primarily towards state stability often fail to address the root causes of insecurity experienced by individuals and communities. By privileging militarised and top-down interventions over inclusive governance and environmental justice, institutions have tended to minimise visible violence without alleviating the underlying structural grievances that drive insecurity. For example, policy responses in conflict-affected regions have frequently focused on short-term peace or economic stability while neglecting systemic issues such as lack of fair compensation, unequal benefit-sharing, and exclusion from decision-making processes. Such approaches reflect the limitations of state-centric security paradigms, which overlook the everyday risks and vulnerabilities that define human security (Siloko, 2024; Okafor, 2025).

Furthermore, the human security framework reveals how institutional neglect of socio-economic and ecological harms deepens mistrust and alienation among affected populations. Communities that experience environmental harm without meaningful redress or participation in governance perceive formal institutions as illegitimate or

biased, reinforcing cycles of resistance and conflict. This dynamic underscores that human security is not merely the absence of violence but also encompasses dignity, rights, and agency, which institutional responses have frequently undermined. Therefore, interpreting the findings through human security theory clarifies both the depth of threat that resource-based conflicts pose to everyday life and the inadequacy of conventional institutional approaches in addressing these threats (UNDP, 2025; Siloko, 2024; Okafor, 2025).

Limitations of the Study

The paper's reliance on secondary data constrained the depth of insight into location-specific and lived community experiences. In addition, the primary focus on structural and institutional factors may have underemphasised the role of cultural, identity-based, and interpersonal dynamics in shaping resource-based conflicts.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Resource-based conflict continues to pose a profound and persistent threat to human security in Nigeria, undermining livelihoods, social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and the wellbeing of affected communities. The analysis demonstrates that these conflicts cannot be explained solely through resource scarcity or competition. Rather, they are deeply rooted in structural inequalities, environmental degradation, governance failures, and weaknesses in institutional accountability. The findings further reveal that resource-based conflicts generate interconnected threats to economic, food, environmental, personal, and community security, thereby reinforcing the central proposition of the human security framework that insecurity is multidimensional and cumulative in nature (Acharya, 2021; UNDP, 2025).

The study also highlights the relevance of the human security framework as a useful analytical lens for understanding resource-based conflict in Nigeria. By foregrounding the lived experiences of affected populations, the framework demonstrates how environmental injustice, social exclusion, and institutional failures translate into everyday forms of vulnerability and insecurity. The findings therefore extend the applicability of human security theory within resource-rich but institutionally fragile contexts, showing that security must be understood not only in terms of territorial protection or state stability, but also in relation to the protection, dignity, and wellbeing of individuals and communities. In this regard, the study underscores the need for a broader conceptualisation of security that integrates governance quality, equitable resource distribution, environmental sustainability, and social justice into conflict analysis and policy formulation.

The analysis further reveals that institutional responses to resource-based conflict in Nigeria have largely fallen short of addressing the underlying structural drivers of insecurity. Existing interventions have often relied on reactive and militarised approaches that prioritise short-term stability, revenue protection, and coercive control while neglecting socio-economic grievances, environmental risks, and community participation.

Such responses have frequently failed to rebuild trust or resolve the root causes of conflict, thereby allowing insecurity to become embedded in the everyday realities of affected populations. The findings suggest that approaches informed by human security principles are better suited to addressing these challenges because they emphasise prevention, inclusion, environmental sustainability, and the protection of livelihoods alongside physical safety.

In light of these findings, the study recommends the strengthening of community participation in natural resource governance. Communities affected by resource extraction and resource-related conflicts should be meaningfully involved in decision-making processes concerning land use, environmental remediation, compensation, and conflict prevention. Inclusive governance structures can enhance transparency, reduce perceptions of marginalisation, and promote local ownership of peacebuilding initiatives.

The study also recommends the adoption of human security-oriented conflict prevention strategies that prioritise the protection of livelihoods, dignity, and wellbeing alongside territorial security. This requires a shift away from predominantly reactive and militarised responses toward preventive and people-centred approaches capable of addressing socio-economic grievances, environmental pressures, and early warning indicators of conflict at the community level. Such an approach would align security policy more closely with development and environmental governance objectives.

Furthermore, environmental regulation and enforcement mechanisms should be strengthened to address the ecological dimensions of resource-based conflict. Effective environmental monitoring, accountability for extractive activities, and timely remediation of environmental damage are essential for protecting environmental security, public health, and sustainable livelihoods in affected communities. Strengthening environmental governance can also reduce tensions arising from perceptions of exploitation and environmental injustice.

Finally, the study recommends improved coordination among security, environmental, humanitarian, and development institutions involved in conflict management and resource governance. Enhanced inter-agency collaboration can reduce policy fragmentation, improve institutional effectiveness, and ensure that responses to resource-based conflict are coherent, sustainable, and responsive to community realities. Integrating human security principles into national and sub-national governance frameworks would therefore contribute not only to conflict reduction, but also to the transformation of resource governance into a mechanism for peacebuilding, social inclusion, and human wellbeing rather than a source of persistent insecurity.

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