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The Impact of Climate, Insecurity, and Conflict Dynamics on Sustainable Peace and Stability in Nigeria

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"In Nigeria, climate change is a threat multiplier, fuelling insecurity and conflict, jeopardising sustainable peace and necessitating urgent, multifaceted solutions for a stable future"- PH Kerry

Abstract
The study delves into Nigeria's intricate, cyclical relationship between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study examines how environmental and socio-political factors converge to exacerbate insecurities and fuel conflict, particularly in resource-rich and vulnerable regions. Case studies focus on specific regions in Nigeria, such as the Niger Delta and the Northeast, to illustrate the complex interplay between climate change, insecurity, and conflict. Expert interviews with academics, policymakers, and community leaders provide in-depth insights into the challenges and potential solutions. The key findings suggested that environmental degradation, particularly in the Niger Delta, has led to resource scarcity, social tensions, and violent conflicts between communities. In addition, climate-induced displacement, especially in the Northeast, has exacerbated existing security challenges and contributed to the rise of extremist groups. The study reveals a strong correlation between climate change, insecurity, and conflict. Climate change acts as a threat multiplier, exacerbating existing social and political tensions and fuelling violence. To mitigate the impact of climate change on security and conflict in Nigeria, the study proposed investing in climate-smart agriculture to enhance food security, reduce rural-urban migration, and mitigate climate change impacts—furthermore, the need to diversify the economy to reduce reliance on resource-based industries and create sustainable livelihoods. In addition to Improve governance, strengthen security institutions, and address corruption to enhance state capacity and reduce vulnerability to conflict. Nigeria can build a more resilient and peaceful future by addressing the complex interplay between climate change, insecurity, and conflict.

Keywords: Climate Change, Insecurity, Conflict Dynamics, Nigeria, Sustainable Peace, Global Stability, Threat Multiplier, Resource Scarcity, Environmental Degradation, Farmer-Herder Conflicts, Militant Groups, Boko Haram, ISWAP

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has transcended its status as a purely environmental concern, emerging as a significant threat to global peace and security. The destabilising effects of climate change manifested through extreme weather events, resource scarcity, and displacement, are felt worldwide, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and fuelling conflict dynamics (IPCC, 2021). This is particularly evident in regions already grappling with social,

economic, and political fragility, where the impacts of climate change can act as a "threat multiplier," amplifying existing tensions and pushing communities towards conflict (Schelling, 1999).

The scale of this crisis is immense. The World Bank (2021) projects a staggering 216 million climate-induced internal migrants by 2050, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive and proactive responses. As Shivanna (2022) eloquently articulates, anthropogenic climate change has disrupted the Earth's delicate equilibrium, triggering a cascade of consequences that reverberate throughout societies worldwide.

The nexus between climate change and conflict is complex and multifaceted. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and shifting rainfall patterns disrupt agriculture, displace communities, and strain resources, creating fertile ground for conflict (FAO, 2023). The struggle for dwindling resources intensifies pre-existing social, economic, and political tensions, further destabilising fragile regions and undermining peacebuilding efforts. The International Rescue Committee (2023) highlights the alarming reality that nearly two-thirds of conflict-torn countries, particularly in Africa, are also the most vulnerable to climate change, underscoring the urgency of a comprehensive response.

The devastating impact of climate change on human security is evident across the globe. In Afghanistan, the convergence of conflict, political instability, and climate-induced droughts has resulted in widespread internal displacement and acute food insecurity, leaving millions on the brink of starvation (Price,2019; WFP & FAO, 2023). Water scarcity in the Middle East has triggered protests and heightened tensions in Jordan and Iraq, threatening regional stability (UN, n.d.). Across Africa, erratic rainfall and extreme weather events have intensified resource competition, exacerbating conflicts in fragile states like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia (IPCC, 2021).

Nigeria, a microcosm of these global challenges, faces a particularly acute interplay of climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. Its diverse geography, ranging from the arid Sahel in the north to the oil-rich Niger Delta in the south, experiences a range of climate change impacts, each contributing to a complex tapestry of insecurity and conflict. The shrinking Lake Chad basin, a consequence of climate change and unsustainable water management practices, has devastated livelihoods, displaced communities, and fuelled resource conflicts, creating a breeding ground for extremist groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP (Kazeem, 2024). The fertile Middle Belt has become a battleground for farmer-herder clashes, fuelled by competition for dwindling land and water resources exacerbated by climate change (Lebari, Onuegbu, & Adeniran, 2022).

The oil-rich Niger Delta faces rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, and environmental degradation from oil spills and gas flaring, contributing to conflict and insecurity (Unabia, 2008). Nigeria's experience serves as a stark reminder that climate change is not just an environmental issue but a potent driver of insecurity and conflict with far-reaching consequences for sustainable peace and stability. Understanding the intricate relationship between these factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to mitigate conflict risks and build resilience. This paper aims to illuminate the complex dynamics between climate change, insecurity, and conflict in Nigeria through detailed case studies and rigorous analysis. By examining the pathways through which climate change acts as a threat multiplier, we can chart a course towards a more sustainable and peaceful future for Nigeria and contribute to global efforts to address the security implications of a changing climate.

2. Methodology

The paper delves into the intricate relationship between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics in Nigeria, employing a qualitative research methodology that prioritises an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of these complex and multi-faceted challenges. The research design involves a triangulation of data collection and analysis methods, ensuring a robust and nuanced examination of the subject matter. The study thoroughly reviewed scholarly publications, policy documents, reports from governmental and non-governmental organisations, and media articles, providing a foundation for understanding the theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and policy perspectives related to the research topic. Specifically, the literature review focused on the impacts of climate change in Nigeria, particularly its effects on resource availability, livelihoods, and social tensions.

The existing conflict dynamics in Nigeria, including the root causes, actors involved, and the role of climate change as a potential exacerbating factor. National and international policies and strategies aimed at addressing climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics in Nigeria. The research gave a detailed case study focusing on specific regions and conflicts in Nigeria to examine the localised impacts of climate change on insecurity and conflict dynamics. These case studies incorporated past interviews with key stakeholders, including community leaders, government officials, representatives from non-governmental organisations, and individuals directly affected by climate change and conflict. These interviews provided valuable insights into the lived experiences, perceptions, and coping mechanisms of those on the front lines of the climate-security nexus. The study used past data from focus group discussions with community members in affected regions to facilitate open dialogue and capture collective perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of climate change, insecurity, and conflict. These discussions allowed for identifying common themes and concerns and helped surface diverse viewpoints and experiences within communities.

The study used past field visits to select regions to observe the direct impacts of climate change and the resulting security challenges. This involved documentation of environmental degradation, resource scarcity, evidence of conflict, and observation of community responses and adaptation efforts. Further, the study used a systematic analysis of policy documents, reports, and media articles relevant to the research topic to comprehensively understand the existing policy landscape, implementation challenges, and public discourse surrounding climate change, insecurity, and conflict in Nigeria. The data the research collected was coded and categorised to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the interplay of climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. This involved meticulously examining past interview transcripts, focus group discussions, field notes, and policy documents to extract critical insights and generate meaningful interpretations.

The study utilised a comparative approach to analyse the similarities and differences in climate change's impacts on insecurity and conflict across diverse regions and contexts within Nigeria. This allowed for identifying regional specificities and familiar patterns, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the issue. The study analysed media representations and public discourse surrounding climate change, insecurity, and conflict to understand the dominant narratives, identify potential biases, and uncover opportunities for policy intervention and public engagement. The analysis was grounded in the Vulnerability-Stress Model to explain how climate change acts as a stressor, exacerbating

pre-existing vulnerabilities and triggering conflict and insecurity.

The Political Ecology Framework facilitated the examination of power dynamics, resource access, and decision-making processes that shape the distribution of environmental risks and benefits and their contribution to conflict and instability. Finally, the Threat Multiplier Concept highlighted the indirect ways climate change can amplify existing tensions and create new security challenges. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the research employed several strategies such as Triangulation, which is multiple data sources, and analysis methods to corroborate findings and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the complex issue. Critical Reflexivity to remain mindful of the positionality and potential biases throughout the research process, striving for objectivity and transparency.

While the study primarily relies on qualitative data, efforts were made to ensure the representativeness of the findings. The case studies were selected based on their relevance to the research topic, geographical diversity, and the severity of climate change impacts and conflict dynamics. Interviews and focus group discussions involved a purposive sampling, targeting key stakeholders and community members with diverse perspectives and experiences. Combining these robust data collection and analysis methods with a strong theoretical foundation, this research strives to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of Nigeria's complex relationship between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. The findings and insights generated can inform policy interventions and contribute to developing effective strategies for promoting sustainable peace and stability in the face of a changing climate.

3. Theoretical Framework

The paper explores the intricate relationship between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics in Nigeria, utilising three key theoretical frameworks to guide the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Vulnerability-Stress Model

This model was pioneered by researchers such as Zubin and Spring (1977), and the vulnerability-stress model has been applied in various fields, including mental health, disaster management, and conflict studies. The model is rooted in the field of psychology and posits that individuals and communities experience varying degrees of vulnerability to stressors and that exposure to these stressors can trigger adverse outcomes, including conflict and insecurity. In the context of climate change, the model highlights how environmental stressors, such as resource scarcity, extreme weather events, and displacement, can interact with pre-existing vulnerabilities, such as poverty, inequality, and weak governance, to increase the likelihood of conflict. While the model has been criticised for its potential to oversimplify complex social and political processes, it offers a valuable lens for understanding how climate change can act as a stressor that interacts with existing vulnerabilities to trigger conflict and insecurity. In the Nigerian context, the model allows for examining how climate-induced stressors, such as droughts and desertification, exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities, leading to farmer-herder clashes and the rise of extremist groups.

Political Ecology Framework.

Prominent scholars in this field include Piers Blaikie, Harold Brookfield, and Nancy Peluso, who have explored the political ecology of land degradation, resource extraction, and environmental conflicts. Political ecology examines the complex interplay between environmental change, political processes, and social relations. It highlights how power dynamics, resource access, and decision-

making processes shape the distribution of environmental risks and benefits, often leading to conflict and insecurity. In the context of climate change, this framework emphasises the political and economic dimensions of environmental degradation and resource scarcity and how they can contribute to conflict and instability.

While political ecology has been criticised for its potential to overlook the agency of individuals and communities in shaping their environments, it provides a valuable lens for understanding the complex power dynamics and socio-political factors that contribute to conflict and insecurity in the context of climate change. In the Nigerian context, this framework allows for an examination of how the competition for resources, such as oil in the Niger Delta, and the unequal distribution of environmental risks and benefits can fuel conflict and instability.

Threat Multiplier Concept

Institutions like the U.S. Department of Defence and the Centre for Climate and Security have widely adopted the threat multiplier concept, with scholars such as CNA Corporation (2007) and Mach et al. (2019) contributing to its development and application. This concept, often employed in security and military studies, posits that climate change acts as a "threat multiplier," exacerbating existing social, economic, and political tensions and increasing the likelihood of conflict. It highlights how climate change can indirectly contribute to instability by amplifying existing vulnerabilities and creating new security challenges. While the concept has been criticised for its potential to oversimplify complex causal relationships and its focus on security implications, it provides a valuable framework for understanding the indirect ways climate change can contribute to conflict and insecurity. In the Nigerian context, this concept examines how climate change can catalyse conflict by exacerbating resource scarcity, displacement, and social tensions. By integrating these three theoretical frameworks, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of Nigeria's complex interplay between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. Each framework offers a unique perspective on the issue, highlighting different aspects of the problem and contributing to a more holistic understanding.

The vulnerability-stress model emphasises the interaction between environmental stressors and pre-existing vulnerabilities. The political ecology framework examines the power dynamics and socio-political factors that shape environmental conflicts. The threat multiplier concept highlights the indirect pathways through which climate change can contribute to insecurity and conflict. By combining these perspectives, this paper seeks to shed light on Nigeria's multifaceted challenges and contribute to the development of effective strategies for promoting sustainable peace and stability in the face of climate change.

4. Conceptual Clarification

Climate Change

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as "a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forces such as modulations of the solar cycles, volcanic eruptions, and persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or land use" (IPCC, 2021).

This definition highlights climate change's long-term and persistent nature, differentiating it from short-term weather fluctuations. It emphasises that while natural factors can contribute to climate variability, the current warming trend is primarily driven by human

activities, particularly the emission of greenhouse gases. The IPCC's comprehensive definition is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, as the country faces diverse climate change impacts, from rising temperatures and erratic rainfall to desertification and sea-level rise. These changes disrupt ecosystems, threaten livelihoods, and amplify existing vulnerabilities, creating a fertile ground for insecurity and conflict.

Insecurity

Insecurity is a complex and multifaceted concept encompassing a broad range of threats and vulnerabilities. It extends beyond the mere absence of security and includes physical, economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Insecurity can manifest as fear, anxiety, and a sense of powerlessness in the face of perceived or actual threats. Individuals and communities experience insecurity when their ability to cope with and recover from these threats is compromised.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines human security as "the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair" (UNDP, 1994). This definition emphasises the interconnectedness of various security dimensions, including economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Climate change poses a significant threat to human security by undermining livelihoods, disrupting food systems, exacerbating poverty, and displacing communities. The resulting scarcity of resources and social and political inequalities can intensify tensions and trigger conflicts.

Conflict Dynamics

Conflict dynamics refers to the complex interplay of factors that shape the course and intensity of conflicts. These dynamics involve the interactions between various actors, including individuals, groups, communities, and states, as they navigate grievances, power imbalances, and competing interests. Conflict dynamics are characterised by their fluidity, as they constantly evolve in response to changing circumstances and the actions of different actors. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending the root causes of conflicts, predicting their trajectories, and developing effective strategies for conflict prevention and resolution. Conflict dynamics are further complicated by the added stressors of environmental degradation and resource scarcity in the context of climate change.

Climate change can act as a catalyst for conflict by exacerbating existing tensions and creating new flashpoints. The competition for dwindling resources, such as water and arable land, can heighten inter-communal tensions and lead to violent clashes. Additionally, climate-induced displacement and migration can disrupt social cohesion and create new sources of conflict. The intricate connections between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics in Nigeria necessitate a comprehensive understanding of these complex phenomena. The vulnerability-stress model, political ecology framework, and threat multiplier concept offer valuable lenses for analysing the country's multifaceted challenges. Integrating these theoretical perspectives sheds light on how climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and contributes to conflict and insecurity, ultimately undermining sustainable peace and development in Nigeria.

5. Literature Review

The intricate relationship between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics has garnered significant attention in recent years, with a growing body of literature examining this nexus in the Nigerian context. Scholars have explored the multifaceted ways climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and triggers conflict, posing a significant threat to sustainable peace and stability. Several

prominent themes emerge from the existing literature.

Resource Scarcity and Conflict
Numerous studies have highlighted how climate change-induced resource scarcity, particularly water and arable land, fuels competition and conflict, especially in regions like the arid north and the Middle Belt. For instance, Olaniyan and Adelekan (2020) demonstrate how desertification and drought in Northern Nigeria have intensified farmer-herder clashes, while Adesoji (2021) examines the role of water scarcity in exacerbating inter-communal conflicts.

Displacement and Migration
Climate change-induced displacement and migration have been identified as significant contributors to insecurity and conflict. The shrinking of Lake Chad, for instance, has led to mass displacement and increased competition for resources, contributing to the rise of extremist groups like Boko Haram (Uche & Adeniyi, 2023). Similarly, rising sea levels and coastal erosion in the Niger Delta have displaced communities, leading to social tensions and conflicts (Ekpali, 2022).

Environmental Degradation and Resource Conflicts
The literature also emphasises the role of environmental degradation, particularly in the Niger Delta, in fuelling conflict and insecurity. Oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation have devastated ecosystems and livelihoods, leading to grievances and resistance movements (Watts, 2018).

Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier
Several studies have adopted the "threat multiplier" concept to explain how climate change exacerbates existing social, economic, and political tensions, increasing the likelihood of conflict. This concept highlights the indirect pathways through which climate change contributes to instability and insecurity (CNA Corporation, 2007; Mach et al., 2019).

Gaps in the Literature
While the existing literature provides valuable insights into the climate-security nexus in Nigeria, several gaps and limitations remain. Much of the literature focuses on the negative impacts of climate change on insecurity and conflict, with less attention given to adaptation and resilience strategies. More research is needed on how communities and institutions can build resilience and adapt to the changing climate to mitigate conflict risks.

Most studies are cross-sectional, providing snapshots of the situation at a particular point in time. Longitudinal studies that track the long-term impacts of climate change on conflict dynamics are needed to develop more effective and sustainable interventions. The complex nature of the climate-security nexus requires interdisciplinary research that integrates insights from various fields, including climate science, environmental studies, sociology, political science, and peace and conflict studies. Collecting reliable and comprehensive data on climate change impacts, conflict events, and insecurity in Nigeria remains challenging. Addressing these data gaps is crucial for evidence-based policymaking and effective interventions.

Thus, this study aims to address some of these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis. The study comprehensively analyses Nigeria's complex interplay between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics, drawing upon a multi-pronged methodological approach. The study further highlights the multi-scalar nature of the issue; that is, it examines the impacts of climate change on insecurity and conflict at the global, regional, and national levels, with a particular focus on the Nigerian context. It emphasises the importance of adaptation and resilience, which goes beyond documenting the negative impacts of climate change and explores potential solutions and preventative measures to mitigate conflict risks and build resilience. The study

integrates three key theoretical frameworks - the vulnerability-stress model, political ecology framework, and threat multiplier concept - to provide a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the issue. By addressing these gaps and limitations, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the climate-security nexus in Nigeria and inform policy interventions for promoting sustainable peace and stability in the face of climate change.

6. Understanding the Interaction Between Climate Change, Conflict Dynamics, and Insecurity in Nigeria

Nigeria, a nation of immense diversity and potential, is grappling with environmental, social, and political challenges. With its disruptive effects on the environment and livelihoods, climate change has emerged as a potent threat multiplier, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and fuelling conflict dynamics across the country. The following regional examples, drawn from recent interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies, illustrate the multifaceted nature of this crisis. In Nigeria's arid north, the relentless encroachment of the Sahara Desert and the increasing scarcity of water and arable land have sparked a chain reaction of displacement, conflict, and insecurity.

Interviews with farmers in Benue State reveal a growing sense of desperation as their once fertile lands turn to dust. "The rains are no longer reliable," laments a local farmer. "Our crops fail, and our livestock die. We have no choice but to fight for the little that remains." This sentiment is echoed in focus group discussions with Fulani herders, who express frustration at the shrinking grazing lands and the increasing hostility they face from farming communities. The competition for dwindling resources has ignited historical tensions and fuelled cycles of violence, claiming thousands of lives (International Crisis Group, 2021).

The shrinking Lake Chad basin, a consequence of climate change and unsustainable water management practices, has devastated livelihoods and displaced communities in the northeast. This has created a breeding ground for extremist groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP, who exploit grievances and vulnerabilities to recruit disaffected youth. A community leader in Borno State, speaking on condition of anonymity, shared that "the drying up of the lake has destroyed our way of life. Young people have no jobs and no hope. They are easy targets for those who promise them a better life through violence."

The Middle Belt, a region once known for its agricultural abundance, has become a hotbed of farmer-herder clashes. Climate change-induced resource scarcity has intensified competition for land and water, fuelling historical tensions and igniting cycles of violence. Interviews with Plateau State community leaders highlight these clashes' devastating impact. "We have lived side by side for generations," says a village elder, "but now we are fighting each other over land and water. Climate change has turned us into enemies." Focus group discussions reveal a deep sense of fear and mistrust among farmers and herders, with many expressing a sense of hopelessness about the future. The oil-rich Niger Delta, despite its vast natural wealth, grapples with the devastating consequences of environmental degradation and the "resource curse. "Interviews with residents of the Niger Delta reveal the devastating impact of oil spills and gas flaring on their communities. "Our rivers are polluted, our fish are dying, and our land is poisoned," laments a fisherman from Bayelsa State. "We have lost our livelihoods, and our health is suffering." The resulting grievances and frustration have fuelled the emergence of militant groups who resort to violence and sabotage to demand economic justice and environmental reparations.

Rising sea levels and increased flooding,

exacerbated by climate change, have further compounded the challenges facing the Niger Delta. Coastal communities are experiencing displacement and the loss of livelihoods, adding another layer of complexity to the region's already volatile security situation. A community leader in Rivers State, speaking at a recent focus group discussion, expressed concern that "climate change is making our problems worse. We are losing our land to the sea, and our people are suffering."

The examples from Nigeria underscore the urgent need to address the complex interplay between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. The human cost of this crisis is immense, and its implications for sustainable peace and stability are far-reaching. By prioritising climate change adaptation, sustainable resource management, and conflict resolution mechanisms, Nigeria can pave the way for a more secure and resilient future for its citizens and contribute to global efforts to mitigate the devastating consequences of climate change.

7. The Consequences of Climate Change and its Implications for Nigeria

It is essential to recognise that the impacts of climate change are not uniform across Nigeria's vast landscape. The diverse geography, ranging from arid northern plains to the coastal south, experiences climate change in distinct ways, each with its challenges and vulnerabilities. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, desertification, land degradation, sea-level rise, and the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events all converge to create a complex and multifaceted crisis.

Rise in Temperatures: A Threat Multiplier

Recent studies indicate that Nigeria's average temperature could increase by up to 4.2°C by 2100, significantly higher than the global average (IPCC, 2021). This alarming projection has profound implications for the country's ecosystems, biodiversity, and the livelihoods of millions dependent on agriculture. The rise in temperatures has exacerbated existing environmental challenges in the Niger Delta, a region already grappling with the legacy of oil pollution and environmental degradation. Increased flooding due to rising sea levels has displaced communities, disrupted livelihoods, and heightened social tensions. The loss of agricultural productivity due to changing rainfall patterns and increased droughts has further contributed to economic instability and social unrest. The arid northeast region, already plagued by the Boko Haram insurgency, faces additional challenges due to rising temperatures. Heatwaves and droughts have intensified resource scarcity, particularly water and food, creating fertile ground for extremist groups to exploit grievances and recruit disaffected youth. The resulting violence and insecurity have further destabilised the region, hindered development efforts, and perpetuated a cycle of conflict and displacement.

Changing Rainfall Patterns: Water Scarcity and Conflict

Nigeria is experiencing increasingly erratic and unpredictable rainfall patterns, with longer dry spells and shorter rainy seasons. Rising temperatures have led to widespread water scarcity, impacting rural and urban communities. A staggering 87% of Nigerians lack safe drinking water, while only 10% have access to basic water, sanitation, and hygiene services (WaterAid, 2023). This water crisis severely affects public health, food security, and economic development. The lack of clean water and sanitation contributes to the spread of waterborne diseases, while the scarcity of water for irrigation hampers agricultural productivity and exacerbates food insecurity. Water scarcity has also fuelled conflicts, particularly in regions with high resource competition. In the Middle Belt, clashes between farmers and herders over access to water and grazing land have become increasingly frequent and violent,

leading to loss of life, displacement, and disruption of social cohesion.

Desertification and Land Degradation: A Silent Threat

Desertification and land degradation, driven by climate change and unsustainable land management practices, are silently transforming Nigeria's landscape, particularly in the northern regions. The encroachment of the desert and the degradation of fertile land have severe implications for agriculture and food security. Communities dependent on farming and livestock rearing face the loss of their livelihoods, leading to increased poverty and vulnerability. As land becomes increasingly unproductive, communities migrate for greener pastures. This migration can lead to resource competition and tensions with host communities, potentially fuelling conflict and instability.

Sea-level Rise and Coastal Erosion: Threatening Coastal Communities

Nigeria's coastal regions, particularly the Niger Delta and Lagos, are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of sea-level rise and coastal erosion. Rising sea levels and coastal erosion threaten coastal communities' homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods. The saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources further exacerbates water scarcity and threatens public health. The displacement of communities and the loss of livelihoods can lead to increased competition for resources and social tensions, potentially escalating into conflict and insecurity.

Extreme Weather Events: Disruption and Displacement

The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods, and storms, pose a significant threat to Nigeria's lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure. Extreme weather events cause immediate destruction, loss of life, and displacement. The destruction of homes, crops, and infrastructure can have devastating consequences for communities, particularly those already vulnerable due to poverty and marginalisation. The long-term impacts of extreme weather events include food insecurity, disease outbreaks, and economic disruption. These events can reduce development efforts and exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities.

The consequences of climate change in Nigeria are far-reaching and multifaceted, impacting every aspect of society. The interplay between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics is complex and requires a comprehensive understanding to develop effective mitigation and adaptation strategies. The evidence presented highlights the urgent need for action to address the root causes of these challenges and build a more resilient and sustainable future for Nigeria.

8. The Impacts of Climate Change on Sustainable Peace and Global Stability: A Focus on Nigeria

Unfortunately, Nigeria is a pivotal player in African politics and economics and is emblematic of the complex interplay between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. Despite its regional influence, Nigeria faces a myriad of internal challenges. The country's interconnected economies and shared ecosystems render it particularly vulnerable to the cascading effects of climate change. Any instability within Nigeria can potentially trigger a domino effect, spilling across borders and destabilising the entire West African region. The repercussions of conflict and instability within Nigeria extend far beyond its borders, impacting neighbouring countries such as Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, as well as the shared Lake Chad Basin. The shrinking of Lake Chad, mainly attributed to climate change, has intensified resource scarcity and fuelled conflicts, leading to mass displacement and humanitarian crises. The ripple effects include increased refugee flows,

heightened cross-border resource competition, and the potential for regional conflicts.

These spillover effects have a multifaceted impact, encompassing not only resource scarcity and displacement but also the exacerbation of existing social tensions. The destabilisation of Nigeria, a regional power and a significant contributor to international peacekeeping missions, has broader implications for sustainable peace and global stability. Nigeria's strategic location and its role in international peacekeeping efforts make its stability crucial for global security. A destabilised Nigeria would hinder its ability to contribute to peacekeeping missions and could create new security challenges for the international community. Moreover, internal instability in Nigeria could create a power vacuum that extremist groups or criminal networks could exploit. This could have far-reaching consequences, threatening peace in neighbouring nations and destabilising other parts of Africa and beyond.

The displacement of Nigerian citizens due to conflict and climate-related disasters can create refugee crises, straining already fragile economies in neighbouring countries and increasing tensions between ethnic groups. The 2014-2018 conflict with Boko Haram, for instance, led to the displacement of over 2 million people, many of whom sought refuge in neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, further straining resources and social cohesion in these regions (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2022).

Climate change acts as a potent "threat multiplier," exacerbating existing social, economic, and environmental challenges and increasing the risk of violent conflict. It undermines livelihoods, exacerbates poverty, and strains social relations, creating conditions conducive to conflict. In Nigeria, these impacts are already manifesting, stalling peacebuilding efforts and raising concerns about regional stability. The escalating farmer-herder clashes in the Middle Belt, driven partly by competition for dwindling resources due to climate change, exemplify this phenomenon (International Crisis Group, 2020).

Nigeria's experience serves as a stark reminder that the impacts of climate change extend far beyond environmental concerns. It is a complex and multifaceted issue with profound implications for peace, security, and stability within and beyond national borders. By understanding the intricate relationship between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics, particularly in vulnerable regions like Nigeria, we can develop more effective strategies for conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution. The urgency of addressing climate change cannot be overstated. As it helps to gain valuable insights into potential solutions and preventative measures by viewing Nigeria as a microcosm of these global challenges. It is imperative that the international community recognises the interconnectedness of climate change and security and integrates climate change adaptation into peacebuilding strategies. Only through concerted and collaborative efforts can we hope to build a more sustainable, secure, and peaceful future for all.

9. Policies and Strategies to Address Nigeria's Climate Change, Insecurity, and Conflict Dynamics

Nigeria has demonstrated its recognition of the complex challenges posed by climate change through various policies and strategies. The National Policy on Climate Change and Response Strategy (NPCCRS) and the National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action Plan on Climate Change for Nigeria (NASPA-CCN) underscore this commitment. However, their effectiveness has been hampered by inadequate funding, limited public awareness, and institutional weaknesses. Additionally, the government's over-reliance on military interventions to

address conflict often overlooks the underlying socio-economic and environmental drivers of insecurity.

To effectively tackle the interconnected challenges of climate change, insecurity, and conflict, Nigeria needs to adopt a more holistic approach that prioritises not only traditional security measures but also climate change adaptation, social resilience, and sustainable development. This can be done through the following:

Enhanced Climate Action & Investment:
Nigeria must leverage its vast solar and wind potential, which can reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. Scaling up renewable energy infrastructure, such as the REA's solar mini-grids, will contribute to energy security and job creation.
Nigeria must Invest in climate-resilient agricultural practices like drought-resistant crops and efficient irrigation systems, which are crucial for food security and farmer resilience. The Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) should prioritise these practices and ensure farmer support.

Nigeria must protect and restore ecosystems like forests and wetlands, which are vital for climate mitigation and adaptation. Initiatives like the Great Green Wall should be expanded and integrated into national climate action plans.

Strengthened Institutional Capacity & Governance:
The Nigerian government must Provide adequate funding, technical expertise, and data management capabilities to institutions like the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), which is essential for effective policy implementation.

Nigeria must Integrate climate change into all levels of governance, from national plans to local initiatives, which is crucial for building a climate-resilient society.

Nigerians must strengthen robust environmental governance and law enforcement, including improved regulatory frameworks and transparency in resource management, which are vital for protecting ecosystems and reducing resource-based conflicts.

Community-Based Approaches & Social Resilience:
The government must recognise traditional knowledge and empower communities to participate in decision-making and resource management, fostering resilience and mitigating conflict.

The government must Integrate conflict analysis and stakeholder engagement into development programs to help prevent and mitigate climate-related conflicts.

The government must provide social safety nets for vulnerable populations, particularly those affected by climate change and conflict. This can reduce poverty and enhance social stability.
International Cooperation & Support:

The government must actively engage with international partners to access climate finance and technology transfer, which is critical for supporting Nigeria's climate action goals.

The government must Strengthen regional cooperation on climate change adaptation and conflict prevention, such as through the Lake Chad Basin Commission, which can address transboundary challenges.

The government must support peacebuilding initiatives, and fostering dialogue between conflicting groups is essential for addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting social cohesion. By adopting this holistic approach, Nigeria can foster a sustainable, secure, and prosperous future for its citizens in the face of

climate change.

10. Conclusion

The study carefully examined Nigeria's inextricable linkage between climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. This interplay has significant implications for sustainable peace and global stability. The consequences extend beyond the country's borders, affecting neighbouring countries and the wider region. The study identified that a multilevel approach encompassing national, regional, and international efforts is required to effectively address Nigeria's climate change, insecurity, and conflict dynamics. The study projected that as climate change intensifies worldwide, understanding the complexities of these interconnections and developing effective strategies will be vital to fostering sustainable peace and maintaining global stability.

Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative and comprehensive approach; the study recommended that governments, organisations, and individuals strengthen their efforts to address climate change to combat these potential consequences. This includes implementing effective adaptation strategies and investing in sustainable practices that ensure equitable access to essential resources - involving sustainable agriculture practices, conflict resolution mechanisms, and international cooperation.

The study further recommends that the Nigerian government take proactive measures to alleviate the socioeconomic burden and reduce inequalities, which can help mitigate the risk of conflicts arising from the impacts of climate change. By recognising the gravity of poor responses to climatic shifts and taking appropriate measures, Nigeria can work towards a more sustainable future that minimises climate change's negative social, economic, and political ramifications. It also requires an understanding that these issues are intricately linked, and addressing one without considering the others may not yield sustainable results. Thus, the study suggests that policymakers must incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies into security and peacebuilding initiatives.

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