

Human Security In 21st Century: Governance, Forced Migration and Environmental Threats

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Abstract- Human security has become a multidimensional concept in the 21st century and far exceeds the conventional concept of state security in that it seeks to protect individuals against a wide scope of dangers. Governance and policy frameworks are instrumental in mitigating the weaknesses that are posed by forced migration and environmental issues. The growing multidimensional relationship between political, social and ecological issues is demanding of strong mechanisms that can alleviate risks but ensure resilience in affected populations. The analysis of these mechanisms provides vital information regarding the way the governments, international organizations and civil society actors can ensure the protection of human security in the context of modern crises.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

The essence of governance in alleviating the human security risks is at the center of the wider ramifications of forced migration and environmental endangers. Effective governance implies the establishment and enforcement of policies that help to meet urgent humanitarian demands and at the same time provide stability in the long term. High rates of migration are usually accompanied with challenges of poor infrastructure, poor access to health and education and social conflicts between the displaced and the host society. Migration management policy frameworks that combine migration management with social protection initiatives have the ability to mitigate vulnerability, inclusion, and social cohesion. As an example, a robust legal framework that acknowledges the rights of refugees and internally displaced individuals is necessary in the process of ensuring that the displaced groups of people get access to the accessibility of basic services and access to sustainable livelihoods (UNHCR, 2024).

The risks facing vulnerable populations are further aggravated by environmental problems affecting vulnerable populations such as climate change, natural calamities, and scarcity of resources. Increasing sea levels, desertification and extreme weather patterns push people to move, and these people have to do it with little organization or help. It is thus important to have governance structures that integrate environmental planning and mitigation of risks into national and local policy. This involves investment in early warning systems, infrastructures that are resistant to climate changes and sound resource management practices. Proactive and not reactive policies can achieve a lot in decreasing human and economic losses due to environmental hazards as well as the resiliency of the community to imminent shocks. The considerations placed on the environment in governance procedures highlight the significance of the adaptive and anticipatory policymaking in the 21st century (UNHCR, 2024).

The effects of forced migration and environmental hazards on the vulnerable groups are so far reaching and intertwined. The displaced persons usually experience physical insecurity, loss of means of living and social networks. Women, children, and the elderly are inordinately impacted and they face increased vulnerability to exploitations, health dangers and trauma. The patterns of risk tend to be shaped by existent disparities such as poverty, gender differences, and access to education or medical services. The role of resilience can however be enhanced by community-based programs, social support networks, and capacity-building programs of which individuals should be empowered to adjust themselves to adverse events. The interplay between the environmental risks and forced migration, in turn, should be understood to find ways of promoting people to have the ability to survive, and overcome the challenges (UNHCR, 2024).

The global and local approaches to human security protection differ considerably yet have the same principles related to the protection, prevention and sustainable development. International organizations, like the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Sustainable Development Goals, offer a roadmap to autonomous effort and an emphasis on the duties of states and other international participants. Humanitarian assistance, such as emergency assistance and shelter assistance, and health care, deal with urgent requirements, whereas longer-term assistance alternatives reconnect livelihoods and enhance societal infrastructure. Local strategies are frequently applied by local communities and local governments and focus on culturally relevant solutions, involving decision-making, and using local knowledge systems to build resilience. The success of such strategies lies in the possibility to combine policy goals with practice and make sure that interventions are context-based, inclusive, and sustainable (UNHCR, 2024).

To measure how effective the governance and policy interventions are, it is necessary to focus both on outcomes and processes. Inclusive, transparent, and accountable policies are usually a hallmark of those policies that are successful in reducing vulnerability and promoting human security. Partnership with the communities that have been affected during the development and implementation of programs results in interventions that are sensitive to the real needs and priorities. The national, international, and non-governmental actors should coordinate their work so that they do not overlap in their activities and maximize the use of resources to achieve maximum output. The existence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms facilitates unceasing learning and adjustment so the policies are able to transform according to the threats that arise and to altering conditions (UNHCR, 2024).

The synergistic relationship between the governance, forced migration, and environmental issues gives a complicated collection of threats to human security. Policies that are effective in terms of curbing these risks, fostering resilience and ensuring that the populations at risk are cushioned are necessary. Knowledge of the effects of environmental threats and displacement underlines the need to develop

differentiated interventions that take into account short-term and long-term requirements. The critique of global and local strategies indicates the significance of integrative, participatory and sustainable human security strategies. Through enhancing the governance systems, integrating policy with the real actions, and developing the adaptive potentials of communities, societies would be more susceptible to the ambiguities of the 21 st century and protect the welfare of every person.

Statement of problem

Weak governance systems, forced migration, and environmental issues have been the main threats to human security in the 21st century. The issue is that the states and international systems are increasingly unlikely to provide sufficient protection of individuals against displacement, resource scarcity, and disasters caused by climate change. Every year, millions of individuals have to escape their homes because of conflicts, bad governance, and ecological disasters but many of them find themselves in unstable situations with no access to the most fundamental rights and guarantees. This scenario casts grave doubts on the value of human dignity, security and the role of states to protect the subjects. This is a problem in the sense that it compromises stability, development and social cohesion among countries. In situations where the governance structures are not responsive enough, displaced communities put a strain on already weak host communities leading to struggle and poverty. These problems are made even more difficult by environmental hazards like flooding, drought and rising sea levels which tend to affect the most needy and vulnerable sectors. The impact of the ripple effect is extensive- including food insecurity and health crisis as well as political instability and inter-border conflict. Unless the responses are undertaken with urgency and coordination, the increasing size of these threats can further undermine development and other global security gains.

The cause of the issue can be traced to a mixture of bad governance, weak policy frameworks, and increased influence of climate change. Corruption, lack of accountability and poor institutions make governments have no business in implementing effective strategies in protecting human beings. In the

meantime, population displacement is being caused by climate change at unprecedented rates and there is a tendency of migration governance to be behind the curve. The answer should be comprehensive and reinforce the governance, develop the resilience to environmental threats, and establish inclusion in the migration policies. Early warning, regional co-operation and sustainable development strategies are very essential steps to make human security not only a political dream but also a reality among the vulnerable population in the 21st century.

Aims and Objectives

1. To examine the role of governance and policy frameworks in mitigating human security risks arising from forced migration and environmental challenges.
2. To analyze the impact of environmental threats and displacement on vulnerable populations, identifying patterns of risk and resilience.
3. To evaluate global and local strategies for protecting human security, with a focus on policy effectiveness, humanitarian responses, and sustainable interventions.

Research Questions

1. How do governance structures and policy frameworks influence the mitigation of human security risks linked to forced migration and environmental challenges in the 21st century?
2. What are the major effects of environmental threats and displacement on vulnerable populations, and how do these groups develop patterns of risk and resilience?
3. How effective are global and local strategies in safeguarding human security through policy implementation, humanitarian interventions, and sustainable practices?

Significance of the study

The study *Human Security in the 21st Century: Governance, Forced Migration and Environmental Threats* is relevant to a number of stakeholders since it touches on problems that are intersectoral in governance, policy, humanitarian intervention and resilience of the community.

The research offers evidence-based information on how the governance structures and policy frameworks may reduce or intensify the risks to

human security. It can act as a blueprint on how governments should formulate more inclusive, accountable, and proactive policies by identifying areas of weakness in the existing policy and outlining how to address them. Enhanced governance has the potential to bring about the fact that the vulnerable population can be improved in terms of displacement and environment.

The study provides worthwhile information on how effective humanitarian intervention and cross-border systems are in dealing with forced migration and ecological disasters. The findings can help organizations like the United Nations, the International Organization of Migration (IOM), and NGOs to perfect their programs, enhance their coordination, and make the interventions sustainable and in accordance with the reality of displaced populations.

The work is a contribution to the expanding literature on human security, migration and environmental governance. It presents a basis to conduct additional academic research by determining the trends of risk, resilience, and policy outcomes. Based on such findings, researchers can contribute to the theoretical discussions and present novel models that can more effectively reflect the issues of the human security in the 21st century.

What is arguably most important, the study allows giving the voice to the people who are directly impacted by forced migration and environmental hazards. The research highlights the significance of community-based solutions by recording their experiences, risks, and coping mechanisms. The resulting insights have the potential to empower local communities to communicate with decision-makers, champion their rights, and come up with adaptive ways of surviving in the face of the current threats.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploring the Interplay of Policy, Displacement, and Ecological Challenges”

This intricate intersection of policy, dislocation and ecological predicament highlights one of the most serious of dilemmas of the present era and compels us to the consideration of the manner in which policy

choices either elicit or alleviate human distress in the face of ecological change. As the ecological systems come to pieces due to the growing magnitude of disasters and the violent fights in the name of conservation, the displacement is identified both as a refugee crisis, and as an outcome of the well-meaning yet erroneous interventions. Policy decisions deem who loses, who gains, and who is blamed regardless of whether it is based on development, climate adaptation, or conservation. The tension is depicted by climate adaptation policy. It is usually aimed at strengthening the society against escalating threats-floods, sea level rise and droughts. The promise of nature-based solutions like restored wetlands or engineered flood barriers will save numerous people, but often leave a few people displaced. Such infrastructures may involve shifting communities, sometimes against their will and with no proper compensation, as in the design of climate-buffer infrastructure, like embankments or mangrove restoration, which subjects the ethical dilemma of collective resilience at individual cost (Kumari et al., 2021). The asymmetry of the risks and burdens reflects more distant arguments around justice: is it okay that one group should lose its suitability to habitation so that other groups can then lead a safer life?

The other dimension is created by development projects. Dams, irrigation, mining and highways tend to dislodge whole communities. This is called development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR), which deprives the affected individuals of livelihood, heritage, and social cohesion. Although development is welcomed as modernization, to the displaced, in most cases, it means economic marginalization and identity loss (Terminski, 2013). It is these injustices that are compounded by the lack of strong legal protections against victims of DIDR; in the absence of international law, individuals are victims in silence unless governments take a responsible action on the domestic level.

Population displacement also comes as a result of conservation initiatives. The establishment of national parks and wildlife reserves has forced indigenous and rural people to make way to preserve the biodiversity. According to scholars, these groups can be referred to as conservation refugees who have

been displaced in the name of conserving ecosystems (Dowie, 2011). Millions of people have been dislocated in Africa alone with little to no compensation hence resulting in poverty, disconnection of tribes and social upheaval. Although biodiversity conservation helps in conserving the global ecology, the fact that people are displaced without any form of negotiation or benefits share exemplifies that ecological concerns take precedence over the human right..

Add to these dynamics is displacement due to climate. With increasingly frequent disasters, such as floods, hurricanes, droughts, and wildfires, millions of people have to move. The oppressed groups in the developing world are affected the most and do not usually have the means to migrate safely- hence they are effectively subjected to what the IPCC has described as forced displacement (IPCC, 2022). Climate shocks may displace hundreds of millions of people by the middle of the century, warns the UNHCR and World Bank, but legal protections do not exist to ensure such environmental migrants receive legal protection (World Bank, 2021). In contrast to refugees who leave to seek refugee, climate migrants rarely can receive asylum, and consequently, they are in the no man's land (McAdam, 2012).

The policymakers have a fundamental problem of coherence: they see displacement in migration, climate adaptation, development planning, humanitarian aid, conservation policy, and refugee law but these domains are isolated. Migration environment nexus needs to be integrated but there is poor institutional coordination. As an example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, climate-related displacement is managed through disjointed action by various agencies and NGOs, which, more often than not, creates gaps and inefficiencies (Zickgraf, 2019). In order to bridge this so-called coherence gap, national and regional consultations have to be linked to environmental, development, and migration strategies (IOM, 2021).

International instruments provide unwholesale answers. Green Climate Fund and other climate financing mechanisms have the purpose of facilitating adaptation but the bottleneck can be found

in the bureaucracy to direct the resources to vulnerable people who are at risk of being relocated (Scown et al., 2022). National plans of adaptation do not sufficiently deal with displacement in most countries, nevermind, entrenching it in a law or budget. This loophole continues the cycles of vulnerability with unprotected people being left vulnerable. The lived realities of displacement highlight institutional failures. The Tokwe-Mukosi dam-induced cataclysmic flood in Zimbabwe, the state rushed in on resettlement with unilateral control of livelihood and cultural continuity. Resettled communities lost land, social networks, and ties to ancestry, and received insufficient compensation, which is the addition of how authoritarian policy contributes to suffering (Hellum and Derman, 2021). Similar dynamics unfold in conservation-led resettlements. Displacement in Nepal was meant to conserve ecosystems, but it destabilized socio-ecological systems that the people had controlled over generations. The elimination of local guardians weakened the results of biodiversity, which proved that conservation without community involvement can be counterproductive (Dhakal et al., 2023).

These dynamics could be analyzed through the prism of political ecology, focusing on the way the unequal distribution of power is organized in environmental regulating. Community rights are the victims of elite conservation agendas, which are mostly approved by international NGOs and donors and yield ecological and social damage (Robbins, 2019). Displacement negatively impacts on ecological sustainability and trust when the decisions are not made using the local knowledge and in the event that benefits are not shared among the people. On the other hand, conservation without displacement is possible through inclusive governance, in which the local communities are given co-management of the parked places (Ostrom, 1990). Equity, participation, and ecological resilience should therefore be incorporated in a coherent policy response. Collaborative environmental governance, where policymakers, scientists, NGOs, and affected communities co-create solutions, avoids top-down displacement and enhances legitimacy. Decisions become effective and fair when various knowledge systems are incorporated such as the traditional ecological practices (Ansell and Gash, 2008). This, in climate

adaptation, has the meaning of designing protective infrastructure that reduces resettlement or in the event that relocation may be inevitable, incorporating negotiation and equity into the process.

The strategies of planned relocation should be based on justice. Governments must also seek to negotiate participatively, compensate fairly, and rebuild livelihoods, as opposed to arbitrarily resettling communities. Legal definitions and protection of environmental migrants, family reunification, and access to long-term residency should be a part of national adaptation and migration frameworks (UNHCR, 2020). There should be a focus on vulnerable groups that face displacement as a priority of climate finance, making funds easy to access and reaching grassroots level (Barnett and McMichael, 2018). Reform is also necessary in the international law. Existing conventions on refugees do not cover climate migrants. There is no international agreement on an international scale on defining environmental migrants and some nations such as Sweden have started to acknowledge environmental migrants in their asylum procedures (Betts, 2013). The gap can be addressed by creating a new group of so-called climate-displaced people who have rights and protections, providing justice to the ecological collapse refugees.

The situation of displacement will persist with increasing ecological shocks. The problem with policy-making that overlooks the interaction of displacement and environmental issues is that they are likely to perpetuate injustice in which the least guilty organized in losing their legitimacy. Adaptation not including is a displacing change; conservation not including is a destruction of trust. Governance should therefore shift to short-term solutions to justice-oriented resilience. The way ahead is anticipatory policy based on rights. Ecological transitions are supposed to be made with the community, not collateral damage of the community. Interventions should not be disruptive, and should be dignified, compensated and re-agency where not possible. Progress should not leave displacement as the byproduct but an indicator of a shift in the policy toward sustainability and justice.

Governance and Global Responses to Migration and Environmental Risks

Migration and environmental risks are now two interconnected phenomena in the modern world, which is, in large part, attributed to the rising rate of the disasters caused by climate changes, the erosion of land, and the lack of resources. Such problems are altering the demographic trends across the globe, compelling the vulnerable groups to migrate to find protection and security. Governance whether at the national or the international level is a critical response to these issues through the development of measures that safeguard displaced communities whilst still considering the wider interests of the state sovereignty, economic capacity and security. The overall performance of these governance frameworks, however, has been unequal in various regions with major gaps in the capacity of states and international organizations to alleviate human suffering and develop resilience. The frequency of displacement has increased around the world through environmental risks like floods, droughts, increase in sea levels, as well as extreme weather. The Internal Displacement monitoring Centre (IDMC) asserts that in 2022 alone about 32.6 million individuals were displaced internally due to disasters, more than were displaced due to armed conflicts (IDMC, 2023). A lot of these displacements are recurrent in the sense that they involve the uprooting of communities and the resultant vulnerabilities are cyclic. Indicatively, small island states like Tuvalu and Kiribati have to grapple with existential threats due to the increasing sea levels and, in the Sahel region of Africa, nations grapple with desertification and the shortage of resources both of which are known to fuel internal and cross-border migration. Such cases require coherent governance actions that go beyond the reactive humanitarian aid to long term adjustment and resilience-enhancement actions.

According to tradition, governance has reacted to the migration caused by environmental threats in two broad perspectives: humanitarian relief and security. Humanitarian governance involves the offering of emergency housing, food and healthcare services to displaced people, which is most frequently organized by agencies like the United Nations High Commissioner to Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization of Migration (IOM). The

governance that is security oriented on the other hand, lays stress on border control, surveillance, and migration control to cushion an apparently threatening impact on its national stability (Betts, 2010). Although the two strategies are both required, they usually conflict, where humanitarian needs demand compassion and help and the security needs demand state needs. The combination of the two strategies has resulted in split policies where the interests of displaced individuals are at times undermined to the anxieties of the host nations.

The international governance has gone a step forward to acknowledge the connections between environmental risks and migration, yet there are only few binding legal frameworks. An example is the 1951 Convention on refugees, which does not acknowledge climate displacement or environmental displacement as a basis to claim refugee status. Such a loophole in the laws implies the existence of millions of people who are forced out of their homes due to floods, storms, or desertification and are left in a gray zone of international protection (McAdam, 2012). Other such soft-law instruments in turn, including the Nansen Initiative (2012) and the Global Compact on Migration (2018) have aimed to fill this gap by encouraging cross-border displacement cooperation and the concept of shared responsibility (UN, 2018). Nonetheless, the initiatives are non-binding and thus the capture of these initiatives is subject to the political goodwill of individual states.

The modes of governance at the national level have varied widely, basing on the resources and political stability as well as priorities each country has. The climate-related migration has been gradually integrated into adaption policies in the developed countries, including the European Union, although it is usually linked to border control. As an example, the European Agenda on Migration acknowledges the climate change effects on migration patterns, yet the EU has also enhanced its external border security measures in the form of Frontex, which is paradoxical in its protection/restriction nuances (Collett & Ahad, 2017). On the contrary, the developing nations, especially in Africa and South Asia, are disproportionately impacted with having to host displaced population even without the required infrastructure or economic capacity. An example of

this is Nigeria, where massive internal displacement is caused by flooding, desertification, and the fight over dwindling resources, but the governance ability to handle the situation remains the weakest and reliant on international assistance (Abah and Nwosu, 2021).

There is also the importance of global climate governance in dealing with migration risks. Global treaties, including the Paris Agreement (2015), recognize the necessity to address the issue of migration in the framework of climate adaptation and resilience. The Agreement created the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage which incorporates a displacement task force to examine measures to resolve the issue of people displaced as a result of climate effects (UNFCCC, 2015). Although this is a very essential move towards the connection of climate policy to migration governance, this has been slow to be realized with minimal funding and poor enforcement systems being the limiting factors of policy implementation. The absence of binding commitments frequently puts vulnerable populations at risk, and this brings the necessity to have more solid global governance arrangements that emphasize on human security as well as environmental sustainability.

Local governance structures and civil societies have also become key players in the solutions to displacement and environmental risks. Community based organizations can be very important in immediate assistance of displaced populations, in defending their rights, and advancing locally-specific adaptation measures. In Bangladesh, as an example, local NGOs have also partnered with the government agencies to avail cyclone shelters, early warning programs and diversified livelihood programs to people affected by floods and cyclones (Islam & Shamsuddoha, 2017). Such local reactions evidenced the need to have a participatory and inclusive governance where the affected communities could influence the formulation of solutions to their problems.

In spite of these, there are still a lot of governance issues. The major concern is that various areas of policy are not coordinated, such as migration policy, environmental policy, and development policy tend

to work in siloes and, as a result, to deliver disjointed responses. As an example, environmental ministries can focus on climate change adaptation, whereas migration authorities can be preoccupied with deterrence, which results in contradictions, which hinder effective protection. The other obstacle is the inequality of resources where rich nations tend to have more resources to adjust and support the displacement migrants whereas poor nations where most of the environment induced migration takes place have few resources (Black et al., 2011). This asymmetry highlights the ethical necessity of international solidarity and the fact that the richer countries require making a bigger contribution to mitigating displacement caused by environmental threats.

In prospect, the governance and global responses would be effective only through a paradigm shift that would incorporate migration into wider climate adaptation and sustainable development strategies. The policymakers should stop perceiving the displaced populations as a burden and rather acknowledge that they are resilient agents who can make positive contributions to the host societies in case they are well assisted. It is essential to develop stronger legal protection systems of the people who are moved because of environmental hazards, possibly by widening the provisions of international laws on refugees, or developing new conventions on climate displacement. In addition, global governance should focus on funding mechanisms to facilitate adaptation of vulnerable areas so as to minimize forced migration in the first place. Migration and environmental risks Governance and international reactions to migration and environmental risks are still highly debated and have to be considered through the prism of humanitarian, security, and development priorities. Although the international frameworks and national policies have achieved certain progress in recognizing the interconnections between climate change and displacement, there are still certain gaps in the law and practice, offering millions of people insufficient protection. More effective international cooperation, increased funding, and an inclusive policy should be provided in order to develop a more efficient and fairer system of governance. Governance of different degrees can help make the world a more human and resilient

place by refraining to view migration as a threat at all, instead of an acceptable adaptation mechanism to environmental risks.

Addressing Vulnerabilities in an Era of Political and Environmental Uncertainty

The modern world is marked with the increasing cross-cutting of the crisis of political and environmental instability. These intersecting problems have further increased human vulnerabilities and this is particularly when the groups of people who are most vulnerable are the marginalized communities whose lives are already insecure. Political crises tend to have forced movement, instability of the political system, and a social fabric, and the environmental unpredictability of climate change, desertification, flooding, and shortage of resources only exacerbates the displacement and poverty. It is necessary to tackle the vulnerabilities in such an era in a combination approach that acknowledges the interaction between governance, human security, and ecological resilience.

One of the biggest contributors to vulnerability throughout the world has always been political uncertainty. The fragile states characterized by having weak institutions, corruption, and poor governance usually leave citizens ill-equipped to face possible risks. Examples include the wars in Syria, South Sudan, and Afghanistan have demonstrated how political collapses can drive the movement of millions of people and put host populations under strain and leading to transnational humanitarian crisis (Betts, 2019). On the same note, in Nigeria and the Sahel, insurgencies and political insecurity have displaced people in large numbers, thus exacerbating poverty and insecurity (Akinola, 2021). The displacement caused by political unrest destabilizes economies, destabilizes education, and places a strain on the healthcare systems, placing vulnerable populations such as women and children more at risk. These risks have also been increased by environmental uncertainties. More importantly, climate change, in its turn, has become a multiplier of threats, negatively affecting existing vulnerabilities and introducing new types of vulnerability. Rising sea levels endanger the existence of the coastal communities, as the desertification and droughts

destroy agriculture in Africa and the Middle East. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that by 2050, hundreds of millions of people around the world will have to be displaced due to climate, and Africa and Asia will suffer the most (IPCC, 2022). Examples include oil pollution and frequent flooding in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, which have destabilized the livelihoods of the people, causing them to live in poverty and migrate (Nwankwo & Akinyemi, 2020). These ecological destabilization erode resilience and undermine social safety nets, which frequently lead to a conflict over available resources.

Political instability coupled up with ecological risks, many a times tend to create a vicious circle of vulnerability. Where there is weak governance, the environmental crisis is not managed well, exposing people to more risks around the area. An example is the situation in the year 2011 which resulted in famine in Somalia due to the drought accompanied by the continuous strife that displaced more than one million people (UNHCR, 2012). This interaction draws us to the fact that the vulnerabilities increase manifold when the political institutions do not offer the sufficient response to environmental shocks. Furthermore, the forced migration process also creates additional vulnerabilities in camps and the host populations such as overcrowding, food insecurity, and health threats.

These vulnerabilities need a regime of governance that is capable of handling uncertainties. Good governance is one which policies are accommodative, institutions open and resources are evenly divided. The benefit of enhancing governance in political instability Cases of political instability Strengthening governance may offer political and environmental shock resistance. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2021) states that an inclusive governance is the key to resolving the vulnerabilities since it gives communities the power to engage in decision-making exercises and foster social trust. Such countries as Rwanda have demonstrated how governance reform investments can reduce vulnerabilities in the post-political conflict period, through institutional fortification and the incorporation of environmental policies into development planning.

In the international arena, there has been a tendency of having responses to political and environmental uncertainty being fragmented but international frameworks have helped in making some progress. The centrality of climate action in minimizing vulnerabilities are enshrined in such agreements as the Paris Climate Accord. On the same note, the Global Compact for Migration (2018) aims at fostering safe and orderly migration by recognizing that displacement is commonly associated with environmental and political instability. Nonetheless, there is a certain lack of consistency in their implementation across the regions, and the very existence of such frameworks in reality being reduced to the political will to implement it in reality depends on the political goodwill (Martin, 2020).

Community and local-based plans also play an important role in dealing with vulnerabilities. The concept of community resilience has been vital in situations that are characterized by a low capacity of states. As an example, flood-resistant housing and early warning systems are community-based adaptation programs in Bangladesh that lowered the risk of displacement in flood-prone countries (Shafiqul and Rahman, 2019). On the same note, the East Africa pastoralists have devised coping scales, such as seasonal migration and resource-sharing, in order to adjust to drought and political turmoil (Dejene, 2021). The localized approaches prove that the empowerment of the community through resource access and decision-making opportunities can increase resilience even during times of uncertainty.

However, there are still issues in integrating the responses of governance and the real lives of the vulnerable people. In many cases, displacement becomes criminal or political and the migrants are depicted as dangerous, not as people who should be treated with compassion. This has been evident in the European migration crisis as political discussions took precedence over humanitarianism (Guild et al., 2021). Similarly, under the international refugee law, environmental refugees are stateless, meaning that millions of people do not receive proper protection (McAdam, 2020). It is essential to close these policy and legal gaps in order to minimize the vulnerabilities in the era of increased uncertainty.

Besides, the solution to counter the vulnerabilities lies in acknowledging the intersectionality of the risks. The vulnerability is not equal; it depends on gender, age, class and disability. The female and child population is particularly vulnerable in the situation of displacement, where they are at risk of exploitation, gender-based violence, and poor access to education (Ferris, 2020). It is thus important to incorporate gender-sensitive responses in governance and humanitarian responses. Likewise, individuals living with disabilities are usually pushed out of relief planning, and this strengthens their vulnerabilities. The inclusion of policies, which can take into consideration these intersecting risks, is the only way to offer proper protection.

The role of the private sector in overcoming the vulnerabilities, especially during uncertain times is also influencing. Businesses and corporations especially in sectors which are directly related to environmental hazards like energy and agriculture have the obligation of being sustainable. Vulnerabilities can be minimized and long-term stability promoted through corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects that invest in the resilience of communities and their ecological sustainability. To mention a few, the renewable energy investments in Africa not only minimize the reliance on fossil fuels, but also generate employment and decrease ecological risks (World Bank, 2022). There is need to have some cooperation between states, civil society and businesses to develop holistic solutions.

Other instruments in dealing with the vulnerabilities are education and awareness. Public knowledge of environmental risks, rights of displaced persons, and the importance of governance fosters resilience. Awareness of disaster preparedness and adaptation to climate programs can enable individuals to take the initiative. A notable example is the current curricular inclusion of disaster risk mitigation in schools in the Philippines, which provides the younger generations with mechanisms to deal with the unpredictability of the environment (Gaillard and Gomez, 2015). Such programs emphasize the role of education in the long term to mitigate vulnerabilities. Political and environmental uncertainties of our time are deeply

challenging to human security; nevertheless, they provide a possibility of resilience-building and transformation in governance. To deal with the vulnerabilities a multi-scalar approach must incorporate good governance, global structures, community-based strategies, and inclusive policies. It, also, requires the acknowledgment of the intersectional aspects of vulnerability and the protection of displaced groups of people through legal means. It is not, after all, only a matter of responding to crises as they arise but of constructing systems that expect uncertainty and adjust to it. Resilience in both institutional and community settings will help societies offer better protection to vulnerable communities and provide human security in the unstable world.

Policy, Protection, and Human Resilience Amid 21st Century Crises

The 21st century has become a phase of deep uncertainty that has joined environmental degradation, forced migration, pandemics, and political instability. The world has transformed into a global arena due to globalization, change in technology and variation in climate which has brought opportunities and threats to human security. Governance and policy frameworks have become more prominent in this respect in terms of the influence on the responses to crises. The key to overcoming the problems of climate-based displacement, food insecurity and geopolitical unrest is based on the policies, which put protection and resilience at the center of the agenda. This essay explores the intersection between policies and protection systems and human resiliency during crisis using examples of the contemporary setting to identify weaknesses, opportunities, and the routes to increase adaptive capacity.

Growing ecological crises are one of the most pressing sources of human vulnerability. Climate change, loss of biodiversity, and environmental degradation endanger lives around the world, yet their effects are not evenly spread, so that the most vulnerable groups are the marginalized ones. An example is that increased sea levels and frequent flooding have already displaced millions of people in low-lying countries like Bangladesh and the Pacific Islands (IPCC, 2021). On the same note,

extended droughts and desertification in sub-Saharan Africa have compromised agricultural productivity, which drives food insecurity and migration (Moussa, 2020). The ecological crisis is also closely connected with the tendencies of displacement and social inability. Mitigation and adaptation policies should thus be formulated not only to curb the danger to the environment but also the sustainability of communities most vulnerable.

Ecological changes are accompanied by displacement which imposes complicated issues on national and international governing systems. Contrary to refugees who are escaping armed conflict or persecution, displaced populations in relation to climate change are not always recognized by the international law, and they are left in a protection gap (McAdam, 2015). The original document of the international law on refugees, the 1951 Convention on refugees, does not directly address refugees displaced by climate and environmental issues. Consequently, millions of displaced people caused by floods, storms, and rising waters have no legal provision or organized response. The recent policy discussions such as the Global Compact of Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration adopted in 2018 have tried to fill these gaps by advocating collaborative solutions to the migration caused by climate change (UN, 2019). The compact is however non-binding and this limits its enforcement capacity. Resilience in this regard then needs the political will, as well as legal innovation, to broaden protection structures.

The COVID-19 pandemic also explains the interaction of policy and vulnerability and resilience. When the virus became global, it exposed vulnerabilities within societies in terms of public health, supply chain and governance. The vulnerable were especially migrants, refugees, and displaced people, who were frequently shut up in camps and subject to poor sanitation and poor vaccine access (WHO, 2022). The nationalist actions, including border closures and vaccine hoarding by the richest states, further increased the disparities and kept millions of people unprotected. Nevertheless, the pandemic also revealed the value of collective resilience, whether in the form of mutual aid networks based on local communities or sharing of scientific knowledge on vaccine development at a

global level. Measures that were easy to mobilize resources, invest in health infrastructure and cross-border collaboration were most effective in softening the vulnerabilities. This points out the need to have versatile and accommodating governance structures that have the ability to foresee and react to cross-cutting crises.

There is also the problem of political instability which adds to the human protection landscape. The wars in other parts of the world like Syria, Yemen and the Sahel have been compounded with the environmental stressors to form what analysts call complex emergencies (Barnett and Adger, 2007). The situation led to rural displacement and social unrest in Syria in 2006-2010 that were caused by drought and mismanagement of the government and then resulted in civil war (Kelley et al., 2015). The crisis demonstrates how ineffective governance and inability to resolve environmental vulnerability can turn into violent conflict, and with disastrous human impacts. Equally, in the Sahel, a combination of climate stress, poverty and violent extremism has displaced millions, which weakens their governance frameworks in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso (International Crisis Group, 2021). Such multidimensional crises would have to be dealt with using integrated policies that would solve the gap between environmental governance, humanitarian protection and conflict prevention.

The ability of communities and individuals to adjust to the shock without losing dignity and agency is one of the vulnerable dimensions of resilience. Resilience does not just mean being able to survive but being capable of regaining, changing, and finding a way to prosper amidst difficulties (Folke, 2016). It is crucial to have policies that encourage social protection, inclusive governance, and economic opportunities to improve resilience. As an illustration, programs like cash transfer in Latin America and Africa have been found to decrease the vulnerability by ensuring that the households have funds that they can use to resist economic shocks (Gentilini et al., 2020). On a similar note, more localized adaptation efforts, including climate-sensitive agriculture in East Africa, have reinforced food security and eased pressure on displacement (Bryan et al., 2013). Protection-focused policies should therefore not focus on response to

emergencies alone but invest in long term resilience-building efforts.

Resilience has also been attempted to be incorporated into policy at the global level through disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation frameworks. The Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction (20152030) focuses on the need to decrease the vulnerable factors by taking proactive steps, including the early warning system, resilience in the infrastructure, and inclusive governance (UNDRR, 2015). In the same manner, the importance of adaptation and climate finance to assist vulnerable states is also highlighted through the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015). Nonetheless, the implementation process is still unequal, as the more developed nations tend to default on climate finance without providing the promised support, and developing countries have to bear inappropriate costs. It is also important to have a more robust global governance structure that will co-ordinate financial resources, political goodwill, and legal frameworks in a manner that will focus on human protection and resilience.

Civil society and the private sector are also important in the formulation of resilience in times of crisis. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) commonly step in where the state is weak and deliver the humanitarian aid, represent the displaced people, and carry out community-based adaptation efforts. As an example, institutions like the international rescue committee and the *Médecins Sans Frontières* have been playing a core role in providing services in war-torn countries where governments are nonexistent or covert. In the meantime, enterprises have started to understand the threats of climate change and migration to global supply chains, which led some to invest in sustainable operations and disaster preparedness. Government-civil society- and private-sector partnerships are thus instrumental in the development of comprehensive answers to current crises.

In spite of these attempts, there are still major difficulties. The responses of policy are usually reactive and preventive only when the crisis grows out of proportions. More so, asymmetry of power among states, and between the Global North and South, restrain the global governance in its

inclusiveness and effectiveness. The displaced populations are often marginalized in decision making processes that target their lives, which weaken the belief of human-centred resilience. In order to eliminate these challenges, the policies have to be re-aligned to equity, inclusion and justice. It includes: extending the law to safeguard displaced populations due to climate change, investing more in adaptation capacity, and making sure that communities at risk are represented in the governance systems. The crises of the 21st century underscore the interdependence between policy, protection, and resilience. Environmental degradation, forced migration, pandemics, and political instability are not separated aspects of human vulnerability but interrelated dimensions of human vulnerability. The adequate governing of the situation presupposes the combined policy that will help to face the ecological risks, legal gaps, and social inequalities. Protection has to be interpreted in a wide manner to include not only legal rights but access to resources, services and opportunities that allow individuals and communities to flourish. Resilience, in its turn, needs to shift to a stage of transformation, making people able to adjust and thrive regardless of uncertainty. Going forward, the ability of states, institutions and communities to adjust policy and protection to concur on how to build a just and strong future will require the ability to prioritize human dignity and sustainability.

Intersecting Threats to Human Security and the Role of Governance

The 21st century has made human security more complex due to the intersecting environmental, political, economic, and social dangers. Human security, in contrast to the traditional security, which talks of state sovereignty, puts emphasis on the security of individuals and communities against threats that impoverish dignity, survival, and well being. Forced migration, climate change, conflict, pandemics, and economic instability are interrelated and pose vulnerabilities that must be managed through governed coordination and adaptive actions (UNDP, 2022). At the heart of such a challenge lies the question as to how the global, regional and national governance can be with regard to improving protection and resilience. One of the distinguishing characteristics of human security threats of today is that they are transnational. The increase in sea levels,

desertification, and extreme weather events are environmental degradations that have led to massive displacement especially in places already facing poverty and poor governance. Food insecurity is made worse by droughts and flooding in Sub-Saharan Africa, which leads to migration (Muggah, 2020). According to the Intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC, 2022), migration caused by climate will increase posing a policy challenge to the unprepared states. In this situation, migration is both an environmental and political challenge because restrictive border policies tend to make migrants vulnerable. The issue of governance should then deal with ecological forces and political strains accompanied with displacement.

The other factor that has continued to fuel human insecurity is the violent conflict. Millions are displaced by civil wars, insurgencies and weak states, and several conflicts are made worse through ecological pressures. The case of the Sahel crisis presents the nexus of governance failures, climatic stress, and insecurity, as the violence increases, and resources decline in number, and people are displaced (United Nations, 2021). The governance is also a cause of instability and good governance is pivotal to the promotion of peace and resilience. Inclusive governance and social protection mitigate the vulnerabilities and enhance stability, but weak states tend to increase the insecurity by failing to deliver services.

The human security also proved to be weak due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to being a health crisis, it caused socio-economic insecurity, increased inequalities, and raised migration policies. This affected migrant workers, who in most cases, did not have access to healthcare and social protection (IOM, 2020). Governance reactions were mixed: other governments expressed inclusive policies to vulnerable groups, whereas other governments defended the exclusionary policies. The pandemic highlights the necessity of strong governance that can handle interrelated risks without violating human dignity.

These difficulties are aggravated by economic insecurity. Economic turbulence on the global scale, including the 2008 financial crisis and pandemic upheavals, as well as geopolitical conflict,

undermines livelihoods, overburdens the social services, and increases societal instability. There is a challenge to the employment, education and financial inclusion of displaced populations. These risks can be abated by governance via safety nets, inclusive growth policies, and inclusion of the displaced populations in the local economies. Displacement can be turned into an opportunity with strategies to implement economic resilience and human rights protection (Betts and Collier, 2017).

The need to collaborate multilaterally is paramount to solving human security threats that cross nations. The global problems of climate change, pandemics and migration are to be solved by means of burden-sharing, collective financing, and harmonization of policies. Some of the instruments (the Paris Agreement, the Global Compact for Migration, and Sustainable Development Goals) are used to handle the overlapping risks, but the implementation is problematic due to the difference in national interests, scarce funding, and poor accountability (Barnett, 2020). The global governance requires political will, inclusiveness, and appreciation of common vulnerabilities.

National and local governance remain indispensable. International agreements can be effective only when they are put in local terms. Frontline support, such as humanitarian responsiveness, adaptive measures to climate stress, and resilience-building is frequently delivered by community-based initiatives (Adger et al., 2018). To make vulnerable populations participate in the process of decision making that affects them, governments have to invest in responsive and participatory local institutions. Ethical governance should strike a balance between sovereignty and the need to comply with human rights without having to set up policies that focus on border security at the expense of displaced people (Betts, 2021). It is necessary to build resiliency. The policies should not be reactive as they should be long-term adaptation, such as climate risk early warning systems, social protection, and conflict prevention. The sustainable human security is increased through peacebuilding efforts involving inequality and competition on resources (Kaldor, 2018). The convergence of environmental, political and economical risks that has led to human insecurity

in the modern world makes it highly complex and necessitates a transition of the state-centred security to holistic management. The 21st century requires human-centered multilevel strategies that focus on inclusivity, resilience, and multilateral collaboration, as key elements in protecting human security.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Qualitative, exploratory–descriptive design using narrative and thematic analysis to capture how governance, forced migration, and environmental threats shape human security. This approach suits examining patterns of risk, resilience, and the effectiveness of multi-level strategies.

Population of Study

Three stakeholder groups:

1. Policymakers/government officials (migration, environment, disaster response).
2. NGO/international-agency representatives working on displacement and environmental risk.
3. Displaced or otherwise vulnerable community members with lived experience.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Total N = 30 using purposive sampling with maximum variation (sector, role, gender, location) to ensure information-rich cases and diverse perspectives.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions aligned to the three research questions:

- Governance/policy frameworks and mitigation of human-security risks.
- Effects of environmental threats and displacement on vulnerable groups.
- Effectiveness of global/local strategies. The format allows probing while preserving participants' narratives.

Validity and Reliability

- Content validity: expert review (two academics, one practitioner) and a two-case pilot.

- Reliability/trustworthiness: standardized protocol, cross-stakeholder triangulation, audit trail/reflexive memos, and anonymization. (Optional: brief member-check of theme summaries.)

Method of Data Collection

In-depth interviews (45–60 minutes), face-to-face or via secure video (e.g., Zoom/Teams). With consent, sessions are audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim; field notes capture context and non-verbal cues.

Method of Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke): familiarization → initial coding → theme generation → review → define/name → report. Coding will be conducted manually with a structured codebook (e.g., Excel); if available, NVivo can be used to support organization and auditing. Analysis is organized explicitly around the three research questions.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Thematic analysis of the 30 semi-structured interviews revealed six recurring themes. These themes reflect how governance structures, environmental threats, and displacement shape human security. Figure 1 presents the frequency of participant references across the identified themes.

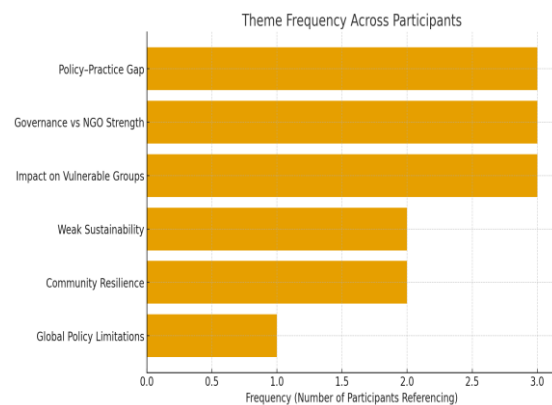
Governance and Policy Frameworks: Participants highlighted a persistent *policy–practice gap*, noting that although policies addressing migration and environmental risks exist, weak enforcement and corruption undermine effectiveness. Respondents also emphasized the competing influence of governance institutions and NGOs, with some describing NGOs as more responsive to community needs.

Environmental Threats and Displacement: The *impact on vulnerable groups* emerged as a dominant theme, with women, children, and low-income households disproportionately affected by floods, erosion, and pollution. Respondents noted that environmental risks exacerbate inequalities by limiting access to healthcare, education, and sustainable livelihoods. Yet, *community resilience* strategies such as mutual aid networks and informal

housing arrangements demonstrated adaptive capacity.

Global and Local Strategies: While international organizations provided short-term relief, participants described *weak sustainability* of interventions, with many projects failing after funding ended. Additionally, several noted *global policy limitations*, as top-down international frameworks often neglected local realities.

The distribution of these themes is presented in Figure 1, where the most frequent references were made to the *policy–practice gap*, *governance vs NGO strength*, and *impact on vulnerable groups*. Less frequent, but still important, were themes related to sustainability, resilience, and the limitations of global frameworks.



The findings reveal that weak governance and poorly aligned global interventions exacerbate vulnerabilities, while local actors remain central to building resilience. Strengthening governance accountability, aligning international support with local needs, and empowering vulnerable groups are key to advancing human security amid 21st-century crises.

Findings and Discussion

The study examined governance and policy frameworks, environmental threats and displacement, and the effectiveness of global and local strategies in safeguarding human security.

Governance and Policy Frameworks
Results show that there is always a gap between policy design and implementation. Nigeria has

ratified the policies on migration and disaster, but due to poor institutional capacity, corruption and low political goodwill, implementation impedes. According to one of the policymakers, some of the migration policies are on paper. This is indicative of wider African patterns in which policies are symbolic with no enforcement mechanisms (Adeola & Evans, 2021; Akinola, 2022). Transparency and community governance is therefore relevant.

Environmental Threats and Vulnerable Populations
Flooding, desertification and coastal erosion became widely used agents of displacement. The vulnerable groups are losing their shelter, livelihoods and health services due to the challenges, particularly women, children and the elderly. According to one displaced respondent: Women and children are the worst hit; they do not always have access to safe shelter. But societies fought back through means such as raising living quarters and community groups. Such reactions correspond to the principles of human security as resilience and adaptive capacity (Idemudia, 2020; UNDP, 2022; Okpara and Adeleke, 2023).

Global and Local Strategies

NGOs and community-based programs are donor-funded and short-term. Systems of the world like the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Sendai Framework are useful principles, but they are generally not applicable to local needs (Ferris and Koser, 2020; Oladipo, 2021). A good collaboration between governments and non-governmental organizations will help to increase preparedness and resilience.

RECOMMENDATION

- Strengthening government institutions to promote transparency, accountability, and good service delivery to reduce human insecurity due to weak institutions, corruption, and policy gaps.
- International organizations must assist in safe, orderly and humane migration pathways and in assisting countries to address forced migration crises in order to safeguard the rights and well-being of displaced people.
- Civil society organizations must take action to implement community-based programs that both offer direct assistance to vulnerable groups facing environmental hazards and forced migration and promote human security policies at local and national scales.

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