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Poverty among women in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Benue State (2020–2025): Determinants and implications for Sustainable Development Goal 1

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Abstract

Women in internal displacement camps in Nigeria are plagued with protracted and acute multidimensional poverty, which poses a structural impediment to the accomplishment of Sustainable Development Goal 1. Despite formal governmental and international commitments to poverty eradication, women in IDP camps remain disproportionately exposed to intersectional deprivations spanning health, education, livelihood, shelter, and personal security. This paper examines the nature and socioeconomic determinants of multidimensional poverty among women in IDP camps in Benue State, Nigeria, between 2020 and 2025, and analyses the implications of these conditions for Nigeria's progress toward SDG 1 anchored on Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Alkire-Foster's Multidimensional Poverty Index methodology, this paper adopts a qualitative research methodology which draws on systematic investigation of secondary sources from academic institutions, humanitarian agencies and journals. The findings demonstrate that poverty among displaced women in Benue is severe, deep-rooted, and structurally constructed, extending beyond mere income metrics to encompass deprivations across several dimensions, including education, health, nutrition, housing, economic activities, and security. Four primary structural drivers were found: the intractable farmer-herder conflict, institutional governance failure, structural gender inequality, and the epistemic exclusion of IDP women from national poverty measurement systems. The paper concludes

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that existing efforts at poverty reduction and humanitarian assistance have been insufficiently holistic and inadequate to address the multifaceted nature of IDP women's vulnerabilities; thus, achieving SDG 1 within conflict-affected Nigeria requires a transformative integration of peace, gender-responsive development, and enforceable measurement and accountability systems.

Keywords: Multidimensional poverty, women; IDP camps, Benue State, capability approach; conflict-induced displacement, SDG 1, gender inequality, Nigeria.

Introduction

Despite decades of international efforts to reduce poverty, it remains one of the most persistent challenges to sustainable development. Increasingly, poverty is understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond inadequate income to include deprivations in health, education, living standards, social inclusion, and the capabilities required to lead a dignified life. These deprivations are also gendered, as women continue to face disproportionate disadvantages arising from unequal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making.[1]

This understanding reinforces the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**,** particularly Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1)**,** which calls for ending poverty in all its forms. However, progress towards this goal has been slowed by the combined effects of armed conflict, political instability, and climate-related shocks, especially in fragile settings where poverty and displacement reinforce one another.[2] Nowhere is this challenge more evident than in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Nigeria illustrates this intersection of poverty and conflict. Although the country possesses substantial human and natural resources, multidimensional poverty remains widespread. According to the National Multidimensional Poverty Index, about 133 million Nigerians experience overlapping deprivations in health, education, living standards, and employment.[3] These burdens fall disproportionately on women, reflecting persistent structural inequalities that limit their access to productive resources, economic opportunities, and social protection.[4]

Conflict-induced displacement has further deepened these inequalities. Nigeria hosts one of the largest populations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sub-Saharan Africa,[5] with women and girls bearing the greatest socioeconomic

[1]UN Women. (2024). *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2024*. UN Women.
[2]World Bank. (2022). *Poverty and shared prosperity 2022: Correcting course*. World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1893-6
[3]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Nigeria multidimensional poverty index (2022)*. NBS.
[4]UN Women. (2024). *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals:*
[5]International Organization for Migration. (2023). *Displacement tracking matrix (DTM): Nigeria Round 11 assessment*. IOM.

consequences of displacement. The loss of livelihoods, restricted access to education and healthcare, heightened exposure to gender-based violence, increased unpaid care responsibilities, and exclusion from decision-making collectively intensify multidimensional poverty.[6] Although humanitarian assistance has expanded in recent years, evidence continues to show that many displaced households remain trapped in conditions of chronic deprivation.[7]

Benue State represents one of the country's most severe displacement contexts. Once renowned as Nigeria's "Food Basket of the Nation," the state has experienced prolonged farmer–herder conflict that has destroyed livelihoods, displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and created a protracted humanitarian crisis.[8] By the end of 2024, more than 500,000 internally displaced persons were living in camps across the state, with the number increasing following renewed attacks in 2025.[9] Earlier IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix data indicated that women accounted for about 56% of the displaced population, underscoring the gendered nature of displacement.[10]

For many displaced women, poverty is experienced through overlapping deprivations rather than income loss alone. Humanitarian assessments consistently report inadequate access to healthcare, food, safe water and sanitation, education, shelter, and sustainable livelihoods, alongside increased risks of gender-based violence, trafficking, and exploitation.[11] These interconnected deprivations not only undermine women's wellbeing but also limit their ability to rebuild their lives after displacement.

While existing studies have examined humanitarian conditions, conflict, gender-based violence, and poverty in displacement settings, these issues have largely been investigated in isolation. National poverty assessments rarely capture the experiences of camp-based displaced populations, and few studies provide an integrated analysis of the multidimensional nature of poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps or examine its implications for Nigeria's attainment of SDG 1**.** This gap limits the evidence available for designing policies that respond to the realities of women living in protracted displacement.

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[6]Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2020). *Global report on internal displacement 2020*. Norwegian Refugee Council; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Nigeria operational update*. UNHCR.

[7]International Organization for Migration. (2023). *Displacement tracking matrix;* United Nations Children's Fund. (2023). *Nigeria humanitarian situation report*. UNICEF; Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals. (2024). *Nigeria voluntary national review 2024: Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Federal Government of Nigeria.

[8]International Crisis Group. (2018). *Stopping Nigeria's spiralling farmer–herder violence (Africa Report No. 262)*. International Crisis Group; Amnesty International. (2025). *The state of the world's human rights: Nigeria 2024/25*. Amnesty International; Amnesty International. (2018). *Harvest of death: Farmer–herder violence in Nigeria*. Amnesty International.

[9]Amnesty International. (2025). *The state of the world's human rights: Nigeria 2024/25*

[10]International Organization for Migration. (2023). *Displacement tracking matrix;*

[11]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Nigeria operational update*; Amnesty International. (2025). *The state of the world's human rights:*

Against this background, this study examines the nature and socioeconomic determinants of multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps between 2020 and 2025 and analyses their implications for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 1. Guided by the Multidimensional Poverty Framework and Sen's Capability Approach**,** the study integrates gender, conflict, and multidimensional poverty within a single analytical framework to provide context-specific evidence for more inclusive poverty reduction and humanitarian policy.This study is guided by the following research questions:i. What is the nature of multidimensional poverty among women in IDP camps in Benue State between 2020 and 2025?ii. What socioeconomic factors contribute to the persistence of poverty among women in IDP camps in Benue State within the study period?These questions highlight the importance of obtaining a holistic, in-depth understanding of the nature and socio-economic drivers of the persistence of multidimensional poverty among women in displacement situations, and their implications for the progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty) in Nigeria.

Similarly, the research propositions are that: i. Women in IDP camps in Benue State experience multidimensional poverty that extends beyond monetary deprivation to include severe deficits in health, education, living standards, personal security, and socioeconomic well-being during the period 2020–2025 and Socioeconomic vulnerabilities jointly reinforce and sustain multidimensional poverty among women in IDP camps in Benue State between 2020 and 2025.The proposition situates poverty not as a failure of individual agency but as a failure of structural conditions and institutional arrangements to create and sustain the capabilities that women need to live lives of dignity and self-determination. It thus carries a normative dimension: that the state and international community bear responsibility for the conditions of IDP women, and that current responses are insufficient to discharge that responsibility effectively.

Conceptual framework

A substantial body of literature has examined the concepts underpinning this study from diverse theoretical and empirical perspectives. These concepts provide the analytical foundation for understanding the interrelationships among multidimensional poverty, gender, forced displacement, and sustainable development in conflict-affected settings. Given the complexity of poverty experienced by women in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, this study examines three interrelated concepts: poverty**,** women**,** and Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1)**.** A critical examination of these concepts establishes the conceptual basis for analyzing the nature, determinants, and implications of multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps.

Concept of Poverty

Poverty remains one of the most widely debated concepts in development studies because of its multidimensional and context-dependent nature.

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Although there is no universally accepted definition, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes poverty as extending beyond inadequate income to encompass deprivations in health, education, living conditions, security, social participation, and the capabilities required to lead a dignified life. This evolution reflects a shift from traditional income-based approaches to multidimensional, human-centered perspectives that better capture the lived experiences of vulnerable populations, particularly those affected by conflict and displacement.

Historically, poverty was primarily conceptualized in monetary terms. This perspective defines poverty according to an individual's inability to attain a minimum level of income or consumption required to satisfy basic needs. The World Bank continues to employ this approach through the International Poverty Line, currently set at US$2.15 per person per day **in** 2017 purchasing power parity (PPP), to facilitate global comparisons of extreme poverty and monitor international development progress.[12] The principal strength of the monetary approach lies in its simplicity, comparability across countries, and usefulness for macroeconomic policy formulation. However, it provides only a partial understanding of poverty because it overlooks important non-income dimensions such as access to healthcare, education, adequate housing, security, and social inclusion. These limitations become particularly evident in humanitarian settings where households may receive temporary income support but continue to experience severe deprivation in other aspects of wellbeing.

At the national level, Nigeria has traditionally measured poverty using consumption-based indicators. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) defines poverty according to household consumption expenditure relative to the national poverty line.[13] While this approach remains useful for economic planning and national poverty monitoring, it inadequately reflects the multiple and overlapping deprivations experienced by populations displaced by violent conflict. Women living in IDP camps, for example, may have little or no monetary income while simultaneously facing restricted access to education, healthcare, safe shelter, sanitation, food security, and livelihood opportunities. Such realities demonstrate that income alone cannot adequately explain the depth or complexity of poverty in displacement contexts.

Recognition of these limitations has led to the emergence of multidimensional approaches to poverty measurement. Among the most influential is the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). The MPI assesses poverty across three broad dimensions: health, education, and living standards using multiple indicators

[12]World Bank. (2025). *Poverty, prosperity, and planet: Pathways out of the polycrisis*. World Bank.
[13]National Bureau of Statistics. (2020). *Poverty and inequality in Nigeria 2019*. NBS.

that collectively capture overlapping deprivations experienced by households.[14] Unlike monetary measures, the multidimensional approach acknowledges that poverty is experienced through simultaneous disadvantages that reinforce one another. This framework is particularly relevant to conflict-affected populations because displacement frequently disrupts livelihoods, weakens social networks, limits access to public services, and increases dependence on humanitarian assistance.

The capability approach developed by Sen further broadened the conceptual understanding of poverty by arguing that development should be evaluated in terms of people's substantive freedoms rather than their income alone.[15] According to Sen, poverty represents the deprivation of basic capabilities required to achieve valued ways of living. Nussbaum extended this perspective by identifying a set of central human capabilities, including life, bodily health, bodily integrity, education, practical reason, and participation in social and political life.[16] Together, these perspectives emphasize that poverty is fundamentally a denial of opportunities and freedoms necessary for human flourishing. Their relevance to this study lies in explaining how conflict-induced displacement restricts women's capabilities through the loss of livelihoods, inadequate healthcare, disrupted education, insecurity, and social exclusion.

An equally important dimension of poverty concerns its gendered nature. Extensive literature demonstrates that women experience poverty differently and often more severely than men because of structural inequalities that limit their access to productive resources, education, employment opportunities, land ownership, financial services, and decision-making processes. Kabeer (1994) argues that gendered poverty is rooted in unequal power relations and institutional arrangements that constrain women's agency and access to resources.[17] Similarly, the African Development Bank Group reports that persistent gender inequalities in education, labour market participation, ownership of productive assets, financial inclusion, and political representation continue to reinforce women's socioeconomic vulnerability across Africa.[18] In situations of forced displacement, these structural inequalities are frequently intensified, exposing women to heightened risks of livelihood loss, food insecurity, gender-based violence, limited mobility, and prolonged dependence on humanitarian assistance.

Recent humanitarian evidence further demonstrates that conflict-induced displacement significantly deepens multidimensional poverty among women. The International Organization for Migration (2023), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2023), and the Internal Displacement Monitoring

[14]United Nations Development Programme, & Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. (2024). *Global multidimensional poverty index 2024: Poverty amid conflict*. UNDP & OPHI.
[15]Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.
[16]Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Harvard University Press.
[17]Kabeer, N. (1994). *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. Verso.
[18]African Development Bank Group. (2023). *Africa gender index report 2023: Analytical report*. African Development Bank Group.

Centre (2023) consistently report that displaced women experience disproportionate deprivation across health, education, shelter, food security, sanitation, and economic opportunities.[19] These deprivations are mutually reinforcing and often persist long after displacement occurs, thereby reducing resilience and limiting prospects for sustainable recovery. Such evidence highlights the importance of analyzing poverty within displacement settings through a multidimensional and gender-responsive lens rather than relying solely on conventional monetary indicators.

Drawing from these perspectives, this study conceptualizes poverty as a multidimensional condition characterized by interconnected deprivations in income, education, health, living standards, security, social participation, and human capabilities. Within the context of women residing in Benue State IDP camps, poverty extends beyond inadequate financial resources to include the loss of livelihoods, restricted access to essential services, weakened social protection, heightened exposure to violence, and diminished opportunities to achieve sustainable wellbeing. This conceptualization aligns with the Capability Approach and the Multidimensional Poverty Framework, both of which provide an appropriate analytical foundation for examining the complex realities of conflict-induced poverty and its implications for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1.

Women

The concept of women has evolved considerably within contemporary scholarship, reflecting biological, legal, social, cultural, and human rights perspectives. While early definitions were largely confined to biological characteristics, contemporary gender and development literature recognizes women as social actors whose experiences are shaped by the interaction of biological differences, gender norms, institutional structures, and unequal power relations. Consequently, understanding women within the context of multidimensional poverty and forced displacement requires a multidimensional conceptualization that extends beyond biological identity to encompass issues of rights, agency, capability, and social inclusion.

From a biological perspective, women are generally understood as adult female human beings distinguished by physiological and reproductive characteristics relevant to health and medical sciences.[20] This perspective provides an important foundation for biomedical and reproductive health research, particularly in understanding maternal health, reproductive rights, and gender-specific health outcomes. However, biological definitions alone provide an incomplete understanding of women's lived experiences because they do not account for the social, cultural, economic, and political structures that shape opportunities, vulnerabilities, and life outcomes.

[19]International Organization for Migration. (2023). *Displacement tracking matrix;*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Nigeria operational update*;Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2023). *Global report on internal displacement 2023*. Norwegian Refugee Council.
[20]World Health Organization. (2022). *Gender and health*. WHO.

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Within international human rights discourse, women are recognized as equal rights-holders entitled to the full enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)provides the principal international legal framework for eliminating discrimination against women and promoting substantive gender equality across all spheres of society.[21] Through its General Recommendations, the CEDAW Committee has further emphasized that governments have an obligation to remove structural barriers that prevent women from enjoying equal access to education, healthcare, employment, political participation, property ownership, and justice. This legal perspective is particularly relevant in conflict and displacement settings where women often experience multiple forms of discrimination that undermine the effective realization of these rights.

Contemporary development discourse further conceptualizes women as active agents of development rather than passive beneficiaries of welfare interventions. UN Women argues that women's empowerment is fundamental to sustainable development because gender equality enhances economic productivity, strengthens social cohesion, improves household welfare, and promotes inclusive governance.[22] Accordingly, women are recognized not only as beneficiaries of development programmes but also as critical actors in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those relating to poverty reduction, education, health, gender equality, food security, and peacebuilding. This perspective shifts attention from women's vulnerabilities alone towards their capacities, resilience, leadership, and contribution to sustainable development.

The gender and development literature similarly explains women's experiences through the lens of structural inequality. Kabeer (1999) conceptualizes women's empowerment as the process through which individuals who have previously been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire the resources, agency, and achievements necessary to exercise meaningful decision-making.[23] Likewise, Nussbaum's capability approach argues that genuine development requires creating conditions that enable women to achieve central human capabilities, including bodily health, bodily integrity, education, political participation, economic opportunity, and control over their environment.[24] These perspectives emphasize that gender inequality is not merely a consequence of poverty, but also one of its principal causes, as unequal access to resources and opportunities systematically constrains women's capabilities and life chances.

Evidence across Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrates that women continue to experience disproportionate socioeconomic disadvantages despite significant

[21]United Nations. (1979). *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women*. United Nations.
[22]UN Women. (2024). *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals:*
[23]Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change, 30*(3), 435–464. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125
[24]Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating capabilities*

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progress in gender equality policies. The Africa Gender Index Report 2023 identifies persistent disparities in education, employment, financial inclusion, land ownership, political representation, and access to productive resources, all of which contribute to higher levels of poverty among women.[25] These inequalities become considerably more pronounced during situations of conflict and forced displacement, where women frequently assume additional caregiving responsibilities while simultaneously experiencing livelihood loss, reduced access to education and healthcare, heightened food insecurity, and increased exposure to gender-based violence.

The experiences of internally displaced women in Nigeria illustrate these intersecting vulnerabilities. Humanitarian assessments by the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and UNICEF consistently show that women constitute the majority of displaced adults and face disproportionate challenges in accessing livelihoods, healthcare, education, protection services, and humanitarian assistance.[26]In Benue State, recurrent armed conflict has further intensified these vulnerabilities by disrupting agricultural livelihoods, weakening community support systems, and increasing women's dependence on humanitarian interventions. Consequently, women in IDP camps experience overlapping forms of deprivation that extend beyond economic hardship to include insecurity, social exclusion, inadequate healthcare, limited access to productive resources, and heightened protection risks.

Within the context of this study, women are therefore conceptualized as adult female internally displaced persons whose experiences of multidimensional poverty are shaped by the intersection of gender inequality, armed conflict, forced displacement, and structural socioeconomic deprivation. This conceptualization recognizes women not merely as victims of conflict but as individuals with capabilities, agency, and resilience whose opportunities to achieve sustainable wellbeing are constrained by institutional, economic, cultural, and humanitarian factors. It also provides an appropriate foundation for examining how these intersecting deprivations influence Nigeria's progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1.

Sustainable Development Goal 1

SDG 1 provides the normative scaffolding for this study. Its targets include: ending extreme poverty for all people everywhere (Target 1.1); reducing by at least half the proportion of people in multidimensional poverty (Target 1.2); implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems for all, including floors, to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable (Target 1.3); ensuring equal rights to economic resources, including access to basic services,

[25]African Development Bank Group. (2023). *Africa gender index report 2023:*
[26]International Organization for Migration. (2023). *Displacement tracking matrix;* United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Nigeria operational update*;Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2023). *Global report on internal displacement 2023*. Norwegian Refugee Council.

ownership, and control over land and other forms of property (Target 1.4); and building resilience of the poor and vulnerable to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters (Target 1.5).[27] The SDG 2024 and 2025 progress reports confirm that these targets are severely off track globally, with conflict-affected populations identified as the primary obstacle to success, and sub-Saharan Africa and fragile states bearing the heaviest burden.[28]

Empirical Review of Related Literature

The Nature of Multidimensional Poverty among Displaced Women in Benue State IDP Camps

The empirical literature consistently demonstrates that multidimensional poverty among conflict-displaced populations extends beyond income deprivation to encompass deficits in health, education, housing, food security, sanitation, livelihoods, social protection, and personal security. These deprivations are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, with women disproportionately affected because conflict and displacement compound existing gender inequalities. Consequently, multidimensional poverty has become the dominant framework for analyzing the experiences of internally displaced women in humanitarian settings.

Global evidence strongly supports this perspective. The *World Bank*conceptualizes poverty as overlapping deprivations in income, education, health, and social protection, showing that poverty is most severe in fragile and conflict-affected settings where women experience disproportionate disadvantages.[29] Similarly, the *Africa Gender Index Report 2023* (African Development Bank Group, 2023) demonstrates that persistent inequalities in education, labour market participation, asset ownership, financial inclusion, and decision-making continue to reinforce women's socioeconomic vulnerability across Africa. Likewise, the *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index Report 2024* (UNDP & OPHI, 2024), using the Alkire–Foster methodology, concludes that multidimensional poverty is particularly acute in conflict-affected contexts because households experience simultaneous deprivations in health, education, and living standards.[30] Although these studies provide robust comparative evidence, they are largely conducted at national or international levels and therefore offer limited insight into the lived experiences of women residing in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

[27]United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations.
[28]United Nations. (2024). *The Sustainable Development Goals report 2024*. United Nations.
[29]World Bank. (2022). *Poverty and shared prosperity 2022:*
[30]Alkire, S., & Foster, J. (2011). Counting and multidimensional poverty measurement. *Journal of Public Economics, 95*(7–8), 476–487. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2010.11.006

Evidence from Nigeria similarly shows that conflict-induced displacement substantially intensifies multidimensional poverty. The International Organization for Migration (2023) reports widespread livelihood disruption, food insecurity, inadequate shelter, reduced access to healthcare and education, and weakened social protection among displaced households, with women and children bearing the greatest burden. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2023) likewise identifies Nigeria as one of the countries with the largest internally displaced populations globally and links displacement to livelihood loss, increased socioeconomic vulnerability, and heightened exposure to poverty among women and children. National evidence from the Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2022) further indicates that approximately 133 million Nigerians are multidimensionally poor, with the highest intensity of deprivation occurring in rural and conflict-affected areas.[31] Collectively, these studies demonstrate that poverty within displacement settings extends far beyond income deprivation; however, they provide limited displacement-specific and gender-disaggregated analyses at the camp level.

Humanitarian assessments provide more context-specific evidence for Benue State. Following the June 2025 attacks on Yelewata and Daudu communities, Amnesty International documented severe humanitarian conditions characterized by overcrowded shelters, inadequate sanitation, limited healthcare, and heightened risks of gender-based violence among displaced women and girls.[32] These findings are reinforced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2023), which identified inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, food insecurity, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and protection risks as persistent challenges in Benue IDP camps. Complementing these assessments, Iorbo et al. (2024) found that recurrent farmer–herder conflict has destroyed livelihoods, deepened food insecurity, and intensified the social exclusion of displaced women through the erosion of economic opportunities and support networks.[33] The World Health Organization (2020) further demonstrates that overcrowding, inadequate healthcare, poor sanitation, food insecurity, and exposure to violence significantly worsen health outcomes among displaced women, illustrating the close interrelationship between health deprivation and broader socioeconomic exclusion.[34]

Consequently, the empirical literature establishes that conflict-induced displacement produces overlapping deprivations across livelihoods, health, education, housing, food security, sanitation, protection, and social inclusion, thereby reinforcing multidimensional poverty among women. Nevertheless, important gaps remain. Existing studies predominantly examine poverty at

[31]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Nigeria multidimensional poverty index*
[32]Amnesty International. (2025). *The state of the world's human rights: Nigeria 2024/25*
[33]Iorbo, R., Sahni, S. P., Bhatnagar, T., & Andzenge, D. T. (2024). Social inclusion and justice for the internally displaced by the herdsmen–farmers conflict in Benue State, Nigeria. *SAGE Open, 14*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/23315024241239585
[34]World Health Organization. (2020). *World health statistics 2020: Monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals*. WHO.

global, regional, or national levels or focus on immediate humanitarian needs, with limited attention to integrated, gender-responsive analyses of multidimensional poverty among women living in Benue State IDP camps. Furthermore, few studies explicitly examine the implications of these multidimensional deprivations for Nigeria's attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 1. This study addresses these gaps by applying the Capability Approach to examine the multidimensional poverty experienced by internally displaced women in Benue State between 2020 and 2025 and its implications for achieving SDG 1.

Socioeconomic Factors Contributing to the Persistence of Poverty Among Displaced Women in Benue State IDP Camps

The persistence of multidimensional poverty among internally displaced women is widely attributed to the interaction of conflict-related, socioeconomic, institutional, and gender-specific factors that reinforce one another over time. Rather than arising from income deprivation alone, poverty in displacement settings is increasingly understood as the cumulative outcome of disrupted livelihoods, weak governance, limited access to productive resources, inadequate social protection, gender inequality, and prolonged humanitarian crises. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that these factors interact to produce chronic poverty among displaced women, limiting their resilience and opportunities for sustainable recovery.

Evidence from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Nigeria Reports (2024**)** identifies armed conflict, unemployment, inadequate livelihood opportunities, weak governance, and gender discrimination as major drivers of persistent poverty among internally displaced populations. Drawing on camp-level profiling and household assessments, the reports reveal that prolonged displacement has resulted in high levels of unemployment, economic dependency, inadequate shelter, poor access to healthcare, and increasing reliance on humanitarian assistance, particularly among female-headed households in Benue State. A major strength of the IOM reports lies in their extensive empirical evidence collected directly from displacement sites. However, their descriptive orientation provides limited theoretical engagement with multidimensional poverty and the Capability Approach, thereby restricting a deeper understanding of how these interrelated deprivations reinforce long-term poverty among displaced women.[35]

The relationship between camp conditions and women's socioeconomic vulnerability has also been explored by Oriola and Abimbola (2024)**,** who employed a mixed-methods design to examine gender-based violence among internally displaced women in selected IDP camps within Nigeria's Federal

[35]International Organization for Migration. (2024). *Displacement tracking matrix (DTM): Nigeria reports*. IOM.

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Capital Territory.[36] Their findings indicate that inadequate access to education, economic opportunities, basic social amenities, and security significantly increases women's exposure to sexual and gender-based violence while undermining their overall wellbeing. The study's integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence provides a comprehensive understanding of how camp environments shape women's lived experiences. Nevertheless, its primary emphasis on gender-based violence gives comparatively less attention to broader dimensions of multidimensional poverty, including income insecurity, housing deprivation, food insecurity, and livelihood sustainability. The authors therefore recommend improving camp infrastructure, strengthening protection mechanisms, and expanding access to essential social services as critical measures for enhancing women's wellbeing.

Gender inequality has similarly been identified as a fundamental driver of persistent poverty among displaced women. Using an intersectional feminist perspective, UN Women demonstrates that unpaid care responsibilities, exclusion from labour markets, limited ownership of productive resources, and unequal access to education and healthcare disproportionately expose displaced women to multidimensional poverty across humanitarian settings in Africa.[37] The report provides valuable policy insights through its robust gender-responsive analysis and highlights the importance of women's economic empowerment in humanitarian programming. However, its continental focus limits its ability to explain the specific socioeconomic realities of women living in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Benue State. Accordingly, the report advocates gender-responsive humanitarian interventions, expanded livelihood programmes, improved educational opportunities, and equitable access to healthcare and productive resources.

At the continental level, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2022) identifies structural inequality, fragile governance, conflict, unemployment, food insecurity, and limited access to essential services as major determinants of multidimensional poverty across fragile African states. The report argues that violent conflict weakens state institutions, undermines social protection systems, disrupts livelihoods, and constrains inclusive economic development,thereby increasing vulnerability among already disadvantaged populations. Although this macro-level analysis provides valuable insights into the structural drivers of poverty, it pays limited attention to the gendered experiences of women in displacement settings. The present study addresses this limitation by examining how these structural factors interact with gender and conflict to shape multidimensional poverty among women residing in Benue State IDP camps.

National evidence further reinforces these patterns. The Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) identifies

[36]Oriola, B., & Abimbola, O. H. (2024). Social displacement, camp environment and manifestation of gender-based violence among internally displaced females in Abuja (FCT) IDPs. *FUOYE Journal of Criminology and Security Studies, 3*(2), 24–42.
[37]UN Women. (2023). *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2023*. UN Women.

inadequate education, poor healthcare, unemployment, deficient sanitation, and limited access to basic services as key contributors to multidimensional poverty, particularly among vulnerable populations and conflict-affected communities.[38] Its nationally representative dataset provides a robust empirical basis for understanding poverty in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the survey does not explicitly incorporate displacement-specific indicators or analyze the distinctive socioeconomic conditions within IDP camps, thereby limiting its applicability to conflict-induced displacement contexts.

Empirical studies conducted within Benue State provide more context-specific evidence. Using qualitative interviews informed by Social Exclusion Theory and Social Justice Theory**,** Iorbo, Sahni, Bhatnagar, and Andzenge (2024) found that recurrent farmer–herder conflicts have destroyed livelihoods, increased food insecurity, deepened unemployment, and intensified the social exclusion of displaced women. The study's principal strength lies in its rich contextual analysis of the lived experiences of conflict-affected communities. However, its qualitative design and relatively small sample size limit the generalizability of its findings and do not permit quantitative measurement of multidimensional poverty.

Institutional evidence further highlights the interconnected nature of these socioeconomic drivers. The Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023 published by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) identifies conflict, recurrent displacement, livelihood disruption, and prolonged insecurity as major drivers of chronic poverty among displaced populations worldwide, particularly women and children. Although the report provides comprehensive global statistics and valuable policy recommendations on durable solutions and livelihood recovery, its broad international scope offers limited insight into gender-specific experiences within particular displacement settings such as Benue State. Likewise, the World Health Organization (2020) demonstrates that overcrowding, inadequate healthcare, poor sanitation, food insecurity, and exposure to violence reinforce multidimensional deprivation among displaced women. While its public health perspective contributes significantly to understanding humanitarian vulnerability, its biomedical orientation provides comparatively less analysis of the wider socioeconomic processes that sustain multidimensional poverty.

Overall, the empirical literature demonstrates broad agreement that persistent multidimensional poverty among displaced women results from the interaction of conflict, weak governance, livelihood disruption, unemployment, gender inequality, inadequate social protection, and limited access to essential services. Nevertheless, significant gaps remain. Existing studies frequently examine these determinants in isolation, focus on either humanitarian needs or gender-based violence, or rely on national and regional analyses that overlook the unique realities of women living in Benue State IDP camps. Consequently, there remains limited empirical evidence that integrates conflict-related, socioeconomic, institutional, and gender-specific determinants of

[38]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Nigeria multidimensional poverty index*

multidimensional poverty within a single analytical framework while explicitly examining their implications for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1). This study addresses that gap by adopting the Capability Approach and the Multidimensional Poverty Framework to provide a context-specific, gender-responsive analysis of the socioeconomic factors sustaining multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps between 2020 and 2025.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework Is anchored on the multidimensional poverty framework and the capability approach.

The Multidimensional Poverty Framework

The Multidimensional Poverty Framework, operationalized through the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) developed by Alkire and Foster (2011), emerged to address the limitations of income-based poverty measures. Building on Sen's Capability Approach, the framework conceptualizes poverty as overlapping deprivations in essential dimensions of wellbeing rather than income alone. Since its adoption by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the MPI has become a globally recognized tool for measuring multidimensional poverty and informing evidence-based social policy (Alkire & Foster, 2011; UNDP & OPHI, 2024).

The framework measures simultaneous deprivations in health, education, and living standards, recognizing that these dimensions interact to create persistent poverty. This perspective is particularly relevant to women in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Benue State, where conflict-induced displacement results in livelihood loss, food insecurity, inadequate shelter, poor access to healthcare and education, inadequate sanitation, restricted mobility, and social exclusion. By capturing both the breadth and intensity of these overlapping deprivations, the MPI provides an appropriate framework for assessing multidimensional poverty and aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1), which seeks to end poverty in all its forms.

Despite its strengths, the framework primarily measures the incidence and intensity of deprivation without adequately explaining the structural mechanisms that sustain poverty. It gives limited attention to conflict dynamics, institutional exclusion, gendered power relations, and individual agency. Consequently, while the MPI identifies who is poor and the extent of deprivation, it offers less insight into why poverty persists. To address this limitation, the present study complements the Multidimensional Poverty Framework with the Capability Approach.

The Capability Approach

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The Capability Approach, developed by Sen (1999), conceptualizes poverty as the deprivation of capabilities the substantive freedoms individuals possess to achieve valued ways of living rather than merely a lack of income or material resources. It distinguishes between *functionings*, the realized states of being and doing, and *capabilities*, the genuine opportunities to achieve those functionings.

The approach is particularly suited to analyzing conflict-induced displacement because forced displacement constrains women's opportunities across multiple dimensions, including education, healthcare, employment, personal security, and participation in decision-making. In Benue State IDP camps, these constraints are reinforced by livelihood loss, prolonged dependence on humanitarian assistance, institutional weaknesses, insecurity, and entrenched gender inequalities, thereby limiting women's agency and long-term wellbeing.

A key strength of the Capability Approach is its human-centered focus on the freedoms people have to live lives they value. This perspective complements the MPI by explaining the processes through which multidimensional deprivations emerge and persist, while aligning with the "Leave No One Behind" principle underpinning the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this study, the Capability Approach provides the explanatory lens, while the Multidimensional Poverty Framework supplies the measurable indicators health, education, income, housing, sanitation, and living conditions used to assess multidimensional poverty. Together, the two frameworks provide a robust theoretical foundation for analyzing the determinants and implications of multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps.

Complementarity of the Frameworks

Neither the Multidimensional Poverty Framework nor the Capability Approach is sufficient on its own to explain the complex realities of multidimensional poverty among displaced women in Benue State. The Multidimensional Poverty Framework provides a robust method for measuring the incidence, intensity, and overlap of deprivations but offers limited explanation of the structural processes that sustain poverty. In contrast, the Capability Approach explains how conflict, gender inequality, institutional exclusion, and limited agency constrain individuals' opportunities to achieve wellbeing. However, it does not provide a standardized framework for measuring these deprivations.

Integrating the two frameworks therefore provides a more comprehensive analytical foundation. The Multidimensional Poverty Framework identifies and measures overlapping deprivations in health, education, and living standards. At the same time, the Capability Approach explains the structural and institutional conditions that restrict women's capabilities and perpetuate poverty. Together, they offer a holistic understanding of how conflict-induced displacement, gender inequality, and institutional failures interact to sustain multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps.

Accordingly, this study is anchored on the proposition that multidimensional poverty among internally displaced women reflects not only material

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deprivation but also the combined effects of conflict, structural inequalities, and institutional exclusion that constrain women's capabilities and access to essential resources and opportunities. This integrated perspective provides a robust theoretical basis for analyzing the determinants and implications of multidimensional poverty and underscores the need for gender-responsive policies that strengthen livelihoods, expand access to basic services and social protection, and support Nigeria's attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 1

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative documentary research design based on the systematic collection and critical analysis of secondary data. The approach is appropriate because it examines how multidimensional poverty is experienced and sustained among women in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps within the context of conflict, displacement, and institutional responses in Benue State. Documentary research is particularly suited to humanitarian settings where credible evidence is available from governments and international organizations and where primary data collection may be constrained by ethical, security, and logistical considerations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).[39]

To enhance credibility, the study employs data triangulation by integrating multiple secondary sources covering the period 2020–2025. Documentary sources include the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) reports, UNHCR Nigeria Middle Belt Operational Updates**,** UNICEF Nigeria Humanitarian Situation Reports**,** Amnesty International reports, and publications of the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA)**.** Statistical evidence is drawn from the Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index,[40] the Human Development Report 2023/2024**,** the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024(UNDP & OPHI, 2024), and the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024.[41] These sources provide complementary evidence on multidimensional poverty, forced displacement, gender inequality, humanitarian conditions, and progress towards SDG 1.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003).[42] Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns relating to the dimensions, determinants, and implications of multidimensional poverty, while critical discourse analysis examined how institutional narratives and policy discourses shape understandings of poverty, displacement, gender inequality, and humanitarian responses. Findings were subsequently interpreted through the Multidimensional Poverty Framework

[39]Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
[40]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Nigeria multidimensional poverty index*
[41]United Nations Development Programme. (2024). *Human development report 2023/2024: Breaking the gridlock—Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world*. UNDP.
[42]Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa(doi.org in Bing); Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Routledge.

and the Capability Approach to explain how conflict, institutional constraints, and gendered socioeconomic inequalities interact to sustain multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps and to assess their implications for Nigeria's attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 1.

Results and Discussion

Nature of Multidimensional Poverty Among Women in Benue State IDP Camps

Documentary evidence indicates that Benue State continues to experience a protracted humanitarian crisis in waves, large-scale internal displacement and severe multidimensional poverty among women. Humanitarian assessments estimated that approximately 510,182 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were living in camps and host communities by the end of 2024[43] (Amnesty International, 2025; IOM, 2024), while earlier IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data recorded 184,711 IDPs across 96 displacement sites in the state.[44] Women and children constitute the majority of the displaced population, with females accounting for approximately 56% of verified IDPs. This demographic pattern underscores the gendered nature of displacement and the disproportionate burden of multidimensional poverty borne by women.

Health Deprivation

Health deprivation emerged as a major dimension of multidimensional poverty. Evidence indicates that displaced women experience poor nutrition, inadequate maternal and primary healthcare, overcrowding, poor sanitation, unsafe water, and recurrent outbreaks of communicable diseases such as malaria, cholera, and dysentery [45](NBS, 2022; UNHCR, 2023). Inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services further increase health risks while exposing women and girls to greater vulnerability to gender-based violence. Consistent with Sen's Capability Approach, these conditions restrict women's capability to achieve good health and diminish their overall wellbeing.

Food and Nutrition Deprivation

Food insecurity remains pervasive across Benue IDP camps due to the displacement of farming households from their agricultural livelihoods. The loss of productive land has forced many women, traditionally responsible for household food production, to depend on inadequate humanitarian assistance. UNICEF Nigeria (2025b) documents beneficiaries reporting insufficient food assistance, while AFP highlights allegations of transactional sex linked to access

[43]Amnesty International. (2025). *The state of the world's human rights: Nigeria 2024/25*
[44]International Organization for Migration. (2023). *Displacement tracking matrix;*
[45]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Nigeria multidimensional poverty index*

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to food aid. These findings demonstrate that displacement exacerbates pre-existing nutritional vulnerabilities and undermines the achievement of SDG 1.[46]

Education Deprivation

Educational deprivation affects both children and adult women, reinforcing intergenerational poverty. The Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (NBS, 2022) identifies school attendance, years of schooling, and school lag as major contributors to child multidimensional poverty.[47] These challenges are intensified by conflict-induced displacement, which disrupts schooling and limits access to educational infrastructure (UNHCR, 2023; UNICEF, 2024).[48] Adult women similarly face limited access to literacy and vocational training, restricting livelihood opportunities and long-term economic empowerment. From the Capability Approach perspective, these educational constraints reduce women's freedom to acquire knowledge, improve livelihoods, and participate fully in social and economic life.

Security Deprivation and Gender-Based Violence

Security deprivation constitutes one of the most pronounced gendered dimensions of poverty within Benue IDP camps. Women face heightened risks of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, and domestic violence, while access to protection and justice remains limited (UNHCR, 2023; Amnesty International, 2025).[49] Although humanitarian agencies have implemented protection interventions, including survivor support services and community awareness programmes, evidence suggests that many incidents remain underreported because of stigma, fear of retaliation, and weak reporting mechanisms. These findings indicate that insecurity is both a consequence and a driver of multidimensional poverty, constraining women's agency, personal security, and participation in economic and social activities.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps extends beyond income deprivation to encompass interconnected deficits in health, nutrition, education, security, and access to essential services. These deprivations are mutually reinforcing and sustained by conflict, displacement, institutional weaknesses, and gender inequality. Consistent with the Multidimensional Poverty Framework and the Capability Approach, the findings suggest that reducing poverty in displacement settings requires integrated, gender-responsive interventions that strengthen livelihoods, expand access to quality social services, improve protection

46AFP (2018, May 24) Amnesty highlights sex-for-food claims in Boko Haram-hit Nigeria. The Guardian, https://guardian.ng/news/amnesty-highlights-sex-for-food-claims-in-boko-haram-hit-nigeria/

[47]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Nigeria multidimensional poverty index*

[48]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Nigeria operational update*. UNHCR.

[49]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Nigeria operational update*. UNHCR.

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systems, and enhance women's capabilities in line with Sustainable Development Goal 1.

Socioeconomic Factors Sustaining Multidimensional Poverty Among Women in Benue State IDP Camps

Economic Deprivation and Loss of Livelihood

The findings indicate that conflict-induced displacement has resulted in profound and persistent economic deprivation among women in Benue State IDP camps. Forced displacement has disrupted agricultural livelihoods, destroyed productive assets, weakened market networks, and eliminated income-generating opportunities, leaving many women economically dependent (Iorbo et al., 2024). This reflects the work and shocks dimension of the Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (NBS, 2022), which captures livelihood disruption and vulnerability to economic shocks.

The effects of displacement are further intensified by gender inequality. Under customary land tenure systems in Benue State, women's access to agricultural land is largely mediated through male relatives. Displacement disrupts these arrangements while camp environments provide few alternative livelihood opportunities, increasing women's dependence on humanitarian assistance and exposing them to exploitation, including trafficking and sexual abuse.[50] National evidence likewise shows that while 40.1% of Nigerians are income poor, 63% experience multidimensional poverty (NBS, 2022), highlighting that deprivation extends beyond income alone. Consistent with Jerumeh (2024), the findings suggest that unemployment, insecurity, limited access to productive resources, and weak social protection remain major drivers of multidimensional poverty among vulnerable women.[51]

Structural Drivers of Persistent Poverty

The findings identify four interrelated structural factors sustaining multidimensional poverty among displaced women. First, the protracted farmer–herder conflict remains the primary driver of displacement, continuously destroying livelihoods and generating new humanitarian needs. The June 2025 attacks on Yelewata and Daudu communities, which resulted in more than 100 deaths and over 3,900 newly displaced persons, illustrate the continuing impact of insecurity on poverty.[52]

Second, institutional limitations have constrained the effectiveness of humanitarian response and livelihood recovery initiatives in Benue State.

[50]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Nigeria operational update*. UNHCR.
[51]Jerumeh, T. R. (2024). Incidence, intensity and drivers of multidimensional poverty among rural women in Nigeria. *Heliyon, 10*(3), e25147. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e25147
[52]Amnesty International. (2025). *The state of the world's human rights: Nigeria 2024/25*

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Although government agencies and humanitarian organizations continue to provide assistance, prolonged displacement, resource constraints, and limited participation of internally displaced persons in programme planning and implementation have weakened the sustainability and impact of protection, social support, and economic recovery interventions. Consequently, many displaced women continue to experience persistent multidimensional deprivation despite ongoing humanitarian efforts (Abah, 2026; IOM, 2024; UNOCHA, 2024).[53]

Third, entrenched gender inequality continues to restrict women's access to productive resources, employment, and decision-making opportunities, reinforcing economic dependency. Finally, persistent insecurity undermines women's capabilities by limiting their freedom to pursue education, employment, participation in public life, and personal autonomy. From the Capability Approach perspective, these structural constraints interact to sustain multidimensional poverty long after displacement has occurred.

Implications for Sustainable Development Goal 1

The findings have important implications for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1). Although Nigeria has adopted the National Multidimensional Poverty Index as a key policy instrument,[54] internally displaced women remain largely excluded from national household survey sampling frames. Consequently, their multidimensional poverty is insufficiently reflected in national poverty estimates, limiting evidence-based policy responses and targeted social protection.

This exclusion extends beyond a methodological limitation to what Fricker conceptualizes as epistemic injustice a condition in which the experiences of a vulnerable population remain systematically absent from the knowledge systems that inform public policy.[55] As a result, multidimensional poverty among displaced women is inadequately represented in SDG monitoring, Voluntary National Reviews, and national poverty reduction strategies. This creates the possibility that progress towards SDG 1 may be reported at the national level while severe deprivation persists among conflict-affected populations that remain statistically invisible.

The findings therefore suggest that achieving the SDG commitment to "leave no one behind" requires more than expanding humanitarian assistance. It demands the systematic inclusion of internally displaced populations in national poverty measurement systems, strengthened gender-responsive social

[53]Abah, J. (2026). *"Do nothing for us, without us": Conflict-induced displacement and humanitarian interventions in Benue State, Nigeria*. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development, 21*(1), 85–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166251372325; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2024). *Nigeria humanitarian needs overview 2024*. UNOCHA.
[54]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Nigeria multidimensional poverty index*
[55]Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press.

protection, and conflict-sensitive development policies that recognize displaced women as a priority population for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal three interrelated insights that advance understanding of multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps.

First, multidimensional poverty is prevalent, overlapping, and mutually reinforcing. Women account for approximately 56% of verified internally displaced persons[56] (IOM, 2023), reflecting the gendered nature of displacement. Deprivations in health, nutrition, education, livelihoods, and security interact to constrain women's wellbeing and agency. Consistent with the Capability Approach, these capability failures reinforce one another, while the Multidimensional Poverty Framework demonstrates that poverty in displacement settings extends well beyond income deprivation.

Second, persistent poverty is driven primarily by structural factors rather than individual circumstances. Recurrent farmer–herder conflict, weak institutional capacity, gender inequality, and limited livelihood opportunities combine to sustain chronic deprivation despite humanitarian interventions. Together, the Capability Approach and the Multidimensional Poverty Framework show that poverty persists because conflict and institutional exclusion simultaneously restrict women's capabilities and access to essential resources. These findings suggest that humanitarian assistance alone cannot achieve sustainable poverty reduction without conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive policies that strengthen livelihoods, social protection, and institutional effectiveness.

Third, the findings expose an important limitation in Nigeria's pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1). The exclusion of internally displaced women from national poverty measurement systems limits their visibility within poverty statistics, social protection programmes, and SDG monitoring. Drawing on Fricker's (2007) concept of epistemic injustice**,** this study argues that statistical exclusion translates into policy exclusion, leaving one of the country's most vulnerable populations insufficiently represented in development planning. Achieving the commitment to "leave no one behind" therefore requires inclusive poverty measurement systems that systematically capture conflict-affected and displaced populations.

Accordingly, the study demonstrates that multidimensional poverty among women in Benue State IDP camps is rooted in the interaction of conflict, structural inequality, institutional exclusion, and capability deprivation. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires integrated, gender-responsive policies that combine humanitarian assistance with sustainable

[56]International Organization for Migration. (2023). *Displacement tracking matrix;*

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livelihood support, strengthened social protection, and inclusive poverty measurement.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study demonstrates that multidimensional poverty among women in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Benue State is pervasive, interconnected, and structurally embedded. Drawing on the Multidimensional Poverty Framework and Sen's Capability Approach, the findings show that poverty extends beyond income deprivation to encompass overlapping deficits in health, nutrition, education, livelihoods, housing, security, and social inclusion. These deprivations reinforce one another, creating persistent capability deficits that constrain women's wellbeing and opportunities for sustainable recovery.

The findings further indicate that the persistence of multidimensional poverty is driven primarily by structural factors rather than individual circumstances. Protracted farmer–herder conflict, weak institutional capacity, gender inequality, inadequate livelihood opportunities, and limited social protection interact to sustain chronic deprivation despite ongoing humanitarian interventions. This suggests that emergency relief alone cannot address the root causes of poverty without complementary investments in peacebuilding, institutional strengthening, and women's economic empowerment.

The study also identifies important implications for Nigeria's attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1). Although the National Multidimensional Poverty Index has strengthened poverty measurement, the exclusion of internally displaced women from national household survey sampling frames limits the visibility of their deprivation within poverty statistics, social protection programmes, and SDG monitoring. Building on Fricker's (2007) concept of epistemic injustice, the study argues that statistical exclusion contributes to policy exclusion by rendering one of the country's most vulnerable populations insufficiently represented in national development planning. Achieving the commitment to "leave no one behind" therefore requires more inclusive poverty measurement systems that systematically capture conflict-affected and displaced populations.

These findings have three principal policy implications. First, poverty reduction strategies should integrate conflict-sensitive approaches that address the structural drivers of displacement while promoting sustainable peace and institutional resilience. Second, humanitarian responses should evolve beyond short-term relief by prioritizing gender-responsive social protection, livelihood restoration, education, healthcare, and protection services that strengthen women's capabilities and economic inclusion. Third, national poverty measurement and SDG monitoring systems should explicitly include internally displaced populations through displacement-sensitive survey designs and disaggregated reporting to improve evidence-based policymaking and accountability.

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Finally, the study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that multidimensional poverty among displaced women is best understood as the product of interacting capability deprivations, structural inequalities, and institutional exclusion rather than income deprivation alone. By integrating the Multidimensional Poverty Framework with the Capability Approach, the study provides a context-specific analytical framework that advances understanding of gendered poverty in conflict settings and offers evidence to inform more inclusive poverty reduction policies in Nigeria and comparable humanitarian contexts.

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