

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN INTERNAL DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE WAKE OF OPERATION ZARB-E-AZB CAMPED IN DISTRICT LAKKI MARWAT

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses the Problems and challenges faced by Women and children's due to displacement caused by Operation Zarb-e-Azb. More specifically, the paper will discuss and analyze the problems and challenges experienced by IDP's settled in Lakki Marwat. The thesis will discuss what rights the displaced people had and explore to what extent the rights were provided by the authorities. Problems faced by the women and children discussed and analyzed include; their Identity issue, the susceptibility of the women and children to diseases, mental disorders and Psychological Health Issues, Children affected by War on terror, Due to stern traditional Laws (Pashtun-wali code of Conduct) and Tribal Cultural Background women as a victim of inaccessibility to education and also victimized on the basis of Gender based violence (GBV).

Key Words: Identity, Women health, children health, psychological issues, Gender Based violence

INTRODUCTION

According to Deputy Commissioner and Crime Branch office District Lakki Marwat, There were total 5,641 Females, and 10,238 Children's who resided in district Lakki Marwat due to Operation Zarb-e-Azb.ⁱ They definitely faced problems and challenges in achieving of basic Needs and Some of other needs as well, E.g. Issue of Identity for them, Women and Children's are more vulnerable to diseases, Mental disorders and Psychological Health matters, Children affected by War on terror, Due to strict customary Laws (Pashtun wali code of Conduct) and Tribal Cultural Background women as a sufferers, Female Literacy and Gender based violence (GBV). We are going to discuss all these problems which are faced by women and child IDPS; one by one elaborately.

Issue of Identity

The main problem for IDP Childs and women were their identification. Identity is very much important

in displacement cases whether within their own territory or outside the country in shape of refugees. In any calamity where inhabitants are forced to flee, whether crossways international borders or within inside the country, holding fundamental documentation to prove one's identity is basic to survival and revival.ⁱⁱ Many of women do not have National ID cards who living in IDP camps and other Areas of Lakki Marwat District. It is very difficult to come across such issues without having ID cards, like Facing Registration camps, Traveling from one place to another, facing Check posts, receiving of Ration, and job seeking process. Obtaining food aid for women without a male companion is very difficult and it becomes worst when she do not have ID card. Sometimes they use their brothers or fathers CNIC to Support their cause. Women was interviewed she said that, "My husband is dead and I have 3 Childs. I came here with my relatives. I faced a lot of problems in taking of Ration because we have

no Male in our house and secondly I have no id card. Our first three months stay was very worst. I get my id card after 3 months and then start getting Ration, before that I didn't get any aid. I was supported by my relatives but I don't want to be dependent on them. I start working in one house as a maid which was our neighbors." She further said that "If I used to travel from one place to another I mostly use my brother CNIC. Once I was traveling to Peshawar with my children's to meet my sister. In the way at check post security forces asked that with who these children's are? I gave my brother id card; he said that it is expired, activate it again, next time it would not be tolerated."ⁱⁱⁱ

Women and Children; More Susceptible to Diseases

Women and children have specific health issues, needs and problems and thus require specific health care needs and facilities. Due to change in environment and lack of facilities in the camps affected both very badly. Tents which were provided were not enough in contrast to their numbers. Tents and blankets were not in better shape, Mostly were torn and ragged thus were incapable to protect children's and newborn babies from cold or hot weather. When you came to new place environment and weather matters a lot. A women was interviewed she said that "Here environment is very dusty, Polluted and very hot. Our mostly family members especially infants and Childs were affected. We faced the Throat infection, cough and flue etc which later converted to Malaria and Typhoid fever. We have very clean and cold environment in our native place."^{iv}

Women facing issues in Pregnancy

The pre-pregnancy care recommendations are highly stressed upon in case of the pregnancies that have a direct link with the Women and the child health. They are universally important for all the women and the newborns. These recommendations are very much aspiring as they are considered as the standards and the ideal for getting the required health outcomes. These pre-pregnancy care recommendations can be outlined as the importance of Family planning, taking the family history of the women, taking certain important medical conditions, the issue of hypertension, taking the risk factor in

mind for the case of the Diabetes, Role of the previous pregnancy complications, taking in consideration the sexually transmitted infections, issue of violence and abuse, Use of the substance, Use of the Nicotine, Mental health and the mood disorders, Medications, The use and the importance of the Folic acid, The standard and the healthy weight for the Women, The importance of the Nutrition factor for the Women and the relevance of physical activity, Immunizations role, Oral health issue, Toxic environmental exposures and access to care role in the overall process. All these recommendations are considered as universal standards and applicable across all borders.^v The Women displaced are dealt with about all the problems discussed above. Some of them were very prevalent and needed special attention. The standard of facilities provided to the IDP, s were very low and not upto the mark. There were no such facilities of different tests like Diabetes and Pregnancy related tests. Some of them were living in far flanged areas and some were in camps where this facility was not available. As 26 years old Najma was living in Union council Manjiwala Lakki Marwat was interviewed she said that "There was a BHU (Basic Health Unit) instead of DHQ (District Head Quarter Hospital) in the place where we were living. No such test was available over there. When I was pregnant I go to the Basic health unit which was near to us for Ultrasound but they referred me to the City Hospital which was far from us. I faced a lot of trouble in my pregnancy time"^{vi} In tribal areas women's cannot share openly her personal problems like sex and pregnancy issues and family planning etc. On the other side no such guidance provided to them regarding these matters. There are elder women in the families with which they somehow discuss it but the problem is that the elder women are not health experts or doctors that can properly guide them relating the issue. An IDP woman added to the matter, "I faced a lot of problem in my first pregnancy. I personally was Unaware of such things and I was confused that how I would discuss this matter with my family members. My husband had never shown any interest to ask me about my personal problems. I discussed with one of my elder aunt but she was relating me and telling me the old measures relating to pregnancy. No relevant guidance is provided to our females in such cases like doctors, skilled midwives are generally not available

to us.”^{vii}

Despite all the pre-pregnancy issues faced by the displaced women they are susceptible to a lot of chronic diseases in which one of the major is Malaria. Malaria was one of the most important problems that were faced by the pregnant women of the North Waziristan displaced people. Malaria infection during the phase of the pregnancy is an important health issue with considerable risk for the pregnant women, her fetus and the child to be born. The disease of malaria that is quiet rampant in such cases when there is unclean and unhygienic environment and conditions. There is a strong case and risk for the pregnant women to have malaria in such cases. Malaria in the pregnancy increases the risk of getting a mortal and maternal anemia, spontaneous abortion, low birth weight, still birth and neonatal death.^{viii}

Children Diseases

The displaced children of the North Waziristan were faced with a lot of health encounters and faced many diseases due to the change in the environment and unhygienic conditions they faced in the camps. The major children diseases that were paramount were the diseases that are spread by person-to-person contact. The notable of these diseases are the Chicken pox, Fifth disease, Hand/mouth/foot disease, herpes, impetigo, influenza, measles, mononucleosis, mumps, pink eye, rubella, etc. The other diseases are Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping cough, and Polio, Hepatitis B and Pneumococcal disease.^{ix} In these diseases the one, s that were spread from person to person interaction were dangerous in the case as it spread across the displaced children rapidly. The environment was suited for the diseases to spread as due to the unavailability of the proper required tents, washrooms etc the diseases spread through water and air as due to the less space and less resources available at the disposal of the displaced people the children were more prone towards the diseases. Also the case was that in these kinds of diseases that rapidly spread from person to person the medical practitioner’s advice that the patients must be separated from the normal persons. But here the condition cannot be applicable and practicable as the IDP, s had very less space. There was no free space and they hardly and barely managed to live. An IDP Sher Ahmad khan added to the cause, “We are total

56 members in our family in which 26 are Childs. Total 4 rooms were provided to us where we were living. We had very congested setup there. Whenever one are two Childs become sick the germs were spread in the whole family. There were almost 6 to 8 Childs per room and they all were using same utensils for eating, same sport goods and even though same soap for bathing because the aid which provided was very less as compare to our family members strength and we have no resources to provide separate stuff for each and every child.”^x The other diseases that were prevalent among the children were the Polio, measles, diphtheria etc were those that can be prevented through the early vaccination and some vaccination at the proper stages of the life. These vaccinations are highly recommended on health scale.^{xi} The problem with the children of the displaced people was that they did not have relevant vaccines at the proper stages. Due to this there issues of diseases aroused and become a daunting task to control due to the lack of the early vaccination facilities and the later treatment facilities that were also scarce.

Mental Disorder and Psychological issues with Women and Children’s

The displaced people of North Waziristan due to the operation Zarb-e azab experienced severe psychological and mental disorders ranging from the all ages of the man and women and especially the children were the worst effectives of the war and terror more prone to violence and physical and mental stress due to the actions and conduct of the terrorists and the military operation as the counter action against them. They are mostly living in the shelter homes, and in the camps, that are hostile to their natural living. The migration, violence, imposed poverty and the unsystematic and unhygienic atmosphere of the camps has changed their way of living style and the routine with which they lived in the past thus leading to disorders and abnormality. The conflict and the displacement from their native area created circumstances for their abnormal psychological behavior. Due to the prolonged violence in the area it has reshaped many lives and people. They have faced shelling, bloodiest scenes and destruction. Another factor observed was that crime rate has been increased as the data taken from the Bannu area after the influx of the IDP, s due

to the mental disorders and the thinking of the individuals after going through the traumas. As the government and the other humanitarian agencies only focused upon the physical ailments of the displaced people while ignoring the important issues of their mental and psychological aspect that is why it lead to the chronic health issues and can be reflected upon the community as a social consequences and evils that can persist even if the IDP, s return to their native areas.^{xii}

Women

The female IDP, s is more effected than the male ones according to the various studies and the statistics. They can be termed as the victimized as they are more prone towards the psychological disorders and the stressful situations. Female displaced are affected due to the loss of their cattle's, livestock and properties. The economic losses leads to a direct and an overwhelming effect on the females either through forced or the early marriages, domestic tensions or the other consequences of the displacement as they observe their cultural, social and the economic roles in a lot limited way in the new environment. The female IDP, s was more prone towards the stressful life events than the male ones. In the conflicting situation all the displaced people especially the females face a lot of the psychological problems like the post-traumatic stress, the phobias and the anxiety that can finally lead towards the behaviors like the loneliness, withdrawal, revenges, nightmares, irritation, hostility and also the effectives tries to violate the societal norms and customs imposed over them. Study also shown that the female displaced persons had a high level of the hyper arousal symptoms than the male IDP, s. The female ones have faced a higher level of the depression, stress and the anxiety as compared to the male ones. The issue of the avoidance, intrusion and the numbing was also higher in females and consequently present in all the displaced people. The lack of the health care facilities and the restriction on the mobility was also on higher level in the females than in the male members of the displaced persons. Thus, the overall issue of the psychological stress and the trauma was more present in the females than in the males.^{xiii} A 54 years old women was interviewed she said that, "I have a 19 years old daughter and she can't sleep alone or in a separate room. She sleeps with me or

with her elder or smaller sister. The reason she told was that once they were traveling her daughter seen a TTP member in their native place, he has long hairs, having Gun in their hands and covered his face with a mask with a violent behavior. Now whenever she seen a person having getup like that person, whether it's on Television or somewhere else she start crying."^{xiv}

Children

The children affected from the war on terror are confronted with a specific type of psychological issues as physically abused, exploited and dealt with hunger and disease. Due to the displacement many of the child rights that are guaranteed by the CRC (convention on the rights of the child) are put at a high risk including the protection, survival and the development without the discrimination. Thus, due to the sudden and unconscious displacement of the Children it greatly affects the psychological and the mental wellbeing of the children. Some of the groups of the children also face the traumatic conditions and thus require the special attention. In these the physically and the sexually abused children are those which have witnessed the traumatic level of the sufferings and those children that are with the disabilities. In the displacement the children are thus more vulnerable to risk of the poverty due to the loss of the land, inheritance, the legal rights issue, discrimination issue and the issue of the inability to start the schooling and the other related problems of the education and development.^{xv}

The children of the North Waziristan displaced people suffered acute mental and psychological problems. Even the rate of the mortality was much higher in the children and the women than the others. The children were greatly suffered from the war and the displacement faced the traumatic disorders. This resulted in creating fear and the issue of revenge in their mental preposition and thinking.^{xvi} Shafi Ullah IDP from North Waziristan added to the issue that, "After facing continues terror and fear and the noise of bombing and bullets our child's became psychologically sick. Now we are in the settled and peaceful area but still our children's afraid. Whenever they listen the noise of airplane they ran towards any elder member of the family or go inside the rooms."^{xvii}

Issue of the education facilities and access to Education

Children

The children effected by the war and the other emergency situations are deprived of a lot of the life needs in which the paramount is education. Going to the schools can be the best source for the children affected as it would be relieving them of the psychological and psychosocial distress. For the integration into the local community the education can be the best ingredient for the IDP, s as they return to their homes or settle elsewhere. In the established human rights law, in the area of the “Guiding principles on internal displacement” it stresses on the concerned authorities to have a free and a compulsory education for all the IDP, s children. Also in *addition* it urges on the authorities to establish the training and the educational facilities for the effected children.^{xviii} The most relevant problems pertained with the IDP, s children education is the lack of the infrastructure and proper setup, the issue of the security and safety, the loss of documentation, the residency, the language concerned, the discrimination they are prone to, the issue of school fees, material and the stationary needs, the economic burdens and responsibilities and the experience of displacement.^{xix}

The children of the North Waziristan are deprived of their fundamental right of education due to their forced displacement from their native areas. The people cannot afford the education facilities of their children because of the barriers in finding the proper livelihood sources for their children. The same happened to the IDP, s of North Waziristan where the drop out of the children increased by 40 %.^{xx}

Female and Women education issue

The education of the females on the Pashtun society is linked to the strict socio-political considerations of the religious interpretation and the Pashtun wali code of conduct. The different opinions and the stereotypes arising from the politics, culture and the religion in the Pashtun society shape the view of the males about the female education. Women in the tribal areas of Pakistan have a relatively less openness to the education than the other areas and provinces of Pakistan. As of the UNESCO report of 2000 only 11 % girls and females are literate in the tribal belt of Pakistan. The Pashtuns as strictly

adherent to the Pashtun wali code of conduct consider the female education as the violation of the code of conduct. This narrative is now changing but still majority of the people consider women either to be in the home or in the grave. In the same way the religious interpretation of the female education is often done in the way that is detrimental to their education. This is due to the violent religious and extremist narrative developed after the war on terror and before that in the war against soviets.^{xxi} The existing literacy rate in the FATA is only three percent which may be the lowest in the world. While on the other hand the dropout rate among the female is 70.6 percent. There are a lot of schools in FATA from decades but the lowest literacy rate speaks out the hindrances and the social disparities at the society level. On the other hand the Taliban bombed a lot of female schools and banning the female education considering it as unIslamic according to their interpretation of Islam, warned the parents not to send their daughters to the school. This greatly affected the female enrolment in the schools. Adding to the problem there are very less female teachers available for the female FATA students. And the females have to go to the nearest and adjoining districts of the KPK but due to the factor of security it is also on decline.^{xxii} A 17 years girl was interviewed she said that, “We are 4 sisters and no brother, I am the eldest one. My father doesn’t allow me for school because of our family customs. I feel really depressing when I see other girls going to school. Sometimes I think how lucky these girls are; going to school is my biggest wish.”^{xxiii}

Gender based Violence and Women (GBV)

There are many human rights violations that the IDP, s are faced with in which the Women are the greater risk than the others. They face the livelihood problems and the key documentation needed for the daily life of the women. They have indeed the less access to the education, health care facilities, training and other livelihood issues. One of the most paramount problem is that they are the most prone to the issue of the sexual and the gender based violence. It is a kind of an unfortunate reality faced by them. Usually without the protection of the family and the community the displaced women are the most vulnerable to the issues of the domestic violence, rape, forced prostitution, trafficking and many of the

other violent conditions. On the other hand women mostly have lost their husbands have additional family burdens on them relying on the basic survival skills.^{xxiv} According to the conventional and the traditional concept of the conflict the women are the most effected victims and potential vulnerable to the conflicts. The conflict-ridden situation facilitates the possibility of the gender based violence. The prostitution and the domestic violence becomes the most important in the case of the militarization and the militarism. All the historical wars in the human history has proven to the fact of the women as the biggest effectives as like the sex slaves, rape, forced prostitution, forced labor etc.^{xxv} The FATA females like the other displaced women are also prone to all the issues connected with the gender based violence of the women. There are a lot of stories told on hidden account about the victimization of the women in the camps as well as when these women go outside of the camps for the search of the food and the other necessities of the life like the health problems etc. Young girls and the child's are often targeted to the sexual exploitation, rape, abuse etc. The females are reported to be exploited at the food distribution points and also in the camps at the absence of their man. So the women in this case prefer to be in the camps rather to get outside for the necessities of their lives. There is also the issue of the privacy for the females because there is no proper lock out system for the females in the camps.^{xxvi} The IDP, s of the North Waziristan camped in the Lakki marwat and in the shelter homes also like the other displaced people are reportedly have faced a lot of the issues related to the gender based violence. The problem and the fact is that due to these females are very much traditional and cannot raise voices against their exploitation as they prefer it's better to be quiet as they consider it against their honor and the opinion that will develop against them if the people will know about it. A women from North Waziristan was interviewed she added to the matter that, "We don't feel safe over here in a new place. In our native area we were go outside the homes without any fear for water, agriculture work and other works but here we can't. Many times and at different places we are been harassed in the camps, outside in getting of ration and even at registration centers but we don't discuss it with our males because then they react and tension increased in the family."^{xxvii}

CONCLUSION:

The women and children are the worst effectives of war anywhere in the world. History is proven to the fact that they are the most susceptible and prone to the scourge of war. The same was the case with the IDP, s in the aftermath of the operation Zarb-e-azb camped in district Lakki Marwat. The fundamental issue they faced was the issue of identity as to be an IDP or refugee on international level the basic documentation is required everywhere in order to dwell in the place to where a person is migrated. The women IDP, s lacked the national identity cards and fundamental documentation due to which they faced difficulty in travelling, collecting the food rations, facing the registration camps, check posts and applying for jobs. Due to the less availability of the tents and camps and the less number of blankets at the disposal of women and children they were susceptible to a lot of diseases most primarily were the water born diseases and infectious diseases. Women in pregnancy faced severe issues as in the first case no pre-pregnancy recommendations were followed due to less available resources and the dearth of proper awareness. No proper pregnancy related tests were available for them in the camps and the facility in the local hospitals of Lakki Marwat was below standard. Some other issues the IDP, s women specifically face are due to the strict social and religious customs in the tribal belt the sex and pregnancy related issues cannot be discussed openly and women feel shy to discuss it even with her close relatives and belongings. The diseases to which the children were most prone to were influenza and chicken pox etc due to the less space in tents along with less bathrooms facility available and unhygienic conditions. Despite this no proper vaccinations were available in camps for polio and measles diseases. Women and children had mental and psychological setbacks because of the operation in which women were greatly affected due to the loss of the belongings and live stock. They faced post traumatic stress disorder, phobia and anxiety disorders after the war that led to loneliness, withdrawal, revenge etc. They have more hyper arousal tendency than males. Due to the lack of health care facilities and restriction on mobility their mental issues got worse. The children were badly affected psychologically due to physical abuse, hunger and diseases. They faced traumatic conditions the noise of the bombs and

firing led to fear and anxiety. The loss of the land and inability to attend schools affects them too. In case of education for the children the lack of resources, security issues along with lack of proper infrastructure and curriculum in camps led to increase in drop out of students. The issue of language change and discrimination was another issue faced by IDP, s children. The females already have a less enrollment in schools due to the strict socio cultural and religious structure of tribal society that consider women education unethical and irreligious. But due to the displacement their educational challenges intensified due to the less availability of teachers, honor issues, security issues and less independent schools for females led to the further drop out of students in schools and their literacy rate deteriorated further. Gender based

violence is another challenge for IDP, s women. In wars and its aftermaths women are more susceptible to rape, forced prostitution and trafficking. Due to the loss of their husbands the basic survival of the family is upon women that is why they have to face the honor and gender issues in camps and outside the camps when they have to face strangers. In camps their privacy is at stake while outside their purdah and religious and social veiling is at stake. For the IDP, s women the another issue was also alarming that even if they were faced with gender violence they cannot raise voice against their exploitation openly as than their honor and the honor of the family becomes at stake.

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