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From Humanitarian Assistance to Women's Protection: International Organizations' Response to Conflict-Induced Displacement in Swat, Pakistan (2007–2009)

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Email: mehreenhashmi7@gmail.com**ARTICLE INFO****ABSTRACT****Received:**

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The focus of this article is the human security of women displaced during Swat Conflict in Pakistan 2007-09 and humanitarian assistance, provided by international Organizations. Displacement exposed women to multiple security threats and multiplied the vulnerabilities such as threats to physical security, disruption of health care and education, loss of livelihoods, psychosocial distress, and insecurity of housing. International organizations were responsive providing with emergency shelter, water and sanitation, food and nutrition, health, education, protection and psychosocial support. But humanitarian operations are not synonymous with lasting human security. The current study focuses on the role and the effectiveness of the international organizations in fulfilling the human security of women displaced from their homes. The study used a qualitative exploratory research design, relying on oral history and semi-structured interviews with 100 conflict-affected women in Swat and neighboring conflict-affected areas. Coupled with secondary data, an integrated Human Security – Feminist Institutional framework guides the analysis. The results suggest that humanitarian intervention played a key role in immediate security and service provision. However, significant gaps in protection and recovery existed. Though international organizations were comparatively better at meeting acute human crisis than in delivering long term protection, agency, and recovery in a gender responsive way. Humanitarian effectiveness should therefore be evaluated on a continuum from assistance to protection, empowerment to sustainable human security. The integrated theoretical framework adds to the understanding of the ways in which humanitarian outcomes are driven, both by material humanitarian interventions and by gendered social processes.

Introduction

Armed conflict and forced displacement create other threats of insecurity beyond direct exposure to conflict. Conflict wreaks havoc on livelihoods, health services, schools, shelter, social relations, and protection services. These impacts are often gendered as women and men have different social, economic and institutional statuses before, during and after conflict. Women might have further restrictions affecting their mobility, reproductive health, household duties, access to resources and decision-making. Assessing humanitarian intervention, therefore, cannot only be about the provision of assistance, but also about how it diminishes gendered vulnerability and assists in sustainable protection.

The conflict in Swat (2007-2009) is an important case where these issues can be explored. Militancy, insecurity and consequently military operations led to massive displacement from Swat and its adjacent districts. Emergency shelter, food, health, education, water and sanitation, protection and psychosocial support were needed for the displaced populations.

International organizations collaborated with the Pakistani Governmental institutions, local authorities, humanitarian organizations, and host communities in responding to the emergency.

However, for displaced women, the humanitarian needs went beyond the provision of material support. The conflict had negative impacts on family life, education, livelihoods, health, mobility and social security. Humanitarian interventions thus took place in a gendered social environment in which women's decision-making authority and access to resources at institutions were not always the same.

This is illustrated via the underlying study. The head of the family made the decision to evacuate in 96% of cases while 4% made their own decision. This suggests that there is a high level of structuring of the decision on displacement by pre-existing gender relations. The educational profile of people responding is similarly the result of the longer-term impacts of gendered educational exclusion, as 62% were reported as illiterate in the underlying dataset.

International organizations thus played a pivotal role between emergency assistance and protection. They should not be judged just on the amount of food, shelter, medical services, schools, or other services provided. A wider assessment needs to consider if interventions actually enhanced physical security, health, education, psychosocial wellbeing, dignity, agency, participation and prospects for recovery of women.

This study attempts to address this issue by conducting a study from the perspective of those women who have been displaced due to conflict. It questions whether international organizations were only delivering emergency and/or whether their interventions resulted in meaningful and sustainable protection.

This analysis is a mixed method of Human Security Theory and Feminist Institutionalism. Human Security Theory is a theory that moves away from territorial security and towards the security and wellbeing of individuals. The UNDP in 1994 introduced the term "human security" which established a paradigm of security which focused on persons first and foremost and expanded the definition of security to encompass economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. The feminist institutionalism approach adds to this by focusing on the effects of formal rules, informal norms, organizational structures and institutional practices on gender outcomes. A good example of this can be found in the work of Mackay et al. (2010) which shows how to consider institutions from a gender perspective.

The study has three main contributions: First, it puts the voices of displaced women at the heart of the evaluation of humanitarian intervention. Second, it links humanitarian impacts with institutional processes in an integrated approach of Human Security – Feminist Institutional framework. Third, it has conceptualized humanitarian response as a continuum from assisting to protecting and empowering to recovering and sustainable human security.

Structured Literature Review

Humanitarian Governance

The humanitarian action, which has long been seen through the lens of emergency relief, is now increasingly seen in an institutional way, with a wider humanitarian portfolio that includes humanitarian assistance and protection, accountability and recovery, and resilience. According to Barnett (2011), humanitarianism has become an institutionalized international practice of states, United Nations agencies, international NGOs and more.

The modern humanitarian system is thus one with many institutional actors, in a system of partnerships and coordination. National governments, local authorities, civil society organizations and community networks are often essential to implement the principles of international humanitarianism into concrete interventions for international organizations.

This institutional complexity necessitates coordination and accountability as a key aspect of humanitarian effectiveness. The Ferris (2011) illustrate that in the last few decades humanitarian actors have not only tried to help vulnerable populations in conflict and disaster situations but also to safeguard them. Assistance vs protection is of critical importance for women displaced by conflict, as material resources do not necessarily respond to exposure to violence, exclusion, discrimination or to long-term vulnerability.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement also lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive definition of the rights and protection needs of IDPs (United Nations, 1998). Humanitarian response needs to therefore include protection and survival.

Women, Conflict, and Displacement

There are direct and indirect ways in which conflict impacts women. Violence against women, displacement, loss of livelihoods, disruption of healthcare and education and greater responsibility for care-giving may occur. Meanwhile, gender inequalities may be exacerbated during displacement.

The focus of Ní Aoláin et al. (2011) is on the pre-conflict gender relations, which shape women's experiences in conflict and post-conflict transition. Their analysis also reveals that post-conflict security is neither understood nor defined by traditional state-centred notions of security.

Similarly, Freedman (2016) shows that when humanitarian needs are measured in terms of population-level needs, refugee women's vulnerability can be overlooked, encompassing other vulnerabilities such as sexual and gender-based violence.

These viewpoints are applicable to the context of Swat as the overall feeling of insecurity related to the conflict also affected the lives of women, as well as gender inequalities in households, education, economy, and participation.

Human Security and Humanitarian Protection

Human Security Theory helps to provide an appropriate conceptual framework to explore the multidimensional effects of displacement. The UNDP (1994) model shifted the focus of security from state and military threats to people and human development.

Human security for displaced women involves:

- Physical safety;
- Food security;
- Health security;
- Educational security;
- Economic security;
- Community security;
- Psychosocial wellbeing;
- Respect and freedom from fear

This is particularly effective as it is a method that can be used to stop insecurity when people move out of a conflict zone. A woman might be able to avoid direct violence but still experience insecurity due to poor shelter, food insecurity, loss of livelihood, poor health services, psychosocial trauma, or insecurity upon return.

Feminist Institutionalism and Humanitarian Organizations

Feminist Institutionalism focuses on the formal rules, informal norms, organizational rules and practices, and gendered expectations that affect political and social outcomes of institutions. Since institutional arrangements influence behavior, opportunities and outcomes, it is important to view institutions from a gender perspective (Mackay et al., 2010).

When applied to humanitarian organizations, this lens brings up a number of questions:

1. Do women's needs feature in humanitarian planning?
2. Do women have the opportunity to take part in decisions on support?
3. Is there a services approach that is based on women's real social and cultural situation?
4. Are institutional structures enabling or disabling for women's agency?
5. Are there gender policies that are implemented in practice?
6. Does humanitarian programming focus on structural vulnerability or is it only about immediate needs?

The formal vs substantive gender transformation distinction is of key importance. An organization can offer a women's health facility without the need to alter institutional arrangements which restrict women's involvement in decisions about health, education, livelihoods or recovery.

International humanitarian response in Swat

Several international organizations were involved in the humanitarian response along with the Pakistani institutions in the Swat area. UNHCR engaged in protection, registration and displacement, shelter and camp management, while UNICEF was

involved in education, child protection, health related activities, water and sanitation, and other humanitarian actors in complementary activities.

This underlying dataset highlights the key role of camps in displacement. 84% of respondents mentioned that they were in IDP camps right after the migration, 8% in own homes, and 8% with other family members.

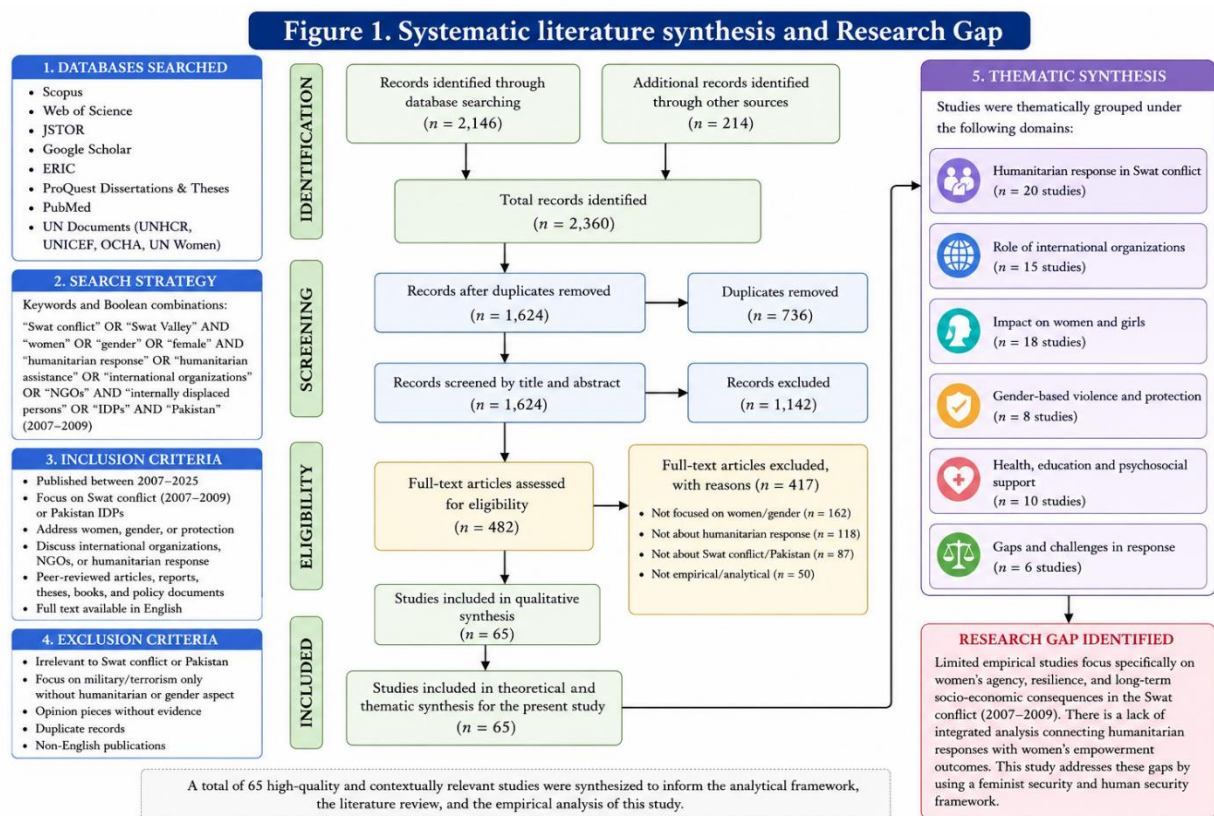
However, the literature highlights issues of coordination, psychosocial support, reproductive health, livelihood recovery and participation. These challenges are significant as a reflection of the boundaries of an assistance-based approach.

Literature synthesis and research gap

The literature shows that international organizations can alleviate immediate humanitarian suffering with food, shelter, health, education and emergency services. But humanitarian assessments often focus on the products of the projects, instead of on beneficiaries' experience of protection, dignity, participation and long-term recovery.

In much the same way, research on the Swat conflict has been largely geared towards militancy, counter terrorism, military operations, displacement and security. There has been less focus on examining international humanitarian organizations as seen through the eyes of displaced women.

The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by investigating both human-security outcomes and institutional processes.



Research Gap & Research Questions

Based on the above, the study outlines five interwoven research gaps

First, relatively little research takes a women's perspective to the international humanitarian response to the conflict in Swat. Second, humanitarian performance is usually measured in terms of services provided, not in lived experiences. Third, there is still little research into the link between humanitarian assistance and women's protection in the longer term. Third, the literature review of the Swat literature reveals lack of integration of Human Security Theory with Feminist Institutionalism. Finally, there is a lack of conceptual focus on the shift between immediate assistance and sustainable recovery and women's agency.

The study is aimed at tackling the following questions:

1. What part did the international organizations take in addressing the humanitarian needs of IDW in the conflict in Swat?
2. How were the gender-specific needs for health, safety, education, psychosocial wellbeing and livelihoods addressed in humanitarian interventions?
3. What was the displaced women's feeling of the effectiveness of international organizations to safeguard their security, dignity and wellbeing?
4. What institutional, cultural and/or operational factors helped or hindered humanitarian effectiveness?
5. What can be learnt from the Swat experience for gender responsive humanitarian interventions in the future in Pakistan?

Theoretical Framework

Human Security Theory

The outcome dimension to the framework comes from the Human Security Theory. It questions whether the people do not suffer from fear or want and whether they have the means to a secure and dignified life.

The framework is used for physical security, health, food, education, economic wellbeing, community relations, psychosocial security and housing in the context of the Swat case.

This theory then permits humanitarian intervention to be evaluated in terms other than its ability to save lives.

Feminist Institutionalism

The institutional dimension is given by Feminist Institutionalism. It reviews the effect of formal and informal rules that are gendered on access to resources, participation, decision making and protection.

This is especially relevant, as displaced women had multiple experiences of interacting with different institutional settings – within the household, camps, government, international bodies, NGOs, and host communities.

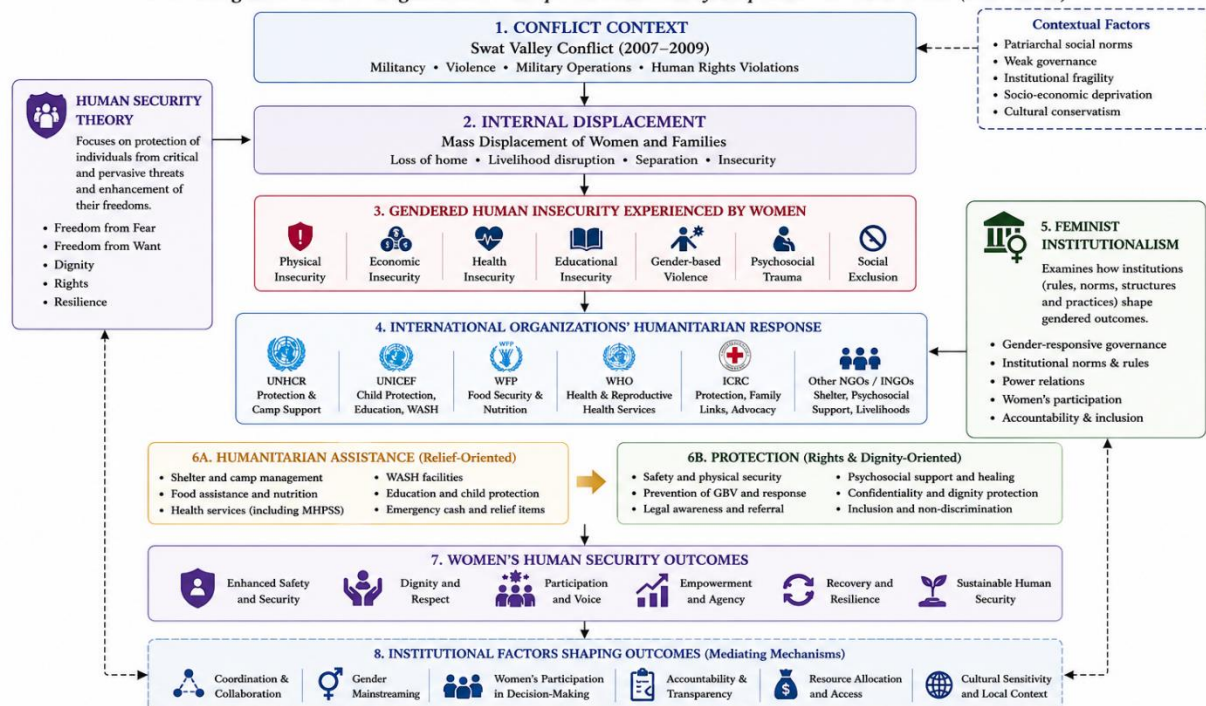
The institutional question is not simply one of whether there were services, but whether women had access to and influence on institutional structures for delivering services.

The integrated human security–feminist institutional framework

The integrated framework will link:

Conflict – Displacement – Gendered Insecurity – Institutional Response – Humanitarian Assistance – Protection – Agency and Participation – Recovery – Sustainable Human Security.

Figure 2. Integrated Human Security–Feminist Institutional Framework
Evaluating International Organizations' Response to Internally Displaced Women in Swat (2007–2009)



Note: The framework illustrates how the Swat conflict led to internal displacement and gendered human insecurity, how international organizations provided humanitarian assistance that should transition into protection, and how outcomes for women are shaped through the interaction of Human Security Theory and Feminist Institutionalism.

The pathways through which feminist institutionalism shapes the likelihood of achieving the outcomes delineated in HST are the institutional processes. The institutional processes are those that shape the likelihood of the outcomes outlined in HST.

Operationalization

Analytical dimension	Human Security indicator	Feminist indicator	Institutional	Empirical evidence
Physical Security	Freedom from fear	protection mechanisms		Threats to Safety
Health	Health Security	Gender-Responsive Provision		Services for women's Health
Education	Human Capability	Gender Inclusion		Destruction of Girls Schools, and Schools in Camps
Economic Security	freedom from want	Access and Participation in Economic Activities		Livelihood destruction, Limited Finances
Psychological Security	Human wellbeing	Institutional responsiveness		Trauma support
Participation	Community Security	Women's Agency		Limited Decision Making
Recovery	Sustainable Security	Institutional responsiveness		Construction of Housing and livelihood
Dignity	Human Centered Protection	Gender Equality		Voice, inclusion, autonomy

These are the areas where recovery is already underway. Recovery is already happening in these areas: sustainable security, institutional continuity, housing and livelihoods.

The key rights are dignity, the right to be protected from a human rights perspective, and gender equality, voices, privacy and autonomy.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is of an exploratory qualitative research design that adopts oral-history and semi-structured interviews. The design was chosen due to the research's focus on women's experiences, perceptions, memories, and interpretations of the process of displacement and humanitarian intervention.

The study is not of a statistical generalizable nature. The numerical distributions found in the results are reported descriptively to illustrate patterns in the sample.

Study population and the participants

The study covers 100 women who are the victims of conflict-induced displacement in relation to the conflict in Swat. The participants came from Swat and bordering conflict affected areas.

Participants were identified through purposive sampling to ensure that they had first-hand experiences with displacement and humanitarian assistance.

Data Sources

The primary data included oral-history and semi-structured interviews. Secondary sources were humanitarian reports, United Nations documents, government publications, scholarly research and policy literature.

Data Collection

Interview topics included:

- Displacement and evacuation;
- Shelter;
- Food;
- Healthcare;
- Education;
- Security;
- Psychosocial wellbeing;
- Cooperation with the humanitarian actors;
- Livelihoods;
- Return and reconstruction;
- Women's involvement and decision making.

Data Analysis

Patterns were identified using the thematic analysis. The method for analysis was conducted based on the six-phase method of Braun and Clarke (2006), which is widely used in the analysis of qualitative data. According to Braun and Clarke, thematic analysis is a flexible approach to spotting patterns in qualitative data.

This analysis was both deductive and interpretive. The Human Security–Feminist Institutional framework was used as a guide for deductive coding, and inductive coding was used to identify themes that arose from the women's accounts.

Trustworthiness

Data from the interviews were triangulated with humanitarian documentation and academic literature in order to increase credibility. An audit trail of themes and interpretations was also kept during the analysis.

Ethical Considerations

To honor the sensitivity of conflict related experiences confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized. The participation was voluntary and the subjects were informed about the purpose of the research and their right to withdrawal. Identifying information was not included in the analysis.

Methodological Limitations

This is a retrospective study, which could be subject to recall bias. Purposive sampling reduces the generalizability of the results. In addition, humanitarian outcomes are not always attributed to individual organizations as the response involved multiple actors from both the international, national, local and community level.

Findings

Immediate Humanitarian Security

The results show that the security was multidimensional due to the displacement. 56 percent of the respondents indicated that threats to life were a large security problem, 20 percent said that food and shelter were a big security challenge, 6 percent financial issue, 4 percent social issue and 14 percent multiple insecurity.

The evidence suggests that humanitarian intervention was thus taking place in a setting of economic, social and material insecurity as well as immediate physical insecurity.

Women's Health

Eighty-four percent said women's health facilities were available in the IDP camps and 16% said that women's health facilities were not available.

This is one of the most visible aspects where humanitarian action helped to achieve immediate human security.

Not everyone had access to this, however. The discovery also suggests that the presence of services does not necessarily imply an effective level of access.

Education for Girls

Of the respondents, 66% said that they were aware of girl's school in IDP camps, while 34% were not.

Temporary educational provision thus became a key intervention, especially in the wake of the school disruptions of conflict and displacement faced by girls.

But temporary education alone was not going to be enough to address the structural educational inequalities faced by women prior to the conflict.

Psychosocial Support

Psychosocial insecurity was an important aspect of displacement.

Forty-six percent of respondents said camp support staff was an important source of coping with trauma, 38% said family was and 16% said host community.

Significantly, this finding showed that psychosocial protection is achieved through both formal humanitarian institutions and informal social networks.

Host Communities as Protection Networks

A total of 74% said that host communities were cooperative, 22% said it was average and 4% said it was non-cooperative.

Host communities provided food, shelter, medicines, financial support and emotional support.

The finding contributes to a better understanding of humanitarian response as a process that happens in the interplay between formal humanitarian institutions and community networks, as opposed to the organization-centered concept.

Economic Insecurity

Prior to displacement, the income sources reported were household employment (64%) and business activity (36%).

26% of those who returned said they struggled with finances, 30% with shelter, 12% with food, and 32% with more than one type of hardship.

The results thus highlight a major disconnect between emergency humanitarian assistance and sustainable livelihood recovery.

Housing Destruction and Post-Return Insecurity

The destruction of their homes was reported by 56% and 40% reported that their house remained normal; 4% reported that their house was occupied by others.

This is significant as it means that the return did not necessarily mean the return to security.

The post-return experience shows that the humanitarian response needs to be seen as a continuum of operations from displacement to return and reconstruction.

Summary of Findings

Findings	Percentage	Analytical Significance
Women Health Facilities	84 %	Strong contribution to immediate health security
Educational continuity	66%	Educational Continuity but Partial coverage of Girl's Education
Camp Staff Provided Trauma Support	46 %	Institutional responsiveness
Host Communities Cooperation	74%	Importance of local protection networks
Threats to Life as Major Security Concern	56%	Continued Physical Insecurity
Post Return Shelter Problem	30 %	Recovery Gap
Post Return Financial Problem	26 %	Livelihood Security Gap
Multiple Post Return Problem	32 %	Multidimensional Insecurities
Destruction of Homes	56%	Long Term Reconstruction Challenge

Discussion

Humanitarian Assistance Improved Immediate Security

The evidence suggests that immediate human security was important and that international humanitarian organizations played a significant role in that security.

Immediate vulnerabilities were addressed through health services and educational facilities, psychosocial assistance, shelter, food and camp services.

A high level of availability of women health facilities (84%) is particularly significant as health is a core component of human security. In a like manner, educational facilities for girls helped to ensure continuity in education.

But the results did not warrant leaving the assumption that humanitarian organizations fully addressed these insecurities. We see uneven service coverage as 16% report no access to women's health facilities, and 34% report no access to girls' schools.

Thus, the proper answer will be that international humanitarian intervention helped to, but did not achieve, immediate human security.

Assistance Was Stronger than Long-Term Protection

The key is the difference between help and defense.

Humanitarian response was provided to meet immediate needs. Ongoing exposure to insecurity, vulnerability, discrimination and trauma and lack of access to durable resources had to be protected.

This is especially evident in the post-return evidence. Although emergency intervention was provided, respondents still indicated financial, shelter, food and housing issues.

Similarly, Ferris (2011) notes the difference between humanitarian assistance and the wider politics of protection.

The case of Swat thus highlights that humanitarian action can help alleviate short-term need without necessarily ensuring sustainable protection.

Gender-Responsive Provision Was Partial?

Gender responsive programming is evidenced by women's health facilities and girls' schools. Feminist Institutionalism needs to be further explored, however, to understand if women had an impact on humanitarian decision-making.

The findings of 96% of respondents saying that the head of the family made the decision about the evacuation shows that women's agency was limited in the household decision-making processes.

This implies that attention to gender in service provision and gender transformative institutional practice cannot be confused.

Gender-responsive humanitarianism must include women as both beneficiaries and involved actors in the needs assessment, program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process.

Psychosocial Protection needs to be Institutional and Community Integrated

The results of the findings about the trauma support the role of formal and informal institutions.

The camp support staff were identified by 46% of respondents while the family and host communities also had significant roles.

This indicates a relational approach to effective humanitarian protection. International organizations offer resources and specialized services and families/communities offer social/emotional support.

Humanitarian policy should thus reinforce, not supplant, community-based coping strategies.

Economic Recovery Was a Major Institutional Gap

Financial difficulties do not resolve after return, indicating a lack of financial transition from relief to recovery.

While emergency assistance may help keep households afloat, livelihood recovery is needed for long-term human security.

Twenty-six percent reported financial problems, and 32 percent reported several post-return financial issues, suggesting that humanitarian interventions did not necessarily put all people in the economy back on track.

This discovery reinforces the wider concept of how effective humanitarian action is, in which livelihood recovery is seen as a component of protection, not a separate development challenge.

Return Was Not Equivalent to Recovery

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that physical return did not necessarily yield human security came from the destruction of homes, reported by 56% of respondents.

The return of the displaced is often viewed as the end of displacement. However, with a human-security lens, return can only be deemed a success if people have access to safe housing, livelihood, services, community security and dignity.

The Swat findings thus question a limited interpretation of "durable solutions."

Human Security–Feminist Institutionalism as an Integrated Explanation

The two theoretical perspectives shed light on different aspects of the results.

Human Security Theory is the need to assess the intervention on security of the human, security of the health, security of the education, security of the physical, security of the economy, security of the psychosocial, security of housing and security of dignity.

Feminist Institutionalism addresses the question of why, despite the accessibility of services, gendered vulnerability can be present.

The theories show that:

Material assistance without institutional inclusion can lead to temporary security without empowerment.

Participation, without material resources, can result in institutional inclusion without protection.

Both are essential for effective humanitarian action.

Humanitarian Assistance to Women's Protection

The study suggests the following four-step analytical process:

Stage 1: Humanitarian Assistance

Registration, emergency support, food, shelter, health, education, water and sanitation.



Stage 2: Protection

Physical safety, psychosocial support, gender-sensitive services, dignity and prevention of additional harm.



Stage 3: Empowerment

The participation, voice, agency, livelihoods and decision making of women.

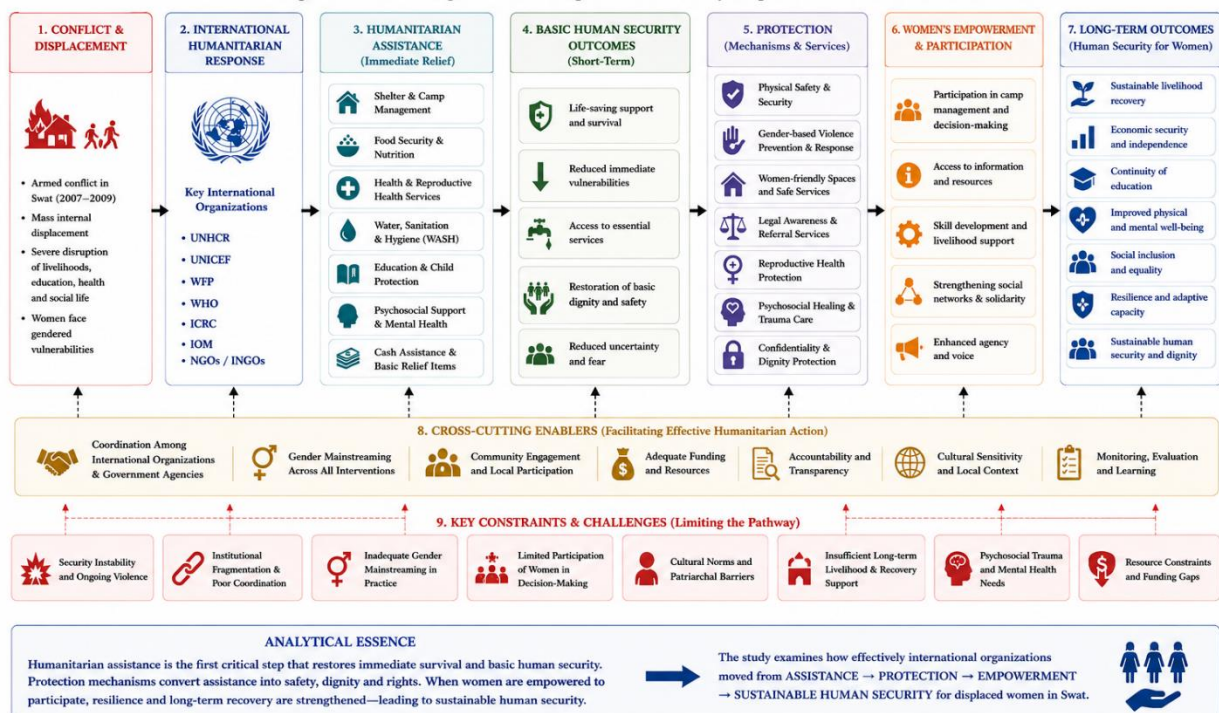


Stage 4: Sustainable Human Security

Safe housing, economic resilience, social inclusion, recovery and long-term wellbeing.

Figure 3. From Humanitarian Assistance to Women Protection: Analytical Pathways

Evaluating International Organizations' Response to Internally Displaced Women in Swat (2007–2009)



Note: The framework illustrates the analytical pathway from humanitarian assistance to women's protection and empowerment, highlighting enabling factors, constraints, and outcomes in the context of internally displaced women in Swat (2007–2009).

The empirical evidence shows relatively good performance at the first stage, some at the second, and less at the third and fourth stages of institutional change.

This is the main analytical contribution of this study.

Theoretical Contribution

The study is a contribution to the literature on humanitarianism, which is based on the integration of two theories – Human Security Theory and Feminist Institutionalism.

Human Security Theory sets out the substantive results that international humanitarian efforts should achieve.

Feminist Institutionalism explains why the outcomes are enabled or constrained by institutions.

The integrated framework thus does not ask the question of whether or not humanitarian assistance was provided, but rather:

- Was any help provided to decrease insecurity?
- Was gender responsive protection offered by institutions?
- Were women involved in decision making?
- Were interventions seen to enhance agency?
- Were there benefits for sustainable recovery in humanitarian assistance?

The study thus suggests the following preposition

$$\text{Humanitarian effectiveness} = \text{assistance} + \text{protection} + \text{agency} + \text{sustainable recovery}.$$

This formulation can be used in other displacement contexts outside of Swat that are caused by conflict.

Policy Implications

Integrating relief and protection

Protection, psychosocial support, legal assistance and gender responsive services are not something that should be added on to an emergency program as an afterthought but should be embedded from the start.

Institutionalize Women's Participation

Displaced women to be involved in humanitarian needs assessment, camp committees, camp program design, monitoring and evaluation.

Improve Women's health services

The following should be integrated into humanitarian health program: reproductive health and maternal care, mental-health services, privacy and culturally appropriate access.

Protect Girls' Education

The temporary learning facilities should be connected to long term reconstruction/reintegration to formal education.

Show a connection between humanitarian assistance and livelihood recovery

Livelihoods should be restored during the humanitarian phase and not at the end of displacement.

Strengthen Coordination

There should be well-defined coordination and accountability procedures among international organizations, governmental bodies, local authorities, NGOs and community organizations.

Recognize Community-Based Protection

Families and host communities are essential protection actors and are important actors to be supported, not ignored or overlooked, when considering humanitarian programming.

Support Psychosocially after return.

Services and support need to continue to be provided during the recovery stage as trauma does not automatically stop once physical displacement does.

Limitations

There are some limitations of the study.

- The research is based on the recall of events that took place between 2007 and 2009, which could lead to recall bias.
- Second, a purposive sample does not allow for the usual statistical generalizability.
- Thirdly, the study is based around women who are impacted by the conflict in Swat and thus cannot be representative of all displaced women in Pakistan.

- Fourth, there were multiple actors in humanitarian intervention. It is thus unfair to blame all the results on individual international organizations.
- The study assesses the humanitarian response as an institutional field comprised of international organizations, government, non-governmental organizations, host communities and families.
- Lastly, the numerical distribution data in the finding should not be considered as inferential statistical estimates of the participant data set, but rather as descriptive summaries.

Conclusion

This study was an assessment of the part played by International Organizations in the context of responding to conflict-induced displacement of women in the context of the Swat conflict of 2007-2009. It took an integrated Human Security-Feminist Institutional framework to consider humanitarian intervention not only in terms of humanitarian assistance provided, but also protection, agency, dignity and sustainable recovery.

The evidence suggests that humanitarian interventions did make a contribution to immediate human security, to a significant degree. The psychosocial assistance received from women's health facilities was reported by 84% of respondents, girls' schools by 66% and camp support staff was an important source of psychosocial assistance.

Meanwhile, high levels of protection and recovery deficits persisted. Multiple security threats were cited including threats to life (56%), post-return difficulties (financial insecurity, shelter problems, food insecurity). In 56% of respondents, their recovery did not translate into the destruction of their homes, and this is a testament to the destruction of homes being reported as well.

The results, accordingly, align with the key difference between humanitarian assistance and women's protection in the center. While assistance can help to alleviate immediate deprivation, protection needs to be ongoing and involve institutional mechanisms for ensuring safety, dignity, psychosocial wellbeing, gender equality, participation and rights. Other essential elements for sustainable human security include livelihood recovery, safe housing, social inclusion and agency.

The theoretical contribution of the study is to show the usefulness of the Human Security Theory and Feminist Institutionalism. The Human Security Theory describes what humanitarian intervention aims to accomplish, and Feminist Institutionalism is used to explain how gendered institutional structures and practices affect the accomplishment of the interventions.

The Swat experience indicates that, while international humanitarian actors could typically do more to provide relief, they were less effective at supporting a shift towards empowerment and sustainable recovery. Future humanitarian action in Pakistan should, therefore, take a continuum-based approach, in which the humanitarian dimensions of relief, protection, participation, livelihood recovery, reconstruction and resilience are considered as interconnected and not separate and sequential actions.

The yardstick to assess the effectiveness of humanitarian action is not restricted to what international organizations can achieve but it should be for displaced women feeling more secure, more dignified, more with agency and participation, more resilient when they come out of crisis.

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