

Problems and Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in the wake of Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Case Study of District Lakki Marwat

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Abstract

The Operation Zarb-e-Azb was a full-scale operation launched against terrorists and their hideouts in North Waziristan. The operation resulted in massive number of IDP's displaced from their homes. They settled in many different parts of Pakistan, including Lakki Marwat. They have experienced severe problems and challenges since the time they were displaced from their native area. The most prominent were the homes, food and health as their basic needs and problem. These problems were coupled with a lot of other related problems like hygiene, access to education, loss of property, identity issues, and the problem of assimilation, security threats and a denial of political rights on a general scale. The paper will try to discuss and analyze the level and extent of these problems and the response of the government and other non-government agencies to tackle with these issues.

Key Words: Identity, IDP, s, Hygiene, Food, Health, Political rights

Introduction:

The majority displaced Peoples favor to dwell with host families or communities instead of staying in organized IDP camps. Decisions by displaced peoples to stay with host connections or communities may be due to the following factors, for example:

- The nonexistence of camps in many circumstances of internal displacement
- The chance to follow local integration
- security problems for certain displaced persons inside the camps which escort them to look for better security outside a camp

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- The effortless opportunity of having associations or friends and other societal networks where hosting is probable; or
- A mixture of some or all of the above factors leading some families to tear their options, whereby part of the family unit may inhabit in a camp while one or numerous family members migrate to regions where employment opportunities are better, and where they might have host-enabling set of connections.¹

Operation Zarb-eAzB resulted in the huge displacement of people from North Waziristan to the districts of Bannu and Lakki Marwat. In Lakki district numbers of IDP's camped were 20,539 in which Male were 4,660, Female 5,641, and 10,238 Children's.² In the camped district they faced two types of problems one is basic needs included Shelter, Food and Health problems and the second was Other Problems like hygiene, education, property, identity issues, problem of assimilation, security threats issue and the use of political rights. We will discuss it in detail one by one.

Basic Needs

Residence Problems

When people came from North Waziristan they were adjusted in the Government institutions (Schools, Colleges and Hospitals) and in some camps by the District Authorities. According to government assent they were settled in the nearby schools and colleges where the rooms provided to them were very less as compare to their strength of the family. As khitab Ullah an IDP from North Waziritsan said that "We are total 52 members in our family while we were given 4 to 6 rooms which were not enough for us. Per room we were 6 to 9 peoples. We spend very congested and hard life."³

This kind of situation when there are less rooms and more peoples it leads to hygiene issues and prone to epidemic diseases. As one another interviewer confessed that "We faced the issue of cleanliness, purity of food, Noise due to lot of children's and small baby's presence. The diseases we faced with due to the use of the same utensils by a lot of people due to its less availability in quantity."⁴

This type of situation also leads to a lot of indirect problems like Adjustment, Privacy and Purdah. Anwar Ali IDP of North Waziristan pointed towards it in the following words, "When we arrived at the place, we noticed that there were very less place and more people settled here. Due to this we felt a lot bad. Our women cannot go out of the allocated rooms to us

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freely as in other rooms we have males of other homes from which we place our women in seclusion or in purdah. We cannot talk to our family members in privacy easily and freely because of the less space provided to us. That is why it was very difficult for us to be adjusted in this kind of setup and environment. In our own areas we have homes of very large size where we can adjust easily, so as we are conversed with such kind of setup it is too hard to bear such conditions now.”⁵ Same situation was there in the camps where they were camped.

The government strategy for the distribution of foods and tents were that one food packet and one tent per CNIC were given to the families of IDP's. So for some families in such cases it was very difficult to adjust; There males were less as compare to the numbers of females and children. One of the Female IDP living in camp stated that “We have total 37 members in our family in which there are 3 males, 11 females and 22 children's. We were given just 3 tents because there was 1 tent per CNIC and we had just 3 males in our home; so it was very difficult for us to adjust ourselves in this situation.”⁶ It was further asked from her that what about yours (females) CNIC and weather this package were valid for females CNIC or Not? She concluded that “I don't know that this package were also applicable at females CNIC but we haven't our CNIC's because we didn't felt any need of that; we never ever came out of our village in the whole life.”⁷

Food Problems

People of North Waziristan living in Lakki Marwat as IDP's faced enormous food problems too. First major issue was the lack of balance diet which was deficient in nutritional requirements. As a man named Sultan Ayaz acknowledged that “The Food provided to us was Bazari khuraak (Market food) that is different from our natural food which we used in our native areas. The food provided to us was Dalda Gee, Rice, Wheat, Nido milk (Dry milk), that cover only some portion of the food which we used to eat in our native areas where we combined it with mutton and goat meat, fruits of many kinds and fresh milk of cows and goats.”⁸ Many health issues especially for small children are associated with the issue when there is no proper food taken by individuals that is rich in proteins, carbohydrates, fibers, vitamins etc that is as a whole called balanced diet. As one of the literate IDP name Shahzeb Rehan added that “Our children have become weak and frail, not getting milk and meat, some are having various skin issues and stomach problems as the food are hygienically and nutritionally not good for their health.”⁹ One other issue that has seriously concerned with the health of the IDP, s living in Lakki Marwat is

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that these people feel that the food they are taking is majorly indifferent to them. These people are conversed with the typical or in local words called “Desi khali” food.

They prefer a simple natural food over modern packed foods. As one of the Aged resident pointed towards it in the following manner. “The food we eat is like we are eating shoppers. It is very much different to what we used to eat in our own area. It is not delicious in taste, having absolutely no taste sometimes as we are confused to figure out whether it was sweet or bitter am saying it in sarcastic way as we are not accustomed to such kind of food stuff. I sometimes think that how they make such kind of food stuff and then think how the other people in Pakistan eat this, he added while laughing loud.”¹⁰

Health Problems

The health issues related with the IDP, s of the North Waziristan are of various aspects. The first and the foremost concern of the IDP, s is that the health services provided by the government to them are not sufficient as according to their needs. The lack of the access to the health services is deteriorating their health problems and diseases. As one person pointed it in the way. “We just have tablets for headache and flue. We use them as we feel pain or headache. Government has not given proper medical care to us and any tablets and syrups available to us along with the injections and surgeries for other sensitive diseases.”¹¹ The basic health problem is one other issue that when taken in the health care of the small babies and women was of a grave concern to IDP, s. The vaccinations of the infectious diseases and those vaccinations that are primarily for small babies are about negligible. The health of the small babies, women and children in this way has been affected. As a person mentioned it in the following manner. “In our FATA and our own agency polio cases are there with children. Children have no access to the polio drops. The injections for the early babies of the small pox, measles etc are very few in number. We have left our Childs on the will of the ALLAH as most of them have got no basic health care and vaccinations needed for them. Some children have while much of them are left.”¹² Another health problem was the issue of space in the hospitals and access to the hospitals. As one of the Union council Name Abbakhel has 20 IDP’s families which have total 286 members in which there were 52 males, 75 females, and children’s were 159.¹³

Union council Abbakhel has total 20,000 their own inhabitants while there is only one Basic Health Unit (BHU) for the above mentioned people.¹⁴ So these all people were dependent and were treated in the only BHU which is terrible. As one of the IDP resided in Village

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Abbakhel stated. “Whenever we took patient to the BHU Abbakhel we faced a lot of problems. The BHU staff was totally biased they would treat their own inhabitants on priority basis and we will wait for hours and hours just for checkup or basic treatment. One day I took my mother to the hospital she has a flue and tonsils; we wait for almost 2 hours. Almost 5 families came after us and were treated before us. We were not treated with good manner as we were treated in our native Areas.”¹⁵ On the contrary when the Medical officer was interviewed he concluded that “We faced a lot of problem to tackle this issue because government didn’t increase our staff while the residents of the village increased. We were treating 30 to 40 extra patients a day. There was lack of staff, beds, rooms, and other treatment equipments.”¹⁶

Other Problems

Identity problem and disintegration from society

The IDP, s is disintegrated from the society of their own tribe and place. Their identity issue and the formal identification are in danger. They have the serious issue of their national identity cards which a lot of them have not made it. Due to the lack of the national identity card issue they are facing aloneness and they have difficulty in travelling from one place to the other in the country. The security forces check their identity cards at various check posts across the country and thus they have difficulty often to explain to them the issue related to them. IDP Hafiz Nazir Ullah acknowledged “At new place far from the home we are facing situations difficult. We have difficulty in traveling from one place to another because of the check posts and the checking of security personals. They ask for CNIC which we haven’t because we have no system of making CNIC in our native area and we also didn’t feel any need of CNIC there. Due to that at check posts we are treated as that we are not Pakistanis.”¹⁷

Loss of belongings and cattle’s

The economy of North Waziristan is primarily based on Livestock and agriculture. The agriculture was badly affected by the war against terrorism, the ongoing operation and movement of people from their native areas. Arshad Ullah an IDP said “Due to the Operation zarb-e-azb we were displaced and came here in Lakki Marwat, so there was no one to take care of agriculture over there in our native area. Our production from agriculture was totally destroyed. We were badly affected due to our totally dependency on agriculture because we are 4 men in the family and no one is government servant; all were engaged and were taking care of our own agriculture.”¹⁸ The cattle were also one of the cheap sources of food and income for

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these people; as these natives used to sell cattle's and their milk. Due to the operation a lot of their cattle's are died and also a lot were left there as these people have no facility to carry these domestic animals with them. One of the IDP women added that "I was selling the milk and Gobber (Duncack) of these cattle's in our area. It was the big source of our income. These incomes easily handle half of our family expenditure. And sometime when we have a need of money in urgent then we sell these livestock as well to fulfill our critical needs."¹⁹

Education Problems

In line with recognized international human rights law, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement underline the liability of national authorities to make sure that IDPs get free and obligatory education at the primary stage. In addition, the Principles advise authorities to make learning and schooling amenities accessible to the internally displaced, including youth and women, whether or not living in camps, as soon as circumstances allow. Too often, however, education is treated as a secondary requirement, to be addressed only just the once conflicts have collapsed. However, inconsistency and crisis can continue for years or even decades, parting many IDP children to become adult without education as well as deprived of the safeguard and support that going to school can make available. Much larger consideration therefore desires to be paid to understanding and beat the barriers that IDPs frequently face in getting their right to education.²⁰

Education of IDP's is significant because there future is associated with it. Education prepares people for employment and for independency. People of North Waziristan faced numerous problems in access to education. The foremost thing was facilities regarding education in Lakki Marwat. They faced Transport problem, Money, security threats, Lack of teachers, and shortage of space in schools, etc. Alam Sarwar an IDP from Waziristan Agency alleged that "When we came to Lakki district it was a month of June and were vacations in the schools. When Schools were opened after Eid-ul-Fiter we start sending our kids to the nearest Government Primary school; where there were just 3 to 4 total teachers and the strength of the school was approximately 100 plus. My Children were not happy over there; they were saying that it's too hot in the class room because there were forty plus students in one class room and secondly the teachers were also less in number, they were not taught properly because of the lack of teachers. And I have no resources to provide home tutor for my sons." Liyaz khan (IDP) added to the issue "When I visited the school for the admission of my son, Principle and School

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Administration was very biased and were behaving very rudely. Firstly they were not admitting my son; they said that there is no more space for admissions.

The principle further said that we have already in trouble and have a burden of our own village resident students. When I insisted for admission Principle looked towards the head master and said Yar ye Musibat kahan se agaye (From where this mess came). Headmaster came nearer to me and said that come again after two days if there would be any space I will admit your son.”²¹ Rehman sarwar added to the matter in the following manner regarding lack of space in schools and transport problem which he faced during his stay in Lakki Marwat. He said that “My son didn’t get admission in the nearest school because of no space so we had to admit him in the school which was far from us. I have Ikloti (only son) and six daughters; He is Ladla (Lovely) in home so it was not easy for us to let him go alone to school. So his schools pick and drop duty was mine. Firstly Before going to my shop I drop him to school and then at leave time I close my shop and goes to pick him. We faced a lot of trouble in getting his education.”²²

Political Rights

The principle of universal and equal suffrage, assuring that every individual who has the right to vote is capable to carry out this right with no differentiation of any kind, expands, unnecessary to say, to persons who are internally displaced. Protection for internally displaced persons (IDPs) the facility to liberally and completely exercise this right is thus important. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights specifies that “[e]verybody has the right to play a part in the government of his country, directly or through freely elected representatives” and through “periodic and legitimate elections which shall be by universal suffrage”.⁽²⁾ This right has been codified in a range of international and local human rights tools.⁽³⁾ In particular, Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) endow with that “every citizen shall have the opportunity and the right ... to vote and be nominated at authentic periodic elections which shall be by universal and identical suffrage”. No discrimination are tolerable on grounds of color, race, sex, religion, language, political or other judgment, social or national origin, property, birth or other status.²³

Political rights was one of the various problems faced by the IDP, s. They mainly leave their identity cards in their homes because of leaving their native place in emergency situations. Due to that they faced problems related to registration, Admissions in school, colleges and universities, in search of jobs and casting of vote in elections. One of the IDP naming Abdul

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wahab concluded that “One of our relative left their Identity card in their home in North Waziristan. Firstly he faced lot of trouble in Registering himself and their family at Registration centre and then in getting Ration (Food Aid from Government side) at the specified centers. He further said that he didn’t get Tent and food ration at first because he haven’t ID card. He was referred to the NADRA Centre and Later on almost after two months he got his id card from NADRA Regional office Lakki Marwat.”²⁴ Regarding Electoral process an IDP was interviewed he said that “We came to Lakki Marwat on 25th June, 2014.

That time General Elections were already gone. Now in BD (Basic democracies) elections we didn’t caste our vote and nor we were asked for. He further said that we have also no such system (BD system) over there in our native areas (FATA).²⁵ People whom are aware of the problems of their areas want to solve these problems through Parliament. They want to contest elections and become a part of Legislature and do something for their Area, but they cannot contest elections due to the pressure of Taliban or any other side. It has also been done in the past as well. In 2013 Genral Elections Gullana bibi want to contest elections from Pk-69 Tank as an independent candidate but she was stepped down because of threats from Taliban. She said to express tribune that Taliban put two options in front of me that either I have to withdraw or to take part and confront to death. After threatening by Taliban she withdrawn due to her family pressure; her son Khandar confessed that if influential politicians are not safe then how she could be.²⁶

Conclusion:

The IDP, s wanted to stay with their local connections in the laces to where they migrated as because there were less camps available and also security issues were there. So they preferred a more secure and wider space to be provided to them in the homes of their relatives. In the basic needs the important challenge was the resident problem they faced. There was less space available in the camp due to the less availability of the camps and the larger size of the families that is why their life was hard and congested. This certainly led to hygienic issues and the break of the epidemic diseases. The cleanliness was an issue in which the purity of food was on top. The noise of the children in the small congested camps was irritating. The privacy of the females and the issue of veil and performing purdah from males were serious issues for women. Food was also the basic need and IDP, s lacked access to the balanced diet needed for healthy well being of adults and growth and well being of children.

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The diet was lacking in the necessary nutritional supplements and was devoid of natural stuff that certainly cause skin and stomach issues immediately along with signs of leading to other diseases and problems. The health facilities for IDP, s was not sufficient. There was the problem in the access to the hospitals in case of emergency. For the infectious diseases of the children there was the shortage of vaccinations. The nearby hospitals were too crowded and no additional space was there to accommodate the IDP, s patients. They were also faced with the challenge of identity issue and the societal disintegration. A lot of the IDP, s had the problem of national identity cards as a lot of them lost it while others had problem in making identity cards. This hampered their travelling from place to place.

While also they had problem in taking food rations which were provided on the basis of national identity cards. Agriculture and cattle was the only source of income of many IDP families. Because of the operation they lost a lot of cattle's and their agricultural supplies stopped. Thus their only source of income was badly damaged and the money provided by the government was very less compared to the monthly expenditures. In the same way the IDP, s children faced educational problems related to the lack of transport, the security issues, lack of the required resources for the children in the form of school fee, stationary, books, uniform etc for the students. There was already a shortage of schools in the areas of Lakki marwat where they were camped and urgent and emergency programs for the schooling of the children were not provided. The universal suffrage is the right of all the people living anywhere in the world. Due to the lack of identity cards, security issues and Taliban pressure the IDP, s were faced with the challenges of casting votes, contesting elections and supporting female candidates for the election in the tribal areas.

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