Thesis Title: Health Issues of Internally Displaced Persons of South Waziristan Agency: A Descriptive Analysis

By Shahid Khan

Field of Study Development Studies

Thesis Supervisor Dr. Durr-e-Nayab

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Executive Summary

Since 2009, South Waziristan Agency (SWA) has suffered a number of violent armed conflicts between security forces and Taliban causing massive destruction, several thousand deaths and creating over a half million displaced people. Right at the start of this armed conflict, the displaced people from SWA took flight to district Tank. The recipient area was selected for this study because it is among the most backward areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)\(^1\), hosting IDPs from the most neglected agency of federally administrated tribal areas (FATA)\(^2\).

Government failed in providing adequate health care support to IDPs due to the absence of legislation regarding their rights in national law. Further, due to negligence of issues related to internal displacement in UN and international law, IDPs were afforded very little health care help during displacement.

This research was designed to contribute to a policy or model to be developed to provide health care services for IDPs. The three objectives of this study were: to evaluate the role of economic and social capital level of SWA IDPs in selection of temporary shelter in IDPs camp and host

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\(^1\) Pak, J. "Budgetary Imbalances in the Health Care System of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 1990-2007."

community during armed conflict; to compare the prevalence of health related problems in IDPs living in camp and host community according to their sex and age; to indicate the difference between current nature and range of health services availability in IDPs camp and host community according to their sex and age.

The research employed mixed methods in achieving the above objectives. It was conducted through surveys and in-depth interviews (IDIs) with IDPs. Respondents for surveys were selected by applying systematic sampling technique with a random start. For this purpose 155 HHs were selected for survey & 5 respondents for IDIs in IDPs camp while in host community 105 respondents were selected for survey and 3 respondents for IDIs.

This study found that in the situation where government and international community was not interested to help them out during displacement, IDPs relied more on their level of social capital and economic status. Those IDPs who could afford a house or had found help from their relatives, fellow tribesmen or friends joined host community but those IDPs who were poor and unable to find any help regarding shelter, loan or food, were left with only one choice that is to join IDPs camp.

The health needs of IDPs were already heightened due to war trauma and were further worsened due to the situation of accommodation, water & sanitation, weather and overcrowding in camp; widening the gap between their health needs and health care availability. On the other hand, IDPs living in host community were free to avail the private and public health services lessening the gap between their health needs and health care availability.
It also found out that IDPs living in camps were more affected by health problems as compared to IDPs living in host community. Where, IDPs in camp were offered inadequate health facilities and were not allowed to visit Tank city for medical treatment even during emergencies causing many deaths, especially among pregnant women.

Moreover, children and old age people were most affected among many age groups while women in reproductive ages suffered more as compared to men. Even the basic mother and child health facilities related to pregnancy and neonatal health care were not incorporated in IDPs camp. Although IDPs were affected by mental stress as much as physical one but psychiatric help was totally absent in camps as well as in host communities.

Based on the results of this study, the thesis provides recommendations for the health sector reform in the areas that receive the IDPs. Like the fieldwork found that local health department in Tank was not capable to handle huge number of IDPs on its own and the study recommends international community’s health related interventions to deal with the situation. It further recommends that livelihood and shelter related issues of IDPs should be addressed legislatively and also recommends that there is a need to study IDPs situation in other agencies as well to prepare a comprehensive policy document for IDPs of FATA.