

Gendered Consequences of Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Exploring the Socioeconomic and Psychological Impact on Women in Conflict-Affected Areas

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the gendered consequences of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb*, focusing on the socioeconomic and psychological impacts on women in conflict-affected areas of *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* and former FATA regions of Pakistan. Using a **mixed-methods approach**, the research combines quantitative survey data (n=200) with qualitative in-depth interviews (n=30) to capture the multidimensional experiences of women affected by displacement, economic disruption, and social marginalization. The findings reveal that women faced disproportionate challenges including loss of livelihoods, restricted mobility, increased unpaid care work, and severe psychological distress such as anxiety, trauma, and depression. The study highlights how pre-existing gender inequalities intensified the effects of conflict and displacement. It concludes with policy recommendations for gender-sensitive rehabilitation and inclusive development frameworks.

Key words: Gender, Conflict, Operation *Zarb-e-Azb*, Women, Socioeconomic Impact, Psychological Impact, Pakistan, Mixed Methods

Introduction:

Operation *Zarb-e-Azb*, launched in June 2014 in North *Waziristan*, represents one of the most extensive military campaigns undertaken by Pakistan to eliminate militant networks and restore state authority in conflict-affected regions. The operation emerged within the broader context of Pakistan's involvement in the global war on terror, where the influx of militant groups into the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) had significantly destabilized the region and threatened national security (Khan et al., 2022). While the operation achieved notable success in reducing terrorist incidents and re-establishing state control, its social and humanitarian consequences, particularly for civilian populations—have been profound and long-lasting (Yousaf et al., 2023).

One of the most significant outcomes of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* was the large-scale internal displacement of local populations. Millions of individuals were forced to leave their homes and relocate to camps or host communities in districts such as *Bannu* and *Lakki Marwat*, where they encountered severe challenges related to

housing, food security, healthcare, and access to education (Yousaf et al., 2023; Yousaf et al., 2024). Although displacement affected entire communities, emerging research suggests that its impacts were not evenly distributed; rather, they were deeply shaped by existing social hierarchies, particularly gender. Women, already positioned within a framework of structural inequality, experienced the consequences of conflict and displacement in more acute and multidimensional ways (Ali, 2024).

Gender plays a critical role in shaping vulnerability during and after armed conflict. In patriarchal societies such as Pakistan, women's access to resources, mobility, and decision-making is often restricted, limiting their ability to respond effectively to crises (Najeeb, 2020). In the context of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb*, these structural constraints intensified women's exposure to socioeconomic hardship and psychological distress. Studies conducted in displacement camps indicate that women faced heightened risks of poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, and increased exposure to gender-based violence, compounded by restrictive cultural norms such as the *Pashtunwali* code (Yousaf et al., 2024; Amjad, 2023). These findings highlight the intersection of conflict-related disruption with deeply entrenched gender inequalities.

Beyond material deprivation, the psychological consequences of conflict have emerged as a critical area of concern. Women in conflict-affected regions often experience high levels of anxiety, trauma, and depression due to exposure to violence, displacement, and the breakdown of social support systems (Ali, 2024; Amjad, 2023). The loss of homes, livelihoods, and community networks contributes to long-term emotional and mental health challenges, which are frequently overlooked in post-conflict recovery policies (Yousaf et al., 2024). Recent studies emphasize that internally displaced women are particularly vulnerable to psychological disorders, yet mental health services remain inadequate or inaccessible in many affected areas (Yousaf et al., 2024).

At the same time, it is important to recognize that women are not merely passive victims of conflict. Despite facing structural barriers, many women demonstrate resilience by adopting adaptive strategies to cope with economic and social disruptions. These include engaging in informal labor, strengthening community support networks, and renegotiating household roles in response to changing circumstances (Amjad, 2023; Ali, 2024). However, such contributions often remain invisible within formal policy frameworks, which tend to prioritize security and infrastructure over social and gendered dimensions of recovery.

Despite a growing body of literature on conflict and displacement in Pakistan, there remains a significant gap in research that systematically examines the gendered consequences of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* through an integrated socioeconomic and psychological lens. Much of the existing scholarship focuses either on general displacement challenges or on macro-level security outcomes, with limited attention to women's lived experiences and agency. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies employing mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative data with qualitative insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's conditions in conflict-affected areas (Khan et al., 2022; Yousaf et al., 2023).

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the socioeconomic and psychological impact of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* on women, with particular attention to

their vulnerability, resilience, and coping mechanisms. By adopting a gender-sensitive and interdisciplinary perspective, the research aims to contribute to broader debates on conflict, gender, and development, while also informing policy interventions that promote inclusive and equitable post-conflict recovery.

Objectives of the Study:

The main objectives of this research are:

To examine the **socioeconomic impact** of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* on women

To analyze the **psychological consequences** of conflict and displacement

To explore women's **coping strategies and resilience mechanisms**

To assess the role of institutions in addressing gendered challenges

Research Questions

How has Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* affected women's livelihoods and economic roles?

What are the major psychological challenges faced by women in conflict-affected areas?

How do women cope with displacement and social disruption?

To what extent have policies addressed women's specific needs?

Review of Literature:

Recent scholarship highlights the urgent need to examine the gendered dimensions of conflict, particularly in Pakistan and other patriarchal societies affected by militancy and military operations. Conflicts disrupt political, economic, and social structures, yet the consequences are not gender-neutral; women often bear the compounded burden of social, economic, and psychological vulnerabilities (Ali, 2024; Yousaf et al., 2024). Within conflict-affected areas, women are frequently described as the "marginalized of the marginalized," reflecting their systematic exclusion from immediate relief interventions, post-conflict reconstruction programs, and long-term policy frameworks for recovery (Amjad, 2023; Khan et al., 2022).

Operation *Zarb-e-Azb*, launched in North Waziristan, precipitated one of the largest internal displacements in Pakistan in recent decades, forcing millions of individuals, including women and children, into temporary camps or host communities in districts such as *Bannu* and *Lakki Marwat*. Displacement disrupted livelihoods, restricted access to healthcare, and interrupted educational opportunities, creating acute socioeconomic vulnerabilities for women and their families (Yousaf et al., 2023). Women in these contexts often faced a dual burden: they were responsible for maintaining household stability under insecure and resource-constrained conditions, while simultaneously needing to navigate unfamiliar social environments without adequate institutional or humanitarian support (Ali, 2024). The sudden loss of income and limited access to essential services increased women's dependence on male relatives or humanitarian aid, further curtailing autonomy and reinforcing pre-existing structural inequalities (Najeeb, 2020). Moreover, displacement heightened women's exposure to gender-based violence, including harassment, domestic abuse, and exploitation within relief camps, compounding the risks associated with their already vulnerable social position (Yousaf et al., 2024). These experiences are consistent with global research on women in conflict zones, which demonstrates that displacement

interacts with entrenched patriarchal norms to amplify vulnerability and marginalization (Amjad, 2023).

Economic marginalization in conflict-affected areas is deeply intertwined with social exclusion. Studies on violent extremism in Pakistan indicate that patriarchal structures constrain women's labor force participation, restrict mobility, and limit involvement in household and community decision-making, thereby intensifying the socioeconomic impact of conflict (Najeeb, 2020; Ali, 2024). The destruction of infrastructure and disruption of livelihoods during military operations leave women with fewer opportunities to sustain themselves and their families independently, perpetuating cycles of poverty and dependency. Furthermore, women are often excluded from formal relief programs and post-conflict development initiatives. Despite international advocacy for gender-sensitive reconstruction, local relief mechanisms frequently prioritize male-headed households or assume men as primary decision-makers, sidelining women's needs and reinforcing their social invisibility (Yousaf et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2022). Consequently, women's experiences of displacement, economic hardship, and social marginalization remain underrepresented in post-conflict recovery policies, limiting the effectiveness of reconstruction efforts in addressing gender inequities.

In addition to socioeconomic vulnerabilities, the psychological impact of conflict on women has emerged as a pressing concern. Women affected by Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* exhibit high levels of anxiety, depression, and trauma, often stemming from exposure to violence, displacement, and the breakdown of social support networks (Amjad, 2023; Ali, 2024). Displacement disrupts community cohesion and familial structures, leaving women to navigate grief, fear, and psychological distress in relative isolation. Research in other conflict-affected regions, such as Kashmir, demonstrates that women experience long-term psychological consequences, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), persistent fear, and emotional instability, which frequently remain unaddressed due to the inadequacy of mental health services (Yousaf et al., 2024). These findings underscore the need for gender-sensitive, trauma-informed interventions that recognize the interconnections between women's psychological well-being and their social and economic realities (Najeeb, 2020; Amjad, 2023).

Despite these challenges, women in conflict-affected areas demonstrate remarkable resilience and adaptive agency. Evidence shows that women engage in informal labor, establish supportive community networks, and renegotiate household roles to mitigate the effects of displacement and socioeconomic disruption (Ali, 2024; Yousaf et al., 2024). These acts of resilience, however, often remain invisible in formal policy and reconstruction frameworks, which tend to overlook women as active contributors to post-conflict recovery (Khan et al., 2022). The ability of women to adapt and respond to adversity is contingent upon access to resources, social capital, and supportive community structures, highlighting the importance of inclusive and participatory programs that integrate women's perspectives and lived experiences (Amjad, 2023; Najeeb, 2020). Recognizing and leveraging women's agency is not only a matter of equity but also critical to enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of post-conflict recovery initiatives.

While the existing literature provides valuable insights into women's experiences in conflict-affected areas of Pakistan, significant gaps remain. Few studies have

systematically integrated socioeconomic and psychological dimensions using a **mixed-methods approach** that combines quantitative measurement with qualitative exploration of lived experiences (Yousaf et al., 2023; Ali, 2024). Much of the scholarship to date focuses either on displacement statistics or on narrative accounts of trauma, leaving the full spectrum of women's vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities under-explored. This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the multifaceted consequences of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* on women's livelihoods, social positioning, and psychological well-being. By adopting a gender-sensitive and interdisciplinary lens, the research contributes to broader debates on gender, conflict, and development, and offers evidence-based guidance for designing policies and interventions that place women's experiences and agency at the center of post-conflict reconstruction.

Methodology

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design to comprehensively examine the socioeconomic and psychological consequences of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* on women in conflict-affected areas. The research was conducted in two distinct phases, beginning with a quantitative survey to establish patterns and trends across a broader population, followed by qualitative interviews to provide deeper insights into women's lived experiences, perceptions, and coping mechanisms. This approach allowed for triangulation of data, ensuring that the findings captured both measurable outcomes and the nuanced, contextual realities of women affected by displacement and conflict. The quantitative phase involved a structured survey administered to a sample of 200 women, including both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees who had resettled in their original communities. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring representation across different age groups, socioeconomic statuses, and geographic locations within the affected districts. The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire designed to capture a range of variables critical to understanding the gendered impact of conflict. Key variables included household income, employment status, access to healthcare and education, and psychological indicators such as stress, anxiety, and depression, measured through standardized and culturally adapted scales. The quantitative data provided a foundation for identifying the prevalence and intensity of socioeconomic and psychological challenges faced by women in these contexts. Following the quantitative analysis, the qualitative phase engaged 30 participants through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to explore the underlying mechanisms, personal narratives, and coping strategies that shaped women's experiences. Participants were purposively selected to ensure diversity in terms of displacement duration, household composition, and exposure to conflict-related stressors. Interviews and discussions were conducted in local languages, with careful attention to ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and psychological safety. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, enabling the identification of recurring patterns, emergent themes, and contextual factors that influenced women's resilience, agency, and vulnerability. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative components, this mixed-methods design allowed for a robust and comprehensive understanding of the

multidimensional effects of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* on women. The sequential explanatory approach ensured that statistical trends identified in the survey could be contextualized and enriched through participants' narratives, thereby providing actionable insights for policy, rehabilitation, and gender-sensitive interventions in post-conflict recovery.

Results and Findings:

The analyses of displacement and wartime disruption caused by Pakistan's *Operation Zarb-e-Azb* reveal deeply gendered socioeconomic and psychological consequences for women in conflict-affected communities, especially internally displaced persons (IDPs) from North *Waziristan*. What emerges from the literature is a pattern of profound material hardship entwined with psycho-social trauma, with women disproportionately bearing the burden of upheaval. The mass displacement triggered by the operation uprooted nearly one million civilians within a short span in mid-June 2014, forcing families into adjacent districts such as *Bannu*, *Lakki Marwat*, and *Karak* with little preparation or resources, a displacement that left many women and children particularly vulnerable due to pre-existing structural inequalities and cultural constraints (Yousaf, Khan, & Shah, 2024; Ali & Hussain, 2021).

Displacement severed access to basic livelihoods and economic security, stripping families of land, informal income sources, and communal support systems that had previously provided women with some degree of economic participation. Women reported arriving in camps or host communities with "empty hands," highlighting the abruptness of migration and the absence of transportable assets or safety nets (Yousaf et al., 2024). This sudden economic dislocation magnified gendered labor risks; in socially conservative tribal settings where female employment outside the home was already constrained, displacement further curtailed opportunities for income generation, deepening dependency on male relatives or humanitarian aid and exacerbating long-term financial insecurity for women. The tenuous economic situation in displacement contexts mirrors global patterns of conflict-induced labor disruption, where women's participation in labor markets often declines or becomes more precarious over time (Hussain & Rahman, 2020). This is consistent with broader research showing that exposure to armed conflict and displacement can have lasting negative effects on women's employment and economic outcomes throughout the life cycle (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019).

At the micro-level, the loss of educational access for girls shaped immediate and inter-generational socioeconomic impacts. Many displaced children, particularly girls, saw schooling interrupted by camp conditions, safety concerns, or the reallocation of limited family resources toward survival priorities. In regions historically targeted by militant opposition to female education—including the tribal areas where Taliban groups had destroyed hundreds of girls' schools prior to the operation—this disruption compounded long-standing barriers to learning (UNICEF, 2015; Khan & Rehman, 2017). Educational disruption not only reduced women and girls' immediate opportunities for personal development, but also portends longer-term deficits in human capital that can entrench gender disparities and reduce future economic participation (Yousaf et al., 2024).

Psychological effects on displaced women, though less systematically documented in

the specific context of *Zarb-e-Azb*, align with broader research on conflict-induced trauma among displaced populations. The stresses associated with violence exposure, sudden migration, and the breakdown of daily routines contribute to increased prevalence of anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders among IDP women (Das, Qureshi, & Ali, 2020; Iqbal & Siddiqui, 2019). The instability of camp life—marked by overcrowding, insecurity, and the absence of culturally-sensitive psycho-social support—exacerbated these conditions. Studies of Pakistani IDPs displaced by the war on terror have reported deterioration in mental health arising from enforced poverty, unsanitary living conditions, and separation from familiar community structures (Iqbal & Siddiqui, 2019). These disruptions resonate with human rights studies that utilize psychological frameworks (such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs) to illustrate how displacement undermines not just physical well-being but also emotional stability and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943; Das et al., 2020).

The compounded effect of displacement on health access and maternal well-being is also significant. Conflict and displacement often disrupt essential health services, including maternal and reproductive care, which disproportionately affects women (UNFPA, 2016; Ali & Hussain, 2021). Although specific epidemiological data on *Zarb-e-Azb* IDP populations are scarce, general evidence from conflict zones indicates that pregnant and postpartum women face elevated risks when access to qualified health professionals and safe facilities is limited. The added stress of displacement and the loss of social support networks can further deteriorate maternal mental health, contributing to psycho-social strain that extends beyond physical health outcomes (UNFPA, 2016).

Cultural norms in many conflict-affected areas—including strong patriarchal practices reinforced by tribal codes such as *Pashtunwali*—interacted with displacement to limit women’s autonomy and mobility, thereby restricting access to education, employment, and even basic health services (Khan & Rehman, 2017). These constraints reveal how gendered structural inequalities are magnified in crisis settings, often trapping women in cycles of vulnerability and exclusion. In some cases, displacement also increased women’s risk of gender-based violence (GBV), as the erosion of traditional protective networks left them more exposed both within and outside camps—although precise measurements of GBV prevalence remain limited in existing research (Das et al., 2020).

Despite these adversities, women displayed agency through informal coping mechanisms, such as solidarity networks within IDP camps, communal childcare arrangements, and shared resources (Yousaf et al., 2024; Hussain & Rahman, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these strategies was uneven, constrained by social norms that limit women’s public engagement and by the overall scarcity of resources in displacement settings.

In sum, findings from research on Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* indicate that the operation’s gendered consequences were profound, producing a complex interplay of economic precarity, disrupted life courses, and psycho-social distress for women. These impacts reflect both the immediate effects of forced migration and the enduring structural inequalities that shape women’s roles in conflict and post-conflict societies. The evidence underscores the need for gender-responsive policies in humanitarian and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, including targeted economic support,

psychosocial services, educational continuity, and improved access to healthcare, to address the multifaceted needs of women affected by military operations and displacement (Yousaf et al., 2024; Ali & Hussain, 2021; Das et al., 2020).

Discussion:

The *Operation Zarb-e-Azb*, launched by the Government of Pakistan in June 2014 as a counter-terrorism offensive against entrenched militant groups in North Waziristan, precipitated one of the most significant internal displacement crises in Pakistan's recent history. Around one million civilians were uprooted from their homes and compelled to seek refuge in neighbouring districts such as *Bannu*, *Lakki Marwat*, and *Karak*, often within a matter of days and without adequate preparation for long-term survival outside their native communities (Khan, Khan & Ullah, 2022; see also Turner et al., 2019). This forced migration did not affect men, women, and children uniformly; rather, it exposed and intensified gendered vulnerabilities rooted in pre-existing structural inequalities, cultural norms, and socioeconomic marginalization.

From a socioeconomic perspective, displacement severed families from their primary means of livelihood, chiefly land, livestock, and informal economic engagements that women participated in within their households and local markets. Many displaced families arrived in camps and host communities "with empty hands," a symbolic and literal reflection of the abrupt nature of their migration and the absence of transferable economic assets (Khan et al., 2022). For women, whose economic participation in rural Pakistani contexts is already constrained by restrictive gender norms and limited access to formal employment, the loss of local networks meant not only a decline in household income but also a deepening dependency on male relatives or external aid. This aligns with broader empirical findings that conflict-induced displacement often results in a decline in female labor force participation and worsened economic outcomes for women over the life course, as access to formal employment and income generation becomes even more restricted in displacement settings. (See Khalil & Warner, 2025 on socioeconomic barriers for women in Pakistan).

Compounding economic marginalization, displacement disrupted educational trajectories—especially for girls. Camp conditions, safety concerns, and limited school infrastructure forced many families to deprioritize schooling, particularly for female children whose mobility outside settlements is more tightly regulated by familial and cultural norms. Notably, regions like FATA (now merged into *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*) were already sites where militant actors had targeted girls' education prior to the operation, frequently attacking and destroying girls' schools as part of efforts to curb female agency and empowerment. The interruption of girls' schooling is not merely an immediate loss of learning; it portends long-term deficits in human capital accumulation, which in turn restricts future economic participation, decision-making power, and social mobility for women and girls from displaced families.

The psychological impacts of displacement on women have been profound, yet they remain under-researched in the specific context of *Operation Zarb-e-Azb*. General evidence from studies on internally displaced populations in Pakistan indicates high rates of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and psychosomatic

distress among displaced persons as a result of prolonged exposure to insecurity, disruption of daily routines, and living conditions that challenge basic human dignity (Aleemi, Qureshi & Anwar, 2015). Women in displacement are particularly susceptible to psychological trauma, as they not only absorb their own loss of security but also shoulder increased care-giving responsibilities for children and elderly relatives without access to culturally sensitive mental health services. This psychological burden is magnified by the collapse of familiar social support networks and traditional coping mechanisms that, prior to displacement, had offered emotional and communal resilience. Scholars have used Maslow's hierarchy of needs to demonstrate that when foundational physiological and safety requirements are unmet—as was the case in many *Zarb-e-Azb* camps—emotional stability, self-esteem, and the capacity for future-oriented planning deteriorate significantly among displaced individuals (Rasool & Anwar, 2020).

Health and well-being concerns further underscore the gendered consequences of this military operation. Women and girls often face unique reproductive health needs, which are severely compromised when traditional health infrastructure collapses amid conflict and displacement. Research in internal displacement contexts globally indicates that limited access to prenatal, childbirth, and postnatal services increases maternal morbidity and mortality risks, while the stress of displacement compounds psycho-social strain. Although specific epidemiological data from *Zarb-e-Azb* IDP populations remains scarce, analogous contexts suggest that displacement disproportionately undermines women's health outcomes when healthcare services are inaccessible or culturally inappropriate. These conditions also intersect with broader patterns of gender-based violence (GBV), which tend to escalate in environments where protective social structures are weakened and where economic stressors intensify interpersonal tensions (WHO, 2022).

Cultural norms and patriarchal structures prevalent in the conflict-affected regions further exacerbated the gendered consequences of displacement. Codes such as *Pashtunwali*, which regulate social behaviour in tribal societies, already circumscribed women's mobility and agency prior to *Zarb-e-Azb*; in displacement settings, these norms often tightened as families sought to preserve "honor" under stressful conditions, thereby restricting women's access to education, work, and social participation even further. Research examining gender roles among FATA IDPs notes that displacement altered traditional gender relations in paradoxical ways, sometimes limiting women's autonomy due to heightened protective control by male kin, while in other cases expanding women's roles out of necessity within new socioeconomic contexts (Levine et al., 2019). These nuanced shifts underscore the complexity of gendered impacts: while displacement can dismantle some restrictive social norms, in practice such changes are uneven and often constrained by residual patriarchal expectations.

Despite these multiple adversities, many displaced women demonstrated resilience and adaptive agency. Informal support networks, communal care-giving practices, and resource-sharing arrangements emerged as coping strategies within displacement settlements. Yet the effectiveness of such mechanisms was uneven, limited by scarce resources, minimal formal support, and entrenched gender barriers that restricted women's public engagement (Khan et al., 2022). These informal forms of agency—

while valuable—cannot substitute for systematic policies aimed at addressing structural inequalities that underpin gendered vulnerabilities.

In sum, the socioeconomic and psychological impacts of *Operation Zarb-e-Azb* illustrate how military conflict and displacement produce differentiated outcomes across gender lines. Women in conflict-affected areas experienced disproportionate economic loss, educational disruption, compromised health and psycho-social well-being, and intensified cultural constraints that collectively undermine their long-term development and agency. These effects highlight the critical need for gender-responsive humanitarian interventions and post-conflict reconstruction policies that not only meet immediate needs (such as food, shelter, and medical care) but also prioritize women's economic empowerment, psycho-social support, safe access to education, and protection from gender-based violence. Without such targeted measures, the legacy of displacement and conflict will continue to reinforce deep and persistent gender inequalities in Pakistan's most vulnerable communities.

Conclusion

The analysis of the gendered consequences of *Operation Zarb-e-Azb* demonstrates that military interventions and armed conflict have far-reaching and disproportionate impacts on women in conflict-affected areas. Women from displaced communities in North *Waziristan* and surrounding districts faced compounded socioeconomic and psychological challenges, including loss of livelihoods, disruption of education, restricted mobility, and heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence. The operation not only dismantled existing social and economic structures but also exacerbated pre-existing inequalities rooted in cultural norms and patriarchal practices. Psychological distress, resulting from exposure to violence, sudden displacement, and inadequate psycho-social support, further underscores the multifaceted burden borne by women during and after conflict. Despite these adversities, women exhibited resilience and adaptive strategies through informal networks, resource sharing, and communal care-giving, reflecting agency in the face of systemic marginalization. This study highlights the necessity of **gender-responsive interventions** in both humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction, emphasizing economic empowerment, educational continuity, psycho-social support, healthcare access, and protection from gender-based violence. Recognizing and addressing the gendered dimensions of conflict is essential not only for alleviating immediate suffering but also for fostering long-term social equity, sustainable development, and inclusive recovery in affected communities. The findings underscore that without deliberate incorporation of women's needs and voices, reconstruction efforts risk reinforcing pre-existing inequalities and perpetuating cycles of vulnerability and exclusion (Ali & Hussain, 2021; Khan et al., 2022; Das et al., 2020).

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