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Civil strife and Darfurian IDPs Women" Abushouk IDPs Camp Case"

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to analyze aspects of impacts of civil war on IDPs women in Abushouk IDPS Camp, North Darfur State. Darfur recent crisis started early 2003, More than 2500 village have been torched and completely destroyed and, over two million people have been driven away from their areas of origin and are living in the IDPs camp. This conflict has severe negative socioeconomic impacts on different segments of the society, particularly women and children. This study tries to investigate the impacts of the current civil war in Darfur on Abushouk IDPs women. In spite of the peace agreements, civil strife in Darfur has had side effects on all segments of Darfur society specially women who are still suffering.

Keywords: *Civil war, Darfur, IDPs, women.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Darfur Crisis

Armed conflicts and strives continue to occur in many parts of the world and have escalated over the last decade. In Africa, over one quarter of the continent's 53 countries were affected by conflict in late 1990s.Today's armed conflicts are predominantly internal with regional and sub-regional repercussions; and the victim of those conflicts and strives are disproportionately civilians.

1.2 Abu Shouk IDPs Camp

El Fasher is the capital of North Darfur State; it hosts 3 IDP camps i.e. Abu Shouk, Al Salaam and ZamZam with a population of 56000, 47000 and 42,000 respectively.

Abu Shouk IDPs Camp located 2.5 kms Northwest of El Fasher town; the capital of North Darfur State. The camp was established in April 2004 to accommodate the massive influx of 30,000 IDPs from Jebel Si, Korma and Tawilla. After the attack on Tawilla and Korma in November 2004, there were additional influxes of 30,000 IDPs. 65% of the IDPs are from Jebel Si, 15% from Korma, 10% from Tawilla and 10% from Kutum and other areas. The camp was planned by Government of Sudan and Spanish Red Cross (SPRC). It was divided into two parts, East part which includes 28 blocks, each block divided in to 15 squares. The other side(West part) divided in to 11 blocks, in each block there is 8 squares, in each square there are about 25 families [3] .

In the beginning of the crisis, there were 54000 individuals, but now the total number of Abushouk IDPs is approximately 42000 individuals, 70% of them are women and children.

The main tribes within the camp are Fur (70%), Zagawa (10%), Berti (5%), Tunjur (5%) and 5% Gimir and Keneen. There are 26 Omdas (Native leader) and 327 sheikhs (Native leader under omda) in the camp. They collaborate with the camp admin to manage, flow; observe the services and solving the social problems

through *Judea* (council of native leaders meet to solve problems).There is homogeneity in the camp.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Understanding the impact of armed conflicts on women requires attention to many specific themes such as; women tend to experience conflict differently than men. Women (just like men) are both actors and victims of the armed conflicts. The specific experience of women in conflicts areas is linked to their status in societies .i.e. women are particularly affected because of their status in the society and their gender. They do not enjoy equal status with men in any society.

Conflicts and strives have severe negative socioeconomic impacts on different segments of the society, particularly women and children in Darfur. This study tries to investigate the impacts of the current conflict on *Abushouk* IDPs women through finding answers to the following questions:

- What are the impacts of Darfur current civil strife on *Abushouk* IDPs women?

- What challenges Abushouk IDPs women face?

3. METHODOLOGY

This research combines both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The qualitative data includes observation, interviews and questionnaires for the primary data .The quantitative data such as books, previous studies, locally available reports, articles, editorials, baseline data, and relevant web sites related to topics (secondary sources).

The study covered AbuShouk IDPs Camp (The data collected by the researcher during 2011-2013); the camp was divided in to 39 blocks. A multi-stage stratified random sampling procedure was employed for selection of (12) blocks, 120 women (respondents) selected randomly (10) women from each block.

Data obtained were processed and analyzed through the computer facilities using the Statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) program to show the

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relations within and between the dependents and independent variables.

Some problems faced the researcher during the field work such as:

a. Difficulty to deal and discuss with IDPs especially about the issues related to violence.

b. Language barriers (some of the IDPs didn't speak Arabic, they use their local languages)

c. There is a sense of fear from outsiders due to absence of trust and confidence.

4. CONCEPT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Theories of Conflicts and Civil Strife

Conflict and strife appear to be as basic to society as harmony, integration, and smooth functioning. Conflicts arise naturally in all kinds of setting. On the global scale, nations struggle with one another.

According to the theory of social change, most social change is the result of conflict between groups with opposing interests. In most cases, conflicts arise from disputes over the legitimacy of authority or over access to power and wealth. Because theories view conflict as a natural condition in all societies, they see social change as inevitable. Thus, they hold that societies are in a constant state of change or potential change [12].

Conflict theory suggests that competition and conflict are common in social interaction and that the study of these processes is the most appropriate way to understand society. Today conflict theorists tell what the potential for Conflict exists in all social situations. In every grouping people there is an imbalance of power and authority, people continually compete for scarce resources such as power, status or authority, and this leads to conflicts. Conflict also arises over differences values and interest. Conflict theorists focus on how power is used by special interest groups for their own benefits. Conflict theory attempts to examine and explain how social change takes place [14].

Conflicts universal in the world and as a force leading to change. Karl Marx felt the economic structure to be the foundation of society, changes or conditions in the economic realm led to changes in other social relations. Capital systems were especially liable to produce conflict. Ralf Dahrendorf, like Marx believed that in every society some members are subject to coercion by others. Also he believed that human development, creativity, and innovation emerge mainly from conflict between groups and individuals. The connection between conflict and social change is well-documented [14].

The social- conflict paradigm is a framework for building theory that sees society as an arena of inequality that generates conflict and change. while the image of society seen it as a system based on social inequality, each part of society benefits some categories of people more than others, social inequality leads to conflict which, in turn, leads to social change [13].

Conflict theory is rooted in Karl Marx's theory of class conflict. Over the years, however, most Conflict theorists have moved away from an emphasis on class conflict. Modern Conflict theorists, such as Ralf Dahrendorf, take much broader view of conflict, focusing instead on social conflict in general [12].

Civil strife is an armed, violent conflict, which active parties tend to involve civilians (not in uniform) and become massive by time. In the Sudanese case, civil strife, using this broader definition cover the long lasting violent civil war between north and south, the opposition-GOS armed conflict in other parts of the country and the so-called tribal conflict. At the end result, it is becoming a social conflict [1].

4.2 Civil Strife in Darfur

The war in Darfur began as skirmishes between farmers and herders over concrete material resources, land. With progress of time and increase of loss of life and material belongings, ethnicity began to immerge as a second cause of conflict. Further aggravation of the fighting and greater loss of life and belongings shifted the ethnic to the fore as the most important motivation for the conflict. The conflict become ethnic and resource conflict still further and grater loss will transform the conflict into an identity conflict [8, 6, 9]. In early 2003, tow rebel groups, namely, the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) launched attacks against Sudanese army garrisons in Darfur. The rebel groups declared that their struggle is for the creation of a democratic united Sudan based on equity and justice. The conflict witnessed the mobilization of the government-backed *Janjaweed* militia. This conducted a terror campaign against civilian population of the region described by many as genocidal. The *Janjaweed* attacks culminated in the most appalling humanitarian disaster in the history of the country. More than 2500 village have been torched and completely destroyed, over two million people have been driven away from their areas of origin and are living in the IDPs camps, in addition to more than 200,000 who crossed the borders to take refuge in Chad and Central African Republic [2, 10].

To reduce the effects of civil strife there are many agreements on the conflict in Darfur, in particular the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement on the Conflict in Darfur & Protocol on the Establishment of Humanitarian Assistance in Darfur of 8 April, 2004, N'Djamena, Chad; the Agreement with the Sudanese Parties on the Modalities for the Establishment of the Ceasefire Commission and the Deployment of Observers in Darfur of 28 May 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the Protocol between the Government of Sudan, The Sudan Liberation Movement / Army and the Justice and Equality Movement on the Improvement of the Humanitarian Situation in Darfur of 9 November, 2004, Abuja, Nigeria; the Protocol between the Government of Sudan, The Sudan Liberation Movement / Army and the Justice and

Equality Movement on the Enhancement of the Security Situation in Darfur in accordance with the N'Djamena Agreement of 9 November, 2004, Abuja, Nigeria; the Declaration of Principles for the Resolution of the Sudanese Conflict in Darfur of 5 July, 2005, Abuja, Nigeria; the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) of 5 May, 2006, Abuja, Nigeria; the Goodwill Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Justice and Equality Movement, 17 February 2009, Doha, Qatar; the Framework Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Justice and Equality Movement, 23 February 2010, Doha, Qatar; the Framework Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement, 18 March 2010, Doha, Qatar; the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement, 18 March 2010, Doha, Qatar(DDPD) [15].

4.3 The Situation of Darfurian Women

Women in Darfur play different roles as mothers, daughters and grandmothers, these roles are of socio-political and economic nature. It might be said in general that women in Darfur, are hard workers, and are distinct from the rest of Sudanese women in terms of production skills. Those women take on both domestic, reproductive roles and productive roles, working inside and outside the home. They have shared most of the jobs designated elsewhere as men's work [5]. Women in Darfur work as farmers, as butchers, as traders and even as construction workers. They assert themselves vigorously in the social, economic and political areas [4].

Women in Darfur enjoy powerful position; throughout history, women in Darfur have played significant roles in political and social life. Muslim travelers were astonished by the freedom accorded to the royal women in particular and women in the Sultanate [7].Through songs, al *Hakkama* (popular poet) has the right to criticize or compliment anyone, including the chief, women singers in Darfur express themselves freely concerning the current social and political situation. Although women in Darfur share most jobs designated for males, men have duties specified only for them, such as warfare. On the other hand, women are also responsible for specific duties, such as the domestic ones [4].

Women in North Darfur are engaged in productive roles, during rainy season (July to October) which called *Goz* economy(see SC UK HEA Profile for North Darfur, 2004), rain-fed farming, mainly millet mixed with melon or grown separately, household are holding small to medium sized herds of livestock(goat, sheep and few cows).*Tombac* economy, cultivation is labor intensive activity for women, it provides local labor opportunities for poor from within the areas. In addition, they grow different kinds of grains and vegetables, such as okra, tomatoes, sorghum, and millet. Women also processed dairy products. In the dry season, women usually worked on traditional crafts such as pottery, leatherwork, and basket waving. They also collect and prepare wild food to make it edible. also women are involved in petty trade includes selling tea, food, cereals, vegetable etc. also work as daily causal labor: this includes work in buildings, on brick mines, on houses as domestic helpers(cooking, cleaning, clothing) [4].

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part discusses the result obtained from the field research, presented and analyzed through answering the questions of the study.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age

Age groups	Frequency	Percent
14 - 24	24	20.0
25 - 35	49	40.8
36 - 46	36	30.0
47 - 57	6	5.0
58 - 68	3	2.5
69and above	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0

The result in table (1) show that most of the women participating in the study their age is range between 25-35 (41%) active productive age, followed by those between 36-46 (30%).%). they are strong compared to the older (their age above 60 years) and have the ability and chance to survive during the war time. Age is a significant factor in many aspects of life such as job opportunity.

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Table 2: Distribution of respondents by head of household

head of the household	Frequency	Percent%
my person	53	44.2
Husband	45	37.5
Father	16	13.3
Mother	2	1.7
Brother	2	1.7
Other	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0

Armed conflict and strive change social structures, networks and relations, displacement due to conflict and strife increase the number of female-headed household. Table (2) show that nearly (46%) of the women in the study are headed households because adult males have fled, gone into exile, joined fighting forces or have died or displaced .

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by the health threat

health threat	Frequency	Percent%
not answer	29	24.2
Abortion	25	20.8
HIV/AIDS	1	.8
Malaria	35	29.2
-abortion-malaria	1	.8
abortion- diabetic-blood pressure-fever	2	1.7
diarrhea- vomit	7	5.8
Fever	6	5.0
blood pressure	1	.8
Rheumatism	4	3.3
diarrhea- malaria	4	3.3
malaria- Rheumatism	1	.8
Abortion	1	.8
Malnutrition	1	.8
abortion-blood pressure-diabetic	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0

Women face health threats that stem from biological differences, e.g. the physical vulnerability of women is higher than that of men due to their gender and reproductive roles. The main health threats Abushouk IDPs women face as table (3) shows are: malaria, abortion (due to the using of hand pump and exposure to dioxin and chemical weapons), diarrhea, and fever. There are other health issues that relate specifically to gender roles and identities .e.g. during famine or food shortages (due to war and strives) women are more susceptible to malnutrition than men because of inequitable distribution of food within households and at the community level. The combination of malnutrition and gender-based discrimination may result in the stunted growth and development of adolescent girls and contribute to additional health risk for pregnant or lactating mothers, and in some cases result in death, crowding, poor housing conditions and inadequate sanitation increase the rates of and exposure to malaria, diarrhea and other communicable diseases.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by the negative impacts of civil strife on Abushook IDPs Women

No	Item	Frequency	Percent
1	Losses of housing	120	100%
2	Losses of assets	116	96.7%
3	Losses of the head of household	18	15%
4	Inability to pay health fees	115	95.8%
5	Inability to pay education fees	105	87.5%
6	Family dislocation	54	45.0%
7	Drops from school	53	44.2%
8	Streetism (children	27	22.5%
9	Beggary	07	5.8%
10	Losses the source of income	117	97.5%
11	Displacement	120	100%
12	Loss of market	108	90.0%
13	Pressure on services	120	100%
14	Prostitution	8	6.7%
15	Alcohol-making	6	5.0%
16	Selling drugs	7	5.8%

The current conflict in Darfur had severe negative socio-economic impacts on Abushouk IDPs women in North Darfur. The negative impact on women and children is difficult to assess (IDPs women experienced loss in lives and assets). According to table (4) the negative effects of the civil strife includes: losses of housing and assets(animal, crops), losses of the head of the household (father, husband), losses of markets and source of income, displacement and family dislocation, drops from schools, streetism (children),beggary, inability to pay health and school fees and pressure on services. Women may turn to illegal activities, including prostitution, brewing of alcohol and trafficking of drugs, which provide lucrative opportunities, but can carry a high risk of violence. In situation of armed conflict, severe mental and social stress can be caused by death, separation and loss of family and friends, loss of home and social environment, killing of friends or relatives, destruction of basic infrastructure, losses of economic livelihood opportunities, and material deprivation.

The psychological and social impacts of civil strife are inter-twined. Changes in social interactions may create psychological distress and fear. Also one of the most negative impacts of uprooting is the weakening or loss of social support networks. Ahmed, Khalid Mohammed [11], found that" that most rural population in North Darfur lost their property and became IDPs who are now mainly dependent on aid relief and marginal work such as, wage carners, beggars and other simple activities for income earning." This result is similar to that obtained by this study.

Other negative socio-economic impacts include:
- IDPs suffer from poor conditions, limited access to income opportunities and food insecurity.
- Destruction of livelihood.
- Children vulnerability to epidemic diseases.
- Indigenous knowledge and generation gaps.
- Culture of violence even among children of the non-conflict zones.
- Children were trained (recruited) without consent of parents or relatives. In addition to lack of identity-birth certificate, school certificates. All this beside Failure in development, including education, health care, transport, veterinary and other services.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by the positive impacts of civil strife on Abushook IDPs Women

No.	Item	Frequency	Percent
1	exposure to other cultures	97	80.8%
2	exposure to new skills and experiences	117	97,5%
3	awareness about sustainable development	109	90.8%
4	awareness about need for sustainable peace	104	86.7%
5	access to education services	105	87.5%
6	access to health services	108	90.0%

Despite of the negative impacts of the conflicts and civil strife in Darfur, there is another positive side for the civil strife. According to women interviewed in the study area, the most positive socio-economic impacts are: exposure to other cultures, exposure to new skills and experiences, awareness about sustainable development, awareness about need for sustainable peace, access to education and health services ,also there are positive changes in social relationships ,including gender relations. Table (5) reflects that.

Table 6: Age * return to home land Cross tabulation

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	42.285(a)	10	.000
Likelihood Ratio	19.209	10	.038
Linear-by-Linear Association	.367	1	.545

N of Valid Cases	120		

Result of cross tabulation analysis show in table (6) the ambition of respondents to returning to homeland is positively affected by age and this means women of the younger and productive age (14-46) prefer to return to their homelands with some requirements demanded. The older ones who prefer to stay in the camp explain that there is no security outside, they lose the trust on others and they do not want to repeat the experience of war and displacement.

6. CONCLUSION

The study confirm that conflict and strife have had an impact on women, the negative socio-economic impacts includes: losses of houses, markets and source of income, family dislocation, destruction of basic infrastructure and livelihood, pressure on services, culture of violence , displacement, illegal activities, psychological distress and fear, dependence on relief aid ,loss of social support . Despite the negative socio-economic impacts, there is a positive side for the civil strife, such as exposure to other cultures, new skills and experiences, awareness about sustainable development and peace, access to education and health services.

The study found that return to homeland is an ambition and desire for IDPs women if there is security, water resources, health and education services, means of production, suitable houses.

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher recommends that:

a. Introduction of educational and psychological activities\ program is very important to increase women psychological well-being.

b. Training is required to support and develop awareness of women on survival skills, health issues, and leadership.

a. Educate the community about armed conflict and strife generally and its impact on women and the problem of gender-based and sexual violence, beside other health threats to the personal safety of women in post conflict contexts.

c. Encourage and carry out inter-social dialogue among women and their communities in an effort to strengthen women's work to resolve conflict and play a pioneer role in their societies.

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