

Impact of Manipur Violence 2023 : a case study of IDPs in Kangpokpi, Churachandpur and Moreh district of Manipur with special reference to women, children, economy, mental health issues, education and healthcare, relief rehalitation resettlement and social exclusion

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Abstract—Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) constitute one of the most vulnerable groups affected by ethnic conflict and conflict-induced migration, often experiencing prolonged displacement within their own countries. Ethnic violence and insecurity frequently trigger humanitarian crises, forcing thousands of people into relief camps where access to adequate shelter, food, clean water, healthcare, education, and sanitation remains insufficient. The challenges associated with relief, rehabilitation, and long-term resettlement extend beyond the immediate provision of humanitarian assistance, encompassing complex socio-economic, political, and psychological dimensions. Displacement often results in significant livelihood loss, unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion, limiting opportunities for sustainable recovery and economic self-reliance. At the same time, IDPs frequently suffer from mental trauma due to violence, displacement, and uncertainty, while inadequate healthcare services further exacerbate their physical and psychological well-being. Women and children are particularly vulnerable, facing heightened risks of gender-based violence, exploitation, child labor, trafficking, interrupted education, and poor maternal and child health. These conditions raise critical human rights issues, underscoring the need to protect the dignity, safety, and fundamental rights of displaced populations. Furthermore, prolonged displacement weakens social cohesion, disrupts traditional community networks, and may contribute to recurring tensions between displaced and host communities. Ensuring effective government security, alongside inclusive policies for relief, rehabilitation, and durable resettlement, is essential for addressing the root causes and consequences of displacement. A comprehensive and rights-based approach that integrates humanitarian assistance, livelihood restoration, healthcare, psychosocial support, and community participation is crucial for promoting resilience, strengthening social cohesion, safeguarding human rights, and achieving sustainable peace and development in conflict-affected regions.

Index Terms—IDPs, challenges, relief rehalitation and resettlement, Ethnic Conflict, Relief Camps, Humanitarian Crisis, Socio-economic aspect, livelihood Loss, Mental trauma and Healthcare, Women and Children, Human Rights, Conflict-induced Migration, Social Cohesion and government security

I. Introduction

The ethnic violence that erupted in Manipur in May 2023 has resulted in one of the most severe internal displacement crises in India in recent years. The conflict, primarily between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, has caused widespread loss of life, destruction of property, and the displacement of thousands of people from their homes. Many of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to live in relief camps

under difficult conditions, facing challenges related to security, livelihood, health, and social integration. The crisis has exposed the complex social, political, and economic dimensions of ethnic conflict and highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive humanitarian and policy responses.

Women and children have been among the most vulnerable groups affected by the violence. Women have faced increased risks of gender-based violence, loss of livelihoods, and additional caregiving responsibilities, while children have experienced interrupted education, psychological distress, and limited access to essential services. The conflict has also disrupted economic activities, damaged infrastructure, and weakened local livelihoods, leading to long-term socio-economic consequences for displaced families.

In addition to material losses, the violence has caused significant mental health challenges, including trauma, anxiety, depression and emotional distress among IDPs. Access to education and healthcare has been severely affected due to school closures, damaged facilities, and limited medical services. Although the government and humanitarian agencies have implemented relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement measures, several challenges remain in ensuring sustainable recovery and safe reintegration. Furthermore, rebuilding social cohesion, restoring public trust, and strengthening government security mechanisms are essential for achieving lasting peace. This study examines the impact of the Manipur violence on internally displaced persons, with special reference to women, children, the economy, mental health and trauma, education and healthcare, relief, rehabilitation and resettlement, social cohesion, and government security.

II. Literature review

The ethnic violence that erupted in Manipur on 3 May 2023 resulted in widespread displacement, loss of lives, destruction of property and a humanitarian crisis. Thousands of people were forced to leave their homes and live in relief camps, becoming internally displaced persons (IDPs). Existing literature highlights that the consequences of the conflict have extended beyond physical displacement, affecting social relationships, livelihoods, education, healthcare access, and psychological well-being. Reports have documented large-scale displacement, destruction of homes, and the difficulties faced by displaced communities in accessing essential services.

III. Amnesty International

Studies on the impact of the violence indicate that women and children have been among the most vulnerable groups. Women IDPs have experienced insecurity, loss of livelihoods, displacement-related trauma and difficulties accessing reproductive and maternal healthcare. Children have faced disruption of education, separation from familiar social environments, and emotional distress due to prolonged exposure to violence and uncertainty. Research on the psychological effects of the conflict shows that women and children in relief camps have experienced anxiety, depression, fear, and trauma-related symptoms.

The economic impact of the violence has been significant. Displacement interrupted agricultural activities, small businesses, trade and daily wage employment. Many displaced families lost houses, land, livestock and sources of income, increasing their dependence on relief assistance. The destruction of local markets and restrictions on movement further affected economic recovery and livelihood restoration.

Mental health has emerged as a major concern among IDPs. Studies conducted among displaced populations in relief camps have reported high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and emotional distress. Factors such as witnessing violence, destruction of property, separation from family members, and uncertainty about the future have contributed to psychological suffering. Researchers emphasize the need for counselling services, psychosocial support and community-based mental healthcare programmes.

The education sector was severely affected as many schools were damaged, closed or converted into temporary shelters. Displaced children faced interruptions in schooling, lack of learning materials, and difficulties continuing their education. Literature suggests that restoring educational opportunities is essential not only for academic development but also for children's emotional recovery and social reintegration.

Healthcare services were also disrupted due to violence, damage to health facilities, displacement of medical personnel, and difficulties in accessing treatment. Women, children, elderly persons and persons with chronic illnesses were particularly affected. Reports highlight the need for strengthening healthcare infrastructure, mobile medical services, maternal care and mental health support in displaced communities.

Studies on relief, rehabilitation and resettlement reveal that while government agencies and civil society organizations provided immediate support through relief camps, long-term rehabilitation remains a major challenge. Issues such as inadequate shelter, sanitation problems, livelihood insecurity, and uncertainty regarding return or resettlement have affected displaced families. Sustainable rehabilitation requires not only physical reconstruction but also livelihood restoration, education, healthcare and social security.

The violence has also affected social cohesion in Manipur by weakening trust and relationships between communities. The prolonged displacement and separation of communities have created social divisions and challenges for reconciliation. Scholars emphasize that rebuilding peace requires dialogue, justice, inclusive governance and initiatives aimed at restoring inter-community trust and cooperation.

In conclusion, the existing literature shows that the Manipur violence of 2023 created multidimensional challenges for IDPs, particularly women and children. The crisis affected economic security, mental health, education, healthcare access and social harmony. However, there remains a need for more comprehensive field-based studies focusing on the lived experiences of displaced communities and evaluating the effectiveness of relief, rehabilitation and resettlement programmes. This study attempts to address these gaps by examining the overall impact of the conflict on IDPs in Manipur.

IV. Objective

The primary objective of this publication is to examine the multidimensional impact of the 2023 Manipur violence through a case study of internally displaced persons (IDPs), with particular reference to women and children. It seeks to analyze the humanitarian, social, economic, educational, healthcare and psychological consequences of the conflict, while evaluating the effectiveness of relief, rehabilitation, resettlement and peacebuilding initiatives. The study also aims to assess the role of government institutions and security agencies in conflict management, protection of civilians, restoration of law and order, and the promotion of social cohesion.

Specifically, the publication aims to :

Examine the causes and consequences of the 2023 Manipur violence and its impact on internally displaced persons.

Assess the specific challenges faced by women and children, including issues related to safety, gender-based violence, trauma, displacement, and access to essential services.

Analyze the economic impact of displacement, including loss of livelihoods, income, employment, and household assets.

Evaluate the mental health and psychosocial effects of the conflict on displaced populations, especially vulnerable groups.

Investigate the disruption of education and the challenges faced by children and educational institutions during and after the conflict.

Examine the availability, accessibility, and quality of healthcare services in relief camps and affected communities.

Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of relief measures, rehabilitation programs, and resettlement policies implemented by the government and humanitarian agencies.

Explore the process of rebuilding trust, promoting social cohesion and facilitating sustainable peace among affected communities.

Evaluate the role of government, civil society organizations, and security forces in ensuring protection, restoring normalcy, and preventing future conflict.

Provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening humanitarian response, inclusive rehabilitation, sustainable resettlement, conflict-sensitive governance, and long-term peacebuilding in Manipur.

The publication ultimately seeks to contribute to academic scholarship, inform public policy, and support the development of comprehensive strategies for protecting internally displaced persons and promoting resilient, inclusive, and peaceful communities in conflict-affected regions.

V. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods case study approach to examine the multidimensional impact of the 2023 Manipur violence on internally displaced persons (IDPs), with particular emphasis on women, children, economic conditions, mental health, education, healthcare, relief, rehabilitation, resettlement, social cohesion, and the role of government and security agencies. The case study approach provides an in-depth understanding of the experiences of affected communities while situating them within the broader socio-political and humanitarian context.

VI. Research Design

The study combines qualitative and quantitative research methods to capture both measurable outcomes and the lived experiences of displaced populations. Quantitative data are used to assess demographic characteristics, patterns of displacement, access to services and socio-economic impacts, while qualitative data provide insights into trauma, coping mechanisms, community resilience, and perceptions of government interventions.

VII. Data Collection

The research relies on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data are collected through structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews with internally displaced persons residing in relief camps and resettled communities. Special attention is given to women, children, elderly persons, community leaders, healthcare workers, teachers, social workers, government officials and representatives of civil society organizations.

Secondary data are obtained from government reports, census and administrative records, publications of national and international organizations, reports of humanitarian agencies, academic journals, policy documents, media reports, and other credible sources relevant to the 2023 Manipur violence.

VIII. Sampling

A purposive sampling technique is employed to select participants directly affected by the violence. Where appropriate, snowball sampling is used to identify additional respondents with relevant experiences. The sample includes displaced households from different communities to ensure diverse perspectives and a comprehensive understanding of the conflict's impact.

IX. Data Analysis

Quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies, percentages, tables, and charts. Qualitative data are analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, perceptions and experiences related to displacement, gender, mental health, livelihood loss, education, healthcare access, rehabilitation, and social cohesion. Triangulation of multiple data sources enhances the validity and reliability of the findings.

X. Ethical Considerations

The study follows established ethical principles for research involving human participants. Informed consent is obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity are maintained throughout the research process and participation is entirely voluntary. Given the sensitivity of conflict-related experiences, interviews are conducted with care to minimize distress, and participants are informed of their right to decline or withdraw from the study at any stage.

XI. Scope and Limitations

The study focuses on the experiences of internally displaced persons affected by the 2023 Manipur violence and does not attempt to establish legal responsibility or provide a comprehensive analysis of all dimensions of the conflict. Findings are based on the selected sample and available data; therefore, they may not fully represent every affected community. Nevertheless, the mixed-methods approach provides a robust and comprehensive assessment of the humanitarian, socio-economic, psychological, educational and governance-related impacts of the violence.

Overall, the methodology is designed to generate reliable and evidence-based findings that contribute to academic understanding, inform public policy and support the development of effective strategies for relief, rehabilitation, resettlement, social cohesion, and sustainable peacebuilding in Manipur.

XII. Conclusion

The 2023 Manipur violence represents one of the most significant humanitarian crises in the region in recent decades, resulting in widespread displacement, loss of lives and livelihoods, destruction of property and deep social divisions. This case study of internally displaced persons (IDPs) demonstrates that the consequences of the conflict extend far beyond immediate physical harm, affecting the economic, psychological, educational and healthcare well-being of affected communities. Women and children have borne a disproportionate share of the burden, facing heightened risks of insecurity, interrupted education, inadequate healthcare, loss of income, psychosocial trauma, and prolonged uncertainty regarding their future.

The findings underscore that displacement has disrupted household economies, weakened community support systems and exacerbated existing socio-economic vulnerabilities. Many displaced families continue to experience unemployment, food insecurity and limited access to sustainable livelihoods. Children have suffered interruptions in education and developmental opportunities, while women have assumed increased caregiving and economic responsibilities under difficult circumstances. Mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, grief and trauma, have emerged as critical concerns, highlighting the need for comprehensive psychosocial support alongside material assistance.

Although government agencies, security forces, humanitarian organizations and civil society groups have undertaken significant relief and rehabilitation efforts, persistent challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to shelter, healthcare, education, livelihood restoration and long-term rehabilitation. Effective resettlement requires more than physical relocation; it depends on restoring dignity, security, economic opportunities and confidence among displaced populations. Sustainable recovery also requires rebuilding trust between communities, strengthening local institutions and promoting inclusive dialogue to address the underlying causes of conflict.

The study further indicates that the role of government and security institutions extends beyond maintaining law and order. Transparent governance, timely humanitarian assistance, protection of vulnerable groups, accountability and community participation are essential for restoring public confidence and preventing renewed violence. Coordination among government departments, humanitarian agencies, community leaders and civil society organizations is crucial for delivering comprehensive and conflict-sensitive interventions.

Long-term peace in Manipur depends on an integrated approach that combines humanitarian relief with inclusive development, psychosocial care, educational continuity, livelihood restoration, and reconciliation initiatives. Policies should prioritize the needs of women, children, older persons and other vulnerable groups while ensuring equitable access to public services and opportunities for economic recovery. Strengthening community resilience, promoting inter-community dialogue and addressing structural inequalities are equally important for rebuilding social cohesion and fostering lasting peace.

In conclusion, the experience of internally displaced persons following the 2023 Manipur violence highlights the complex and interconnected nature of conflict-induced displacement. Addressing immediate humanitarian needs must be accompanied by sustained efforts toward rehabilitation, resettlement, justice, reconciliation and inclusive governance. The insights generated by this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the multidimensional impacts of conflict and offer evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, researchers, humanitarian organizations and development practitioners working toward resilient communities and sustainable peace in Manipur and other conflict-affected regions.

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