



Impact of Conflicts on Role of Rural women's Household in Food Security (West Darfur – Returnee's Area, Sudan)

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ABSTRACT: Tribal conflicts have negative impact on the food security and livelihood of household level for returnee's people, relevant and consistent with the recent growing interest to assess the contribution of women to economic activities in Sudan. This paper identifies the effect of conflict on women headed participation in food security. It was conducted in Merim-Ta village, Western Darfur State in period 2015. Data were collected primary and secondary. Primary data collected by questionnaire and secondary data were from documents, articles report. A simple randomly sampling technique was adopted to select 110 household, because of homogeneity of community, who affected by conflict and displacement, then returnee back to their village. The result obtained indicate that all of the returnee their basic resources of food are farming, live in extremely poor condition characterized by high women headed household (68.2%) with high illiteracy rates, large size of family and with low income. Also the study indicates that the conflict forced young children from school to migrate and look for new source of income to help their family in basic needs. Finally women and young children are vulnerable people in returnee's area and working in hard condition.

Keyword: Rural Women's Headed Household, Food Security, Darfur Conflicts.

I. INTRODUCTION

Food security in the third world are an ongoing problem, most people live in rural areas, main economic activities are agricultural and livestock, increasing attention is also being given to the role of smallholder subsistence agriculture where women are dominating in ensuring the food security of continent, as 73% of the rural population. Women contribute 60-80% of the labor used to produce food (Elhabib, 2014). The causes of food shortages in Sudan is due to several reasons, including war, tribal conflicts, drought and others. Although the Sudan country have enormous potential for food self-sufficiency in cereals (sorghum and millet), which represents the main staple food for the majority of the population, but still facing food insecurity problem. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nation indicate that the disaster that caused food crises in Sudan are drought, wars and displacement (FAO, 2005) including the years if prosperity.

The Sudan Food Security outlook of the Famine Early Warning System (2013) reports indicated that as 3.5 million people in Sudan face stressed and crisis on level of food insecurity, with 80% of the food insecurity population in conflict affected areas of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile people in many rural areas of the Sudan apply multiple livelihood strategies to secure food for their household and undertake other activities to generate income in order to be able to feed their family specially women headed household in Darfur. Since 2003 humanitarian problem which facing Darfur were not the result of today or the result of emergency event in recent years, but result of accumulations and deposits of conflicts which result from several factors, including natural causes, environmental, political, economic, social and neighboring countries (Chad and Libya), but conflict in Darfur could be regarded as one of the main causes that disturbed the livelihood of different communities, which led humanitarian disaster of massive displacement into camps around the cities and the resort of large number of citizens to neighboring countries, widespread destruction, looting of assets and loss of breadwinner and so on. The fundamental livelihood strategies in study area pre-conflict are based on agricultural production and livestock herding, the export which generated 20% of national export from Darfur (FEWS Net, 2013). The study area has normally been able to achieve food self-sufficiency in cereal (sorghum and millet), cash crops and horticulture. Agriculture plays a critical role in the entire life of a given economy, is the backbone of economic system of a given country. In addition to providing food and raw material, agriculture also provides employment opportunities to very large percentage of population 70% of whom live in rural areas,

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it has been stated that the participation of females in traditional agricultural sector reach 87% (Ibnouf,2009). Proportion of the harsh conditions experienced by the people of study area the livelihoods become very difficult and the availability of foods quantities and quality, food prices, marketing, stores, supply, poor quality of health services and education thus resulting in displacement and crowded population which made pressure in the available resources. As a result of conflict, people particularly most of them vulnerable (women and children) vulnerable to food insecurity (FAO, 2009).

Food security is a broad concept that includes issues related to the nature, quality, food access and security of the food supply. The 1996 World Food Summit in Rome defined “food security exist when all people, at all times, have physical and economical access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”, (FAO, 2009). Hence, there is no single way of measuring food security. Food in security has a temporary dimension. It is defined as transitory when a person suffers from a temporary decline in food consumption and as chronic when a person is continuously unable to quire sufficient food. During transitory food insecurity a household adopt several strategies but poor households might deplete their productive assets which may lead to chronic food in security (FAO, 2012). Menale, *et al* reported that conditional on making assumptions on income share of household expenditure, and expenditure on other goods and services; and the household behaviors, then he total household income and food prices could be used to estimate the household food security. He further points out that consumption based estimates is an outcome of access to food, household food acquisition and allocation behavior. Most previous studies concentrate on objective food measures at the household level.

For instance, in rural Darfur areas (FAO, 2009b) analyzed the determinants of four components of food security i.e. food availability, accessibility, utilization and stability. Food availability is achieved when sufficient quantities of food are available to all individuals; explain that access to food attained when household members have enough resources to quire food. Food utilization has health dimension and requires a sufficient energy from diet and access to clean water and sanitation. They found that food availability requires the increased production of crops and livestock products. In food accessibility component they found that electrification and adult literacy positively contribute to food accessibility while marginalization of land contributes negatively to food accessibility. For food stability, we now turn to the four major dimension of food and nutrition security, which relates to the stability of the food and nutrition status and focuses on what happens to livelihoods when households are hit by temporary negative shocks, female literacy, safe drinking water and number of hospitals increase food security. It has generally been argued that female-headed households are more vulnerable to food insecurity and non-income aspects of poverty. The studies link food security and other factors analyzed include farm size, livestock ownership, education of head of household, household size and pre-capita production of the household. With the exception of household size all the other factors increase food security. A hypothesis that is often raised in the literature is that wealth, assets ownership (e.g. land, livestock) and income is a good predictor of food security, household with resources is expected to withstand shocks in production or prices that create food shortages. So the main objectives of this paper is to explore and highlight the role of rural women headed household on food security level and analyze the basic resources for household food security level.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in returnee’s rural areas in West Darfur State, Beiada locality, Merim-Ta village. One of the areas facing armed conflict since 2003, and their people displacement into neighboring countries live in camps with poor condition and lack of income, and then people return back to their village since 2010. The primary data have been collected through interview, critical observation and questionnaire. The secondary data secondary data were collected from documents, articles report; these secondary data are useful for providing background information. 110 household were selected randomly for this study who affected by conflict, and displacement, then return back to their village. Data analysis used SPSS program.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table (4.1): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by their age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less 25 years	20	18.2
26- 35 years	50	45.5
36- 45 year	35	31.8
More than 46	5	4.5
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table (4.1) shows that (45.5%) of respondent reported that their age between (26 – 35) years, (36 – 45) years, (18.2%) less than 25 years. This indicates that most of respondent in their productive age (youth) or active age, represented (63.7%) which means in rural areas traditionally the women get marriage early specially as reflected in table (4-2) below 68.2% were women headed household.

Table (4.2): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents according to their marital status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married (Male)	35	31.8
Single (Daughter)	1	0.9
Divorced (Female)	39	35.5
Widow (Female)	30	27.2
Female with their husband (Specially needs)	5	4.6
Total	110	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table (4.2) shows that the majority of respondents (68.2%) were female, headed household, compare to (31.8%) MHH. That mean the effect of conflict on women's and young children, some student mention that as (Ibnouf, 2009) participation of females in traditional agriculture sector reach 87%. Proportion of the harsh conditions experienced by the women of study area the livelihoods become very difficult, and this reflects women's reproductive and productive roles in food security for their family and/or to work to meet the basic needs of their families.

Table (4.3): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by educational level

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	70	63.6
Khalwa	23	21
Basic	15	13.6
Secondary	2	1.8
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table (4.3) shows that a clear high percentage of the illiteracy (63.6%) are illiteracy, (21%) are Khalwa, primary educated are (13.6%). Secondary are (1.8%) majority are women, as WFP (2006) mentioned that this is considered one of the important factors that promoted the tribal conflict in Darfur, a causes consequence to lack of educational services, also educational level plays a crucial role in the dispersion of information concerning health, nutrition, child care and hygiene for food utilization in general, so that level of education for head of household very important.

Table (4.4): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by their children

Family who have children	Frequency	Percentage
Yes we have	73	66.4
No we haven't	37	33.6
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table (4.4) shows that the majority of the respondents (66.4%) had have children, this indicted that women in rural areas more motivated to secure food for their children, children who support their family, it is observed that sometime even who the husband is existing the responsibility of food is located to women, specially her husband have other wife with large size of family, and/or men with special needs such as illness or unable to work, so women are more motivated to be responsible to engage in economic activities. In other words they represent the backbone that supported the food security at household level. As in literature, FAO, report (2013) women and girls make up 60% of the worlds chronically hungry and Hamdon (2014) mentioned that women contribution about 60-80% of the labor used to produce food for their children, from my observation that conflict lead to destructions of school, children abandon and/or school dropout, increase the immoral behavior and other crimes that happen in study area.

Table (4.5): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by their annual income

Annual income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3000	25	22.7
From 3001- 3500	75	68.2
3501-4000	10	9.1
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table (4.5) shows that most of respondents their annual income (68.2%) between 3001-3500 SDG, follow by (22.7%) less than (3000) SDG per year. This indicates that most of sample selected were loss their assets during conflict and destroyed their livelihood so that people in situation of food insecurity and vulnerable to food insecurity and non-income aspects of poverty.

Table (4.6): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by their purpose of cultivation after

Purpose of cultivation	Frequency	Percentage
Self-sufficient	74	67.3
Market	16	14.5
Both	20	18.2
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table (4.6) shows that most of respondent the purpose of crop cultivation for self-sufficient (60.9%), (39.1%) of respondent their crop cultivation is for both market and food. According to WFP (2006) report, Darfur region has normally been able to achieve food self-sufficient, according to FAO (2009). Food availability is achieved when sufficient quantities of food are available to all individuals; explain that access to food is attained when household members have enough resources to acquire food. On the other hand, during groups discussion they maintained that before conflict there are some crops cultivation specially for marketing and others for food and surplus selling in market, but now all cultivation for food only, because the security situation is not stable, poor healthy for people and lack of food.

Table (4.7): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by sufficient period of their agricultural production

sufficient period of their agricultural production		
Period	Frequency	%
3 – 6 months	69	62.7
7 – 9 months	41	37.3
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

According to FAO (2009b) availability of food is determined by domestic food production. It's clear that majority of the respondent (62.7%) met food shortage in Table (4.7), for a period of six months, (37.3%) between (7-9) months. In general, food insecurity is linked to high food prices, poverty and low agricultural productivity hat rise prices and affected household living standard and food security.

Table (4.8): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by their activities to covers the period of food shortage gap

Activities to covers the period of food shortage gap		
Activities	Frequency	%
Selling the family stock and equipment	21	19.1
Collect fire wood and grass	36	32.7
Labor	53	48.2
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table (4.8) shows that the majority of respondents were women headed (48.2%) mentioned that they work as labor such as working in brick making, water selling, domestic servant, (32.7%) collect firewood, (19.1%) selling family stock and equipment to covers the period of food shortage. This means coping mechanism used by returnees to deal with non available of food. As FEWS NET (2013) reported that, people in many rural areas of the Sudan apply multiple livelihood strategies to secure food for their households and undertake other activities to generate income in order to be able to feed their family.

Table (4.9): Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by their livestock ownership received from NGOs

Livestock ownership		
Goat ownership	Frequency	%
Yes we have	64	58.2
Don't have	46	41.8
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table (4.9) shows that the majority of respondents women headed households (58.2%) received goats, (41.8%) don't have livestock. This one of activities carryout by NGOs during people return back to their village and focused by women headed to reduced food insecurity in study are. As some studies mention that, link food security and other factors analyzed include farm size, livestock ownership, education of headed of household, household size and pre-capita production of the household with the exception of household size all the factors increase food insecurity, exactly what happen in the study area.

Table (4.10): T- Test analysis

	Gender	Frequency	Mean	S.D	T-Test	Sig.
Food Availability	Male	40	2.3	-0.464	-.973	0.013
	Female	70	2.59	-0.496		
Income	Male	40	3.70	0.608	1.953	0.20
	Female	70	3.44	0.694	2.025	
Head of Household	Male	40	1.80	0.464	1.807	0.008
	Female	70	1.63	0.487	1.83	

Statistical significant at the level 0.05

- 1- There are significant between gender and food availability, (sig. 0.013) this figure less than 0.05, and that refer to the arithmetic mean of the biggest for female. That means women in insecurity situation were more engage in different marginal hard work condition to secure food for their family specially women headed household. But the male escape from responsibility, migrates, joined the army and going to get married.
- 2- Gender and income: there is no significant between gender and income, (sig. 0.20) this figure biggest than 0.05.
- 3- There are significant arithmetic mean between gender and head of household, (sig. 0.008) this figure less than 0.05, and that refer to the arithmetic mean of the biggest for male. That means head of household male more secure food for their family than women, because both women and men work together to secure food for their family and other basic needs.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that tribal conflicts have negatively impacted on the food security and livelihoods for women headed, the results obtained indicated that the study area in situation of chronic food insecurity due to insecurity stability, and the main sources of income, are farming the results indicated that most of respondents are women headed (68.2%), live in extremely poor condition, characterized by high illiteracy with low income, the result reeled that the conflict increasing the loading of women, breadwinner due to many reasons during conflict, they constitute the backbone that supported the food security for their families, however there were completely responsible for the family welfare and other household need.

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