

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL
OF GRADUATE STUDIES INSTITUTE
FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES
(IPSS)**

**The Impact of Conflicts and Post-Conflict Reconstruction on Human
Security: The Case of War Widows in Woldia, Northern Ethiopia**

by Hulualem Girma

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**A thesis paper submitted to the Institute for Peace and Security Studies for
the Partial fulfillment of the requirements of Master of Arts in Peace and
Security Studies at Addis Ababa University**

advisor

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DECLARATION

Here, I certify that the paper that I have submitted to the Institute for Peace and Security Studies for the Partial Fulfillment of a Master's Degree at Addis Ababa University is my original work as of this writing. No one else has yet worked on this paper for the degree awards at any universities or at any level of the class.

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APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend to the Addis Ababa University that it accept the thesis submitted by Hулualem Girma, entitled “The Impact of Conflict and Post-Conflict Reconstruction on Human Security: The Case of War Widows in Woldia, Northern Ethiopia,” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Peace and Security Studies, which complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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I thank my almighty God. Thank you to my family, my wife, my brother, and my sister for their contributions to my work. A special thanks to my sister, Betelhem Girma, for her professional advice. And also, I want to thank all my friends for their kind help.

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Abstract

Conflict widows, who face many challenges due to the impact of conflict and widowhood, are the most marginalized and forgotten group in post-conflict reconstruction. The purpose of this case study will be to explore the effects of the conflict and post-conflict reconstruction on human security for the armed conflict widows living in northern Ethiopia, the Amhara regional state, at Woldia town, in order to draw attention to their insecurity and make them especially considered in future recovery, development, and peacebuilding efforts in Woldia and other conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia. A qualitative case study research design, three-step sampling techniques, and the principle of data saturation were used. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather primary data, and secondary data was collected from the internet. Then, using a six-step thematic analysis methodology, the data were analyzed primarily using deductive thematic analysis techniques, with the help of inductive techniques to capture new codes, relationships, and themes generated from the data. The finding shows that the conflict affects the conflict widows in many components of their human security. All the effects of the conflict on one component of human security also have a relationship with and connection to the other component. The results show that the conflict makes them widows, and these widows become vulnerable because of the impact of the conflict and widowhood. Conflict widows were affected by crime, SGBV, looting, property loss, income loss, and income generation activity loss; they also became IDPs; they lived in unhealthy small homes; they were psychologically and physically traumatized; they were vulnerable to food shortages and undernutrition; they found it difficult to maintain inheritance rights; they were grieving; and so on. This impacts their basic physiological and safety needs, which include personal, health, food, and economic security, and their psychosocial needs, which include their relationship with location (home), community, and time (which shows the impact on “identity, recognition, participation, and autonomy”). Their coping strategies and support from post-conflict reconstruction were found to be ineffective in lessening their vulnerability.

key word: conflict widow, conflict, human security, coping and post conflict reconstruction

Chapter one: Introduction

According to Burton, conflicts are activities that have the potential to be harmful (Burton, 1990; in Abaho et al., 2019). It poses serious challenges at all levels, from the individual to the collective, putting political, social, and economic stability at risk (Ferguson, 2010). Nowadays, mainly after the end of the Cold War era, there are high levels of civil war and state collapse. In 1999, 25 of the 27 armed conflicts were internal in nature, involving one or more non-state actors (Bruderlein, 2001), which resulted in a high rate of victimization and displacement of civilians (Newman, 2010). Sub-Saharan Africa, the region of the world with the most armed conflict than the rest of the world combined, had more people die in wars at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Human Security Centre, 2005) than at any other time in history (Brück & Schindler, 2009).

The most dramatic and prevalent threats to civilians occur during internal armed conflict (Bruderlein, 2001). Due to combatants increasingly targeting civilians as deliberate targets (Kaldor, 1999), many of the civilian victims of the conflict are women and children (Bouta & Frerks, 2002; Buijze, 2014). Women and children suffer a disproportionate amount of morbidity and mortality from armed conflict (Bendavid et al., 2021); in addition, they frequently become the target of intentional gender-based violence, lose their husbands in the conflict and become widows, or experience other disruptions to their daily lives, leaving them vulnerable in many ways.

Many countries have a large number of widows as a result of the proliferation of armed conflicts and high levels of military and civilian casualties (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1999). Some authors contend that "armed conflict is arguably now the single most important determinant of poverty in Africa..." despite the fact that wars disproportionately produce a large number of widows worldwide. In the literature on widowhood, the effects of armed conflicts have not received much attention (Luckham and colleagues, 2001, p. 1; Bruck & Schindler, 2009), as cited in Blackburn (2010). Also little known in peace and security studies is how armed conflict and its aftereffects affect the human security of armed conflict widows. And how do war widows cope with such a precarious situation? as well as their long-term needs to be resilient and self-sufficient? are not sufficiently answered in the literature on peace and security.

Throughout its history, Ethiopia has been involved in numerous interstate and intrastate wars and conflicts (Adugna, 2001). Ethiopia, the second-most populous nation in Africa, has 12 administrative regions and a total population of about 115 million (Dadi, 2022). In the recent year, starting in 2018, the conflict in Ethiopia started in many places after a short period of no major conflict and produced an enormous amount of casualties, deaths, war widows, and IDPs. According to the Ministry of Finance of Ethiopia (2022), in the Oromia region, 592,992 IDPs fled the conflict that erupted in West Guji in 2018 between the Gedeo and Guji Oromo ethnic groups and a localized conflict in the Benishangul Gumuz region and in the East and West Wollega zones, where the security situation is volatile and ethnic-based attacks have resulted in numerous civilian deaths and population displacements. The conflict between the federal government and the TPLF began on November 4, 2020, and it quickly spread to the nearby Afar and Amhara regions. This different conflict in Ethiopia has had disastrous impacts on the people and has caused widespread internal displacements of millions, including deaths, homelessness, destruction of resources, GBV, financial loss, and loss of family relationships, as well as disruption to the culture and values of millions of people living in these regions and leaving many of the people food insecure (Dadi, 2022; ministry of finance, 2022).

The Amhara region has the highest number of IDPs, not only because of the ongoing conflict in the country's north, but also because of conflicts in other parts of the country that affect ethnic Amhara, primarily in western Oromia and the Benishangul Gumuz regions (Ministry of Finance, 2022). The populations in the war-affected regions of Afar and Amhara suggest a minimum of 28,560 individuals with more severe forms of mental health disorders that require immediate intervention, of whom 12,566 are children and 14,565 are women (Dadi, 2022).

In this study, by adhering to a human security framework, the focus is primarily on the impact of conflict on the human security of conflict widows. The target group of the study was women who lived in Woldia City and became widows because of the conflict between the TPLF and Ethiopian government forces and the "OLA-Shene" armed conflict. The violent attack widows are IDPs and have been sheltered now in Woldia City. Woldia City is the home for many IDPs affected by the conflict from different areas of the country. These IDPs are victims of ethnic based violence and forced displacement from different areas of the Oromia region by the alleged perpetrator of the "OLA- Shene" armed force. Therefore, the researcher conducted the research

to show the current status of these non-visible conflict widows and to show their insecurity for the attention of post -conflict reconstruction.

Due to the high mortality rate and long-term effects on livelihoods, physical infrastructure, political institutions, social cohesion, loss of dignity, and trust, conflicts are a major type of disaster (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, & Amaratunga, 2016). The direct and indirect effects of those armed conflicts on people, especially widows, are among their devastating effects, which are also challenging to rebuild and restore. And widows are a forgotten, vulnerable group in post conflict reconstruction. In order to boost resilience and human security and stop recurrent conflicts, post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) should follow a comprehensive strategy of rebuilding shattered livelihoods while reestablishing governance and confidence (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, & Amaratunga, 2016).

1.1. Background of the study

Ethiopia has conducted so many different wars in its history. During the period of colonialism, Ethiopia fought with the Italians in the Battle of Adwa and won the battle at the cost of many Ethiopian lives. The second Italian-Ethiopian war, which was conducted during 1935–1936, was a bloody war, and similarly to the Battle of Adwa, many Ethiopians patriotically died on the battlefield. For the next few years until the evacuation of the fascist Italian invaders from Ethiopia, Ethiopian patriots also fought guerilla warfare, and the fascist Italy used toxic gas, which is a chemical weapon banned by international treaties, and air bombing to overwhelm the resistance of the patriots. After trying to kill Marshal Graziani, the Italians also executed a large number of civilians in Addis Ababa (Forgacs, 2016).

From 1974 until the present, major wars and conflicts in Ethiopia have taken the lives of many people. From September 12, 1974, to May 28, 1991, Derg fought against the TPLF-led Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front and Eritrean separatists. Derg also fought against the Somali army during the Ogaden War in 1977–1978. After Eritrea gained independence, Ethiopia and Eritrea fought each other in the Ethio-Eritrea War, which lasted from 1998 to 2000 under the late prime minister Meles Zenawi. And now, between November 2020 and November 2022, Ethiopian government forces are mainly engaged in combat with TPLF forces in the north and with “OLA-shene” in the west Ethiopia region.

During all these major wars and other minor armed conflicts, many Ethiopians, mostly male fighters and civilians, lost their lives and left their families behind; their families became widows and orphans. It is very challenging to estimate the number of war widows in Ethiopia because the number of soldiers, civilians, and patriots who died prematurely due to the war and related circumstances is not well documented, and there are many disputed figures released by the government and others. It is unknown or poorly documented how many widows and orphans have been left behind by this and other armed conflicts. Problems with definition when there is no official evidence of the deaths of husbands and when marriages were not registered make counting the number of war widows even more difficult (Blackburn, 2010).

Conflict widows face challenges and insecurity due to the direct and indirect impact of the armed conflict and from binge widowhood in the conflict and post-conflict periods that have not been thoroughly studied or documented. The post-conflict setting poses specific insecurities for women (Buijze, 2014), and especially for conflict widows, the insecurities became worse. Yet, according to Handrahan (2004) and Puechguirbal (2012), as cited in Buijze (2014), these insecurities are often left out of the peacebuilding and reconstruction processes in the post-conflict setting. Widows face financial difficulties as a result of the loss of the family's primary breadwinner. The widows are expected to work very hard at low-paying jobs in order to secure an income to support the basic needs of their families. Due to her unskilled labor and a lack of education, many of these war widows were expected to suffer in order to find a job that was both sustainable and safe for her. Human security for war widows may be negatively impacted by numerous grievances, a poor economy, social exclusion, a lack of support from friends and family, as well as a lack of support from the government or national and international organizations during the post-conflict reconstruction period. We are only superficially aware of war widows' vulnerability because there is little information available about their human in/security. If her human security is guaranteed, it is likely that she will be able to affect change for the betterment of her community, the future of her child, and the peace and development of the entire country if her vulnerability is acknowledged and taken care of during the post-conflict reconstruction phases.

This study investigates the human security challenge that results from the conflict and the post-conflict situation in order to shed light on the marginalized and ignored armed conflict

widows. The study relied heavily on qualitative data. However, the researcher also used quantitative data to some extent in order to address issues concerning demographics and other study topics.

1.2. Statement of the problem

There are a lot of widows in many nations as a result of the increase in armed conflicts and the high numbers of military and civilian losses (Pannilage & Gunawardane, 2016). It is mainly young women who have become war widows (Amarasinghe & Epa, 2017). The United Nations Development Program (2004) noted that conflict generally undermines human security through the loss of life, the destruction of sources of livelihood, the violation of fundamental indicators of dignity, such as compelling women into prostitution, and the destruction of social services, including health and education. People's means of obtaining basic necessities, continuing existence, and dignity are frequently affected by armed conflict. According to Lim et al. (2022), war or armed conflict can have an impact on both business and society as a whole by restricting access to basic necessities and financial resources, raising unemployment and lowering purchasing power, and increasing the number of asylum seekers and refugees. It also results in the interruption of clinical services, public health services, and other health-related programs and damages health facilities and their infrastructures (Abebaw et al., 2022). The current conflicts in many geographic areas of Ethiopia, which are conducted by different actors, have led to fatalities, humanitarian crises, the destruction of private and public property, and the creation of communities that are in desperate need of assistance (World Bank Group, 2022). Also, the country's recent conflicts have had a significant impact on the host community and the country, resulting in a large number of internally displaced people (Ibid.). According to the International Organization of Migration (2021), there are 4.17 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia, making it one of the largest IDP populations in the world. Of these, 84% are displaced because of conflict in various parts of the country (Ministry of Finance, 2022). This kind of impact of violent conflict on basic infrastructure, society, and the economy has implications for its effect on livelihood, wellbeing, and survival, as well as on dignity for the conflict-affected community in general and for women and children in particular. But the impact of conflict on conflict widows increases due to the death of the husband and related issues. In most cases in the Ethiopian context, husbands are the main breadwinners of the family, the family heads and

managers for children and livestock, and the security providers for the family. So, due to the death of her husband, the woman faces psychological, social, and economic stress. Conflict widows are a mostly marginalized and forgotten group, and most non-developed countries are unable to support and empower these widows due to their underdevelopment (Blackburn, 2010). In conflict and post-conflict situations, conflict widows suffer more than other affected community members due to structural inequalities and patriarchal gender norms (Sahoo, 2014; Sengupta, 2016). However, there is still a need for more detailed research into their daily struggles, particularly their human security challenges and how they cope with insecurity, in order to respond accordingly in post-conflict reconstruction. Widowhood is one of the most neglected of all gender and human rights issues (UNDAW, 2001). Despite the fact that research on the impact of conflict in various disciplines can collectively create an image of how violent conflict and war affect various aspects of human security, it lacks a clear image of human vulnerability in critical human security aspects, particularly for conflict widows in general. The research on widowhood also mainly focuses on the psychological and social plights of widows but not their material aspects, so it lacks the ability to show their vulnerability in their vital human security components. Further, there has been no research in Ethiopia that demonstrates the effect of armed conflict and post-conflict reconstruction on human security, particularly for armed conflict widows, especially in recent times concerning the major armed conflict conducted in different areas of Ethiopia. The aim of this study is to better understand the problems that armed conflict widows encounter in terms of their human security in a post-conflict environment and to draw attention to their issue from post-conflict reconstruction actors.

1.3. Objective

Explore the impact of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction on human security in the case of conflict widows in Woldia town, northern Ethiopia.

1.3.1. Specific objective

1. Explore the human security impact of armed conflict on conflict widows in Woldia town, northern Ethiopia.
2. Explore the coping strategies of conflict widows in Woldia town, northern Ethiopia.

3. Assess the major steps taken by government and non-government actors to assist, particularly conflict widows, in their recovery.

1.3.2. Main research questions

1. How does armed conflict and its post conflict legacy affect Northern Ethiopia, Woldia town conflict widows' human security?
2. How do Northern Ethiopia's Woldia town conflict widows cope with human insecurity?
3. What efforts are made by the government of Ethiopia and NGOs towards helping conflict widows to increase their resilience and self-sufficiency?

1.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study will be thematically focused on exploring the effect of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction on armed conflict widows' human security, their coping mechanisms, and how the post conflict reconstruction effort specifically addresses them. Geographically, the study will be limited to Woldia town, and the population of the study will be limited to armed conflict widows only. The study will be conducted for a specific period of time due to a shortage of funds and time. The study will cover a time frame between November 2020 and June 2023.

The study has a number of flaws, some of which are as follows: it was difficult to obtain accurate data from the government officials' perspective concerning the post conflict reconstruction effort made by the government or any other NGO to make conflict widows recover and resilient, and it was also challenging to compare data that had discrepancies between their perspective and that of the conflict widows. Due to the security situation in the region, where at the time of data collection, armed conflict and public violence had started, mobility was restricted, and getting government officials and collecting further information to investigate and cross-check the data were somewhat hindered, there is a lack of information regarding the effort made by the government or any other NGOs in helping the conflict widows with their recovery and resilience. So the data mainly focuses on the words of the respondent conflict widows.

1.5. purpose of the study

The purpose of this case study will be to explore the effects of the conflict and post-conflict reconstruction on human security for the armed conflict widows living in northern Ethiopia, the Amhara regional state, at Woldia town, in order to draw attention to their insecurity and make it

considered in future recovery, development, and peacebuilding efforts in Woldia and other conflict-affected areas concerning the conflict widows, who face many challenges due to the loss of their husbands and are the most marginalized and forgotten group in post-conflict reconstruction.

At this point in the investigation, the conflict will be broadly defined as the armed conflict fought in northern Ethiopia between TPLF forces and Ethiopian government forces, which include the National Defense Force, Amhara regional and special police forces, Amhara Fano (public force), and other government allies, and the armed conflict by the alleged "OLA-Shene," which was conducted mainly in the west Oromia Welga area.

The post-conflict reconstruction in this paper looks into the "3R4 CACE" project (*Response, Recovery, and Resilience for Conflict-Affected Communities in Ethiopia Project, P177233*). It was launched by Ethiopia with money donated by the World Bank to address the immediate needs of communities, rebuild or recover infrastructure damaged by violence, and develop community resilience to its effects over time (World Bank Group, 2022; Ministry of Finance, 2022). In particular, the initiative will assist in enhancing access to fundamental services, rebuilding climate-resilient infrastructure that is prioritized by communities, and assisting GBV victims (World Bank Group, 2022; Ministry of Finance, 2022).

1.6. Significance of the research

Armed conflict widows face numerous challenges, and according to some scholars, these conflict widows are frequently overlooked during the period of post-conflict reconstruction. As a result, this research helps to bring the plight of armed conflict widows to the attention of policymakers, decision-makers, and those involved in post-conflict reconstruction in governmental and non-governmental organizations. The study's findings will help policymakers and reconstruction actors respond appropriately to conflict widows' most vulnerable aspects and long-term needs during the post-conflict period in order to boost their resilience and self-sufficiency.

1.7. Ethical consideration

The participant's dignity and rights are linked to the consent given by the participant; the researcher will ask the respondents for their consent to participate in the research. and also to

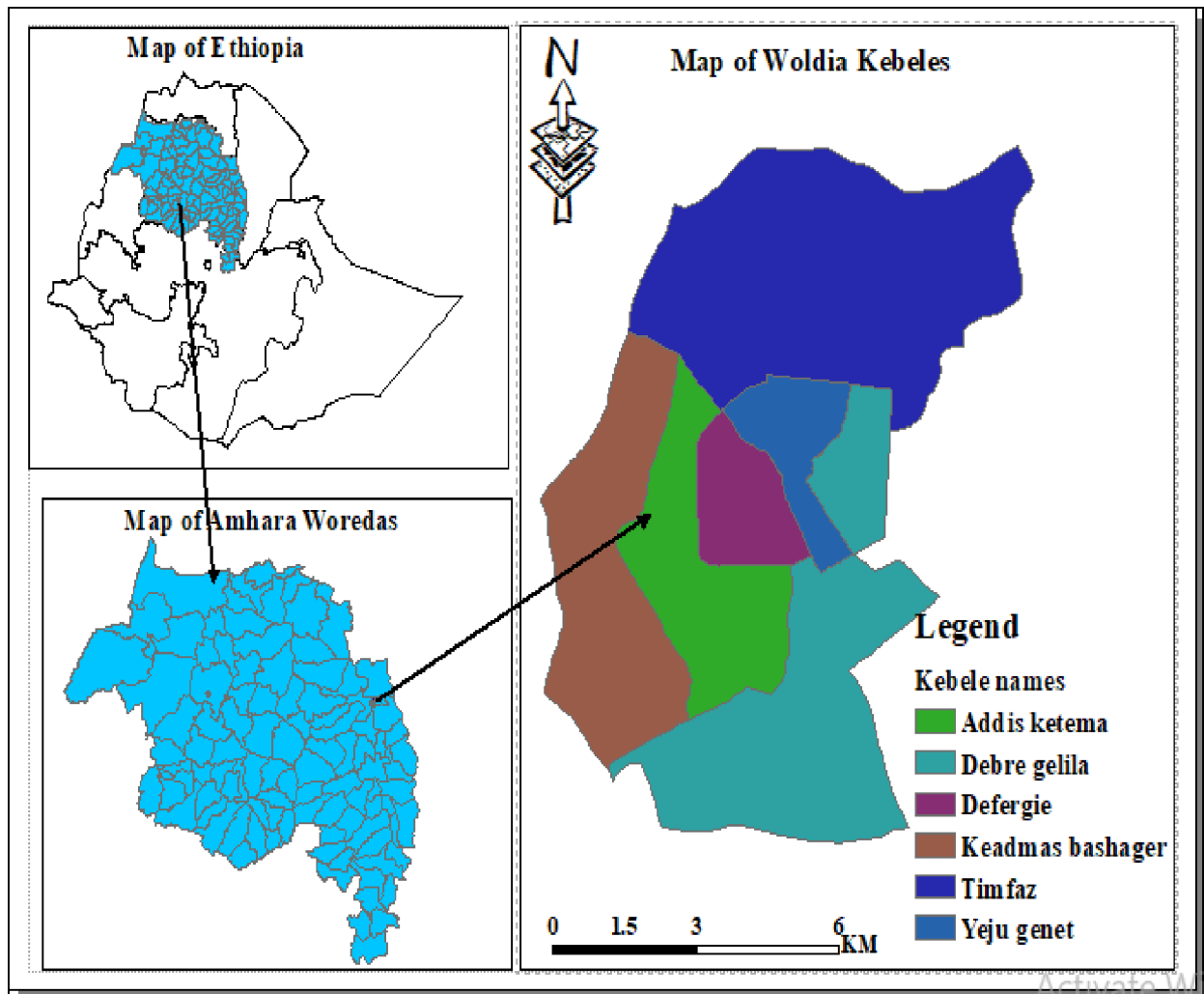
record the interview separately, prepare written consent if they will sign, or just get oral consent if they don't want to sign. Sufficient and adequate information will serve as the basis for giving consent, and the researcher will sufficiently provide the aim and purpose of the study in order to get consent for both being part of the research as a respondent and for taking the record of the interview. The researcher ensures that consent should be given voluntarily and tells them they have the right to withdraw at any time from the interview. Aside from that, the researcher guarantees participant confidentiality: meaning that information about them will be used only in such a way that other people cannot identify the participants or that no institution can use it against the participants' interests.

1.8. Organization of the study

The study will be organized into five chapters. In the first chapter, it will contain mainly an introduction along with a statement of the problem and objectives, and in the second chapter, it will contain the literature review part; in this chapter, a conceptual framework, definition of concepts, and related literature review will be incorporated. The third chapter will contain the research philosophy, methodology, strategy, approach, and methods. The fourth chapter will contain the data presentation, analysis, and discussion. In the fifth chapter, the paper will incorporate the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.9. Description of the study area

This study was conducted in Woldia, the main town of North Wollo, located 530 km north-east of Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia [Fig 1]. The town's geographical coordinates are 11°500 N latitude and 39°360 E longitude. The town has an elevation of 2112m above sea level (Molla & Abegaz, 2021).



Source: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0250465.g001>

figure 1.1 map of the study area

CHAPTER TWO: The conceptual and analytical framework of the study

2.1. Traditional and non-traditional security

Wolfer describes security as "the absence of threats to acquired values" (Baldwin, 1997). So security can be generally understood as the highest level of safety for the involved subjects or actors, including the state, government, organization, enterprise, community, family, and individual (Phi, 2019).

There are currently two types of security thinking: traditional security understanding and non-traditional security understanding. Traditional security issues are about threats against the essential values of the state: territorial integrity and political sovereignty (Attinà, 2016; MacFarlane & Khong, 2006). This notion of security thinking can be traced to the peace of Westphalia in 1648 and the birth of the nation state (Bellamy, 2010; MacFarlane & Khong, 2006). It aims to protect the state against threats to its territorial integrity and political sovereignty (Attinà, 2016; Baldwin, 1997). So far, traditional security has been state-centric, upholding the principle of sovereignty (Pathak, 2013). The classical thinkers Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine contributed to the development of the traditional idea of state security, and more recent authors like Thomas Aquinas, Jean Bodin, and Thomas Hobbes continue to make significant contributions to the idea (MacFarlane & Khong, 2006).

For a long time, the security debate has been dominated by a state-centric view (Kerr, 2010). Many scholars began to question and continuously challenge the traditional concept of security (MacFarlane & Khong, 2006). The meaning and content of "security" became increasingly contested during the twentieth century (MacFarlane & Khong, 2006). Non-traditional security is a way of thinking about security for the state and individual by giving equal emphasis. Phi et al. (2019) created a table using five criteria that illustrates and explains the fundamental similarities and differences between traditional and non-traditional security. and the table is adopted and used to display information clearly and quickly.

	Traditional Security (TS)	Nontraditional Security (NS)	Similarity TS–NS	New Points of NS
1. Basic Concept	TS is "national security." —State-centered Approach —Hard Security	NTS is the security of states, humans, and enterprises. People-Centered Approach —Soft Security	Interrelated Relationship Two Sides of a Coin	NTS is a new concept started in the era of globalization
2. Main Aim	Protect State, Sovereignty, and Territory against Military Threats	Ensure Safety, Stability, and Sustainable Development of State, Humans, Enterprises	Interrelated Relationship	Humans and enterprises recognize the need to manage their security.
3. Main Actor, Subjects in Management	State	State, Humans, Enterprises	Interrelated Relationship	Humans and enterprises have legal rights to protect themselves.
4. Main Tools	Laws and Policies Army and Weapons Police and Arms	Laws, Policies, and Resources of State Power and Resources of Humans Power and Resources of Enterprises	Interrelated Relationship	Humans and enterprises have soft power and resources to manage.
5. Direct Impacts	Survival of the Governing Party, the Political Regime, and Sovereignty	Stability of State Survival and Happiness of Humans Safety and Development of Enterprises	Interrelated Relationship	Impacts can be scalable, national, and transnational.

Source: Phi et al. (2019).

Table 1 traditional Vs non traditional security

2.2. Origin, Concept, and Definition of Human Security

2.2.1 Freedom from Want; Freedom from Fear: The Development of Human Security Thinking

Human security is "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear": positive and negative freedoms and rights as they relate to fundamental individual needs (Newman, 2010; Newman, 2001). Human security is a concept that identifies the security of human lives as the central objective of national and international security policy (Fukuda-Parr & Messineo, 2012). It is an approach to assist states in identifying and addressing such widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2020).

Various scholars trace the origins of human security in different ways, but in this research paper, I, informed mainly by the article by Pathak (2013), trace the origins of human security in the history of human rights thinking because the human rights tradition has made significant contributions to human security and shares many similarities; drawing its origins from this can provide a good explanation.

While human security is a new and contested concept, it is not a new concept in the history of social and political science; rather, it is an adjunct to human rights (Pathak, 2013). Its person-centered axis of freedom from fear, want, and the ability to live in dignity, as articulated by UN and regional bodies over the last 20 years, as well as its protection and empowerment strategies, suggest ways to communicate with human rights advocates (Estrada-Tanck, 2016). Both approaches argue about a variety of issues while focusing on the individual as their primary reference point.

The origins of human security began with the negotiation of formal treaties at the First Peace Conference in The Hague in 1899 (Pathak, 2013, p. 196). Through the Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land, the Hague Convention established the foundations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL); this Convention was the first formal legal instrument concerning disarmament, the laws of war, and war crimes (Pathak, 2013, p. 196).

Franklin D. Roosevelt, when he presented his reasons for America's involvement in World War II to the Congress on January 6, 1941, in what is known as the "Four Freedoms Speech," mentioned four fundamental human liberties: He advocated for four fundamental freedoms for people "anywhere in the world," the third and fourth of which were "freedom from want and freedom from fear" (Pathak, 2013; Borwardt, 2005). In 1948, the United Nations ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which grew out of the ideas outlined in Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech (Borwardt, 2005).

The Moscow and Tehran Conferences declared total victory (the war in World War II) in 1943 and attempted to establish a society in which "men in all lands may live out their lives free from fear and want." The United Nations Charter, the founding document of the United Nations, was signed on June 26, 1945, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and it entered into force on October 24, 1945, at the San Francisco Conference. For long-term peace, both security measures—freedom from fear and freedom from want—were promised (UNDP: 1994) in Pathak (2013).

Those same freedoms were enshrined in the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states that human beings should enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of belief, and freedom from fear and want (Pathak, 2013, p. 170; United Nations, n.d.; Spigelman, 2010). The ideas of freedom from fear and freedom from want are also listed in the ICCPR and ICESCR. According to the preambles of the ICESCR and ICCPR, the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be realized if conditions are created in which everyone can enjoy his or her civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights (Pathak, 2013; Spigelman, 2010).

2.3. The Concept and Definition of Human Security

Human security shifts the traditional concept of security from interstate conflict and the absence of war to the individual's security. It became a people-centered concept that entails safeguarding the primary referent object, which is the community or individual, in order to provide them with *freedom from fear* as well as *freedom from want*. It focuses on the threats to individuals' and communities. In the concept of human security, the central idea is the primacy of human life as

the objective of security policy, or the referent object (Fukuda-Parr & Messineo, 2012). By focusing on the individual, the concept must necessarily include all aspects of human rights, including the need to meet basic needs and the demands of political and social freedoms (Fukuda-Parr & Messineo, 2012). The Human Security Commission (2003) defines human security as "the protection of the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment" (Wibben, 2008). Despite that clarity, concepts of human security vary greatly. Human security entails defending fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the essence of life. It entails protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations (Alkir, 2003). It entails establishing political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems that provide people with the means to survive, a livelihood, and to be treated with dignity (Newman, 2010).

There are two main approaches to the conceptualization of human security identified in the literature for the purpose of this research: the broad human security approach and the narrow human security approach. Both approaches share the same concept that the referent object for human security is individuals, whereas they do not agree on the threats to security.

In the broadest sense, human security is broad; it considers all threats to human integrity, including—and sometimes especially—underdevelopment, poverty, and deprivation (Thakur and Newman, 2004). The 1994 UNDP Human Development Report popularized and is representative of this approach (Paris, 2001). The second approach to human security is narrower and focuses on the human consequences of armed conflict and the dangers posed to civilians by repressive governments and situations of state failure (Mack, 2006). There are several approaches to human security that almost contain the concept that lies in between the UNDP definition and the narrow approach that primarily considers the threat to human beings from armed conflict and the danger posed to civilians by repressive governments.

Some authors support a more inclusive definition that also takes into account threats to livelihoods and food security, health, psychosocial well-being, the exercise of civil and political rights, freedom from oppression, and personal safety. While inclusive, this broad definition can be unwieldy and difficult to operationalize (Paris, 2001).

King and Murray (2002), They emphasize freedom from violence and try to focus on and give an explanation of the human security definition. They are advocating for a narrower definition and define human security as "the expectation of years of life without experiencing the state of generalized poverty." According to their definition, "a person is in a state of generalized poverty whenever he or she dips below the predefined threshold in any of the component areas of well-being." And in the same article, they give a brief review and describe the categories of "domains of well-being" that include those factors that are "important enough for human beings to fight over or to put their lives or property at great risk." They identify five key indicators: poverty, health, education, political freedom, and democracy, which they intend to incorporate into an overall measure of human security for individuals and groups. However, Paris (2001), points out that narrower definitions risk excluding important threats to personal security that do not relate to these five indicators.

Unlike those approaches, which aim to clarify and condense the goal of human security, Sabina Alkire takes the concept a step farther: "The objective of human security is to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive threats without impeding long-term human fulfillment" (Alkir, 2003). In her working paper, Alkir (2003) argues that human security takes its shape from the human being, the vital core that is to be secured. "Vital core" refers to very basic freedoms or rights that can be categorized under the headings of dignity, daily life (basic material needs), and survival (the freedom from avoidable, early death) (Alkir, 2003). This definition emphasizes the importance of focusing on critical and pervasive threats to the vital core of human lives. Instead of providing a list of threats to human security, she establishes criteria beyond which any issue becomes a threat to human security. She also assumes that institutions should address situations in which the very existence of people is threatened, despite the fact that they cannot be expected to protect people from all harm. Except for survival (*premature death*), it is difficult to clearly define the dignity and livelihood (basic material needs) of the individual in order to be secure (MacFarlane & Khong, 2006).

Today, the UNDP's 1994 definition of human security, which takes a broader approach, remains the most widely cited and "most authoritative" formulation of the term (Paris, 2001, p. 90). The UN produced its first comprehensive Human Development Report in 1994 (Pathak, 2013). Seven domains of security are included in the comprehensive definition of human security offered by

the UNDP (1994) report, which advocates for the achievement of the twin goals of "freedom from fears" and "freedom from wants" (UNDP 1994).

Recognizing that this idea is a bit vague and broad, the Human Security Commission (CHS), led by Mrs. Sadako Ogata (former UN High Commissioner for Refugees) and Professor Amartya Sen, was formed to develop a viable definition of human security. The concept was defined in the 2003 CHS report, *Human Security Now*, as "preserving fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the core of existence." It entails guarding against critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) dangers and circumstances. According to the UN report on *Human Security Now* (2003), human security strives to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and rights and their fulfillment (Pathak, 2013, p. 173). It entails developing social, political, economic, military, environmental, and cultural institutions that collectively provide individuals with the fundamentals of survival, livelihood, and dignity (Ogata and Sen, 2003).

Domain	Description
Economic Security	an assured minimum income (income security) or assistance from a safety net supported by public funds
Food Security	a minimal level of nutrition, frequently requiring a variety of foods.
Health Security	a combination of elements including adequate nutrition, immunity to disease, a secure environment, and access to medical care
Environmental Security	an environment that is physically healthy and free from threats like deforestation, overgrazing, poor conservation, air pollution, water pollution, and a lack of water.
Personal Security	Protection from both actual physical acts of violence and the threat of violence
Community Security	Understanding that the majority of people get their security from belonging to a group, such as their extended family, their tribe, or their traditional community

Political Security

requiring the defense of fundamental freedoms and rights for both individuals and groups.

Table 2 The Seven Domains of Human Security According to the UNDP

Note. Adapted from UNDP (1994, p. 24-33).

This list of domains of human security listed by UNDP (1994), is so broad that it is difficult to determine what, if anything, might be excluded from the definition of human security (Paris, 2001, p. 90), and there is also nothing said on how to measure this in any circumstance that affects human security.

For this research paper, the definition of human security is adopted from Leaning and Arie's (2000). Their concept of human security includes the social, psychological, political, and economic factors that promote and protect human well-being over time. Its key components reflect not only the need to ensure human survival at all times, but also the need to sustain and develop a core psychological coping capacity in stressed populations. Leaning and Aerie argue that the conceptualization that addresses these dual needs will eventually provide policy guidance in two areas: (A) how to ensure basic survival (with water, food, and shelter) and provide basic protection from life threats; and (B) how to support basic psychosocial needs for identity, recognition, participation, and autonomy. In their definition, they emphasize two bundles of basic resources: the minimum *material inputs to sustain survival and core psychosocial support*. They give a working definition of human security as follows:

Human security is an underlying condition for sustainable human development. It results from the social, psychological, economic, and political aspects of human life that in times of acute crisis or chronic deprivation, protect the survival of individuals, support individual and group capacities to attain minimally adequate standards of living, and promote constructive group attachment and continuity through time (Leaning and Aria, 2000).

2.4. A Framework for Assessing the impact of conflict and Post-Conflict

Human Security for war widows

The thesis centers on the central understanding that human security is designed “to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive threats in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillment” (Alkire, 2003, p. 2). Threats to human security are seen as critical when they threaten to undermine the core activities and functions of human lives (vital core), and

pervasive when they are substantial, likely to affect a large number of people, and are not an anomalous event (Alkire, 2003). People who have been exposed to either type of threat are frequently referred to as "vulnerable." The concept of vulnerability is central to identifying aspects of people's lives that prevent them from functioning effectively or freely in the context of development studies, particularly in the context of human security (Joseph, 2013).

2.5. Addressing human vulnerability

People who have experienced any kind of threat are frequently referred to as "vulnerable." According to Clark & Preto (2018), the Oxford English Dictionary defines vulnerability as "the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally." In the context of development studies, particularly in the context of human security, the concept of vulnerability is central to identifying aspects of people's lives that prevent them from functioning effectively or freely (Joseph, 2013). Chambers' discussion of vulnerability refers to "defencelessness, insecurity, exposure to risks, shocks, and stress... and difficulty in coping with them" (1989, as cited in Webb & Harinarayan, 1999). Patrick Webb has discussed ways to prepare individuals to function effectively when threatened with an internal or external hazard and deploys the notion of "coping" (as cited in Learning and Arie, 2000, p. 13). Patrick Webb writes, "Vulnerability can be expressed as the net impact of the hazards one faces offset by the mechanisms one has for coping with them" (as cited in Leaning and Arie, 2000, p. 14). Households cope with hazards in different ways according to their capacity, which is itself determined by prior experience, access to information, subjective perceptions of potential loss or gain, cultural norms, and even rational expectations of public assistance (Webb & Harinarayan, 1999). According to Webb & Harinarayan (1999) and Webb (2000, as cited in Learning and Aria, 2000), vulnerability can be viewed as:

$$V (\text{Vulnerability}) = H (\text{Hazard}) - C (\text{Coping})$$

When an individual is exposed to a high level of threat and his or her ability to cope with critical and pervasive threats is underdeveloped, vulnerability increases (Leaning and Arie, 2000; Joseph, 2013). Such coping mechanisms can be seen as contributing to what Drèze and Sen call one's capacity to function (Leaning and Arie, 2000). Due to the increase in vulnerability, a core set of material and psychosocial resources is required to empower and protect individuals whose

capabilities have been harmed, particularly following exposure to prolonged or violent periods of conflict (Leaning & Arie, 2000).

The proposed framework for human security divides human security into four domains: I) basic human needs (physiological and safety), II) relationships with location, III) relationships with community, and IV) relationships with time. Here, the components of basic human needs are integrated with the components of human security in the UNDP 1994 report. These domains represent populations' ability to maintain a diverse range of capabilities in the aftermath of a conflict and in response to a variety of threats in a post-conflict situation (Leaning and Arié, 2001; Joseph, 2013; Parmar et al., 2014). Human security levels remain difficult to determine and measure (Parmar et al., 2014). Given the described links between human security indicators and a greater tendency for intra- and interstate conflict, human security measurement could be used to both warn of potential worsening during a conflict and track the progress of post-conflict state situations (Parmar et al., 2014). Leaning and Arie (2001) developed a model designed for this purpose. Based on firsthand experience and a thorough qualitative examination of human security as understood in unstable African societies (Parmar et al., 2014). According to the Leaning and Arie model, a population requires a "core bundle of basic resources: minimum material input, and basic psychosocial needs (psychological and social)" to ensure survival. If minimum material inputs can be guaranteed and efforts can be made to strengthen basic social coping capacities, societies will be more stable and less prone to fragmentation, violence, and atrocities (Leaning and Arie, 2001). This model moves beyond measurement of basic material supports (food, water, shelter, and, income) to incorporate critical psychosocial components associated with individual security: namely, 'a sense of home and safety, constructive family and social supports, and an acceptance of the past and a positive grasp of the future (Leaning and Arie, 2001). These three domains of home, community, and a sense of time reflect the ways humans relate to themselves, each other, and the world: individuals are anchored and seek safety in a sense of home; they find meaning, in their relationships with family and community, identity, and functional support; and they build their lives through time, depending on their sense of trust in the future and freedom from the past (Leaning and Arie, 2001). This model's main strength is its ability to detect threats to human security at a microlevel, which can then be used to predict community-level violence, which distinguishes it from other approaches that focus on

aggregate national indicators. This model, however, does not explicitly incorporate gender sensitive measures (Parmar et al., 2014).

2.6. Basic psychosocial need

1. sense of place

A person's relationship with their location comprises the physical and psychological connections they maintain with an identifiable place or places. For this domain of human security to be sustained, a person must have the ability to mitigate forced dislocation (Joseph, 2013). Forced dislocation is a common component of many violent wars, but it may also be widespread in civilizations where individuals have been driven from their familiar homes because of inequality, stark economic differences, and poverty. Similar to how it is with basic needs like food security and housing, this sort of insecurity may be easily identified and measured, for instance by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (Joseph, 2013). This often entails counting the number of displaced people, but this often overlooks the distances over which people may be forced to migrate or the challenges they may face along the way. So, as a compromise, the number of displaced people is frequently used as a proxy for the gravity of the threat. A sense of home and a sense of place are considered a most important buttress to the human sense of identity and "rootedness" in the world, a crucial constant across all cultures that have been examined (Leaning and Arie, 2001). When we consider the sense of place, it seems nebulous and challenging to conceptualize. Many terms have been used to refer to these human connections to place, but most people would probably concur that "sense of place" is the most comprehensive term (Farnum & Kruger, 2005). It refers to the entire group of cognitions and affective sentiments held about a specific geographic locale (Altman and Low, 1992; Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001), as well as the meanings one ascribes to such areas (Fishwick and Vining, 1992; Kaltenborn, 1998; Relph, 1976; Stedman, 2003a), as cited in Farnum & Kruger (2005).

In this research, to understand the relationship of the respondents with their location, the researcher used two main indicators: sense of home, which is feeling safe in their surroundings, and social dislocation by measuring their intention to live in the area for a long time.

In academic literature, the concept of "home" has been understood in a multitude of different ways. "Home" has been seen as a socio-spatial entity (Saunders and Williams, 1988), a

psycho-social entity (Giuliani, 1991; Porteous, 1976), an emotive space (Giuliani, 1991; Gurney, 2000), or a combination of the three (Somerville, 1992, 1997), as cited in Easthope (2004). The commonality among all of these approaches is that while a person's home is typically understood to be situated in space (and time), it is not the physical structure of a house or the natural and built environment of a neighborhood or region that is understood to make a home. Instead, homes can be understood as 'places' that hold significant social, psychological, and emotional significance for individuals and communities (Easthope, 2004).

2. sense of community:

A person's connections to their family and community networks play a role in both their ability to operate and their capacity to handle danger (Joseph, 2013). Positive social or familial support is frequently necessary for self-identification, self-empowerment, and defense against physical and psychological harm (Leaning & Arie, 2000). In order to work well in this area of human security, a person must be able to keep their identity. In this component of human security, the researcher intended to capture the feelings of the widows towards the community in order to understand their sense of community. A sense of community for human beings gives them a feeling of safety and continuity. Human beings are social animals, and they need to be together. Through interacting with others, an individual expands his or her own perceptions, develops a system of moral values, finds emotional support, and builds the reasons to continue to stay attached to life (Leaning and Arie, 2001). According to McMillan (1976), the definition of a sense of community is "a feeling of belonging, a sense that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together." (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In this proposed definition by McMillan & Chavis (1986), there are four elements that show a sense of community:

3. *Membership (belongingness):- a feeling of belonging or sharing a sense of personal relatedness*
4. *influence :- a sense of mattering, of making deference to a group, and of the group mattering to its members*
5. *reinforcement :- integration and fulfillment of needs*
6. *Shared emotion and connection:- members have shared and will share history, a common place, and time together.*
7. *Accepting the past and having a positive outlook for the future:*

2.7. analytical framework of human security used in the study

I evaluated a human security measurement tool developed by different scholars like King and Murray in order to examine the threats facing widows from the standpoint of human security. However, each of these tools has its own limitations regarding the comprehensiveness and inclusion of various threats. I want to adopt a framework that can be somewhat inclusive and at the same time measurable, which can include a threat from a psychological and social perspective. The UNDP framework for human security is also far too broad, and it doesn't tell us how to measure it or what happens if one is missed.

So in this research paper, I use UNDP 1994 and Leaning and aerie models in order to create a framework. I adopt this mainstream work and combine it because I want to include many factors, and I use Leaning and Arrie's basic psychosocial needs in particular. From the UNDP components of human security, I adopt some of them by comparing them with the basic needs of human beings, especially the very basic ones like physiological and safety needs.

Components of Human security	Possible threats
1. Economic security	persistent poverty and unemployment
2. food security	Hunger, famine
3. Health security	deadly infectious disease, unsafe food, Lack access to basic health care
4. personal security	physical violence, domestic violence, crime, SGBV, child labor
5. basic psychosocial need 5.1. attachment to home 5.2 Relationship with the community) 5.3 relationship with time	dislocation tenure insecurity stigma exclusion

Table 2 components of human security included in the analytical framework

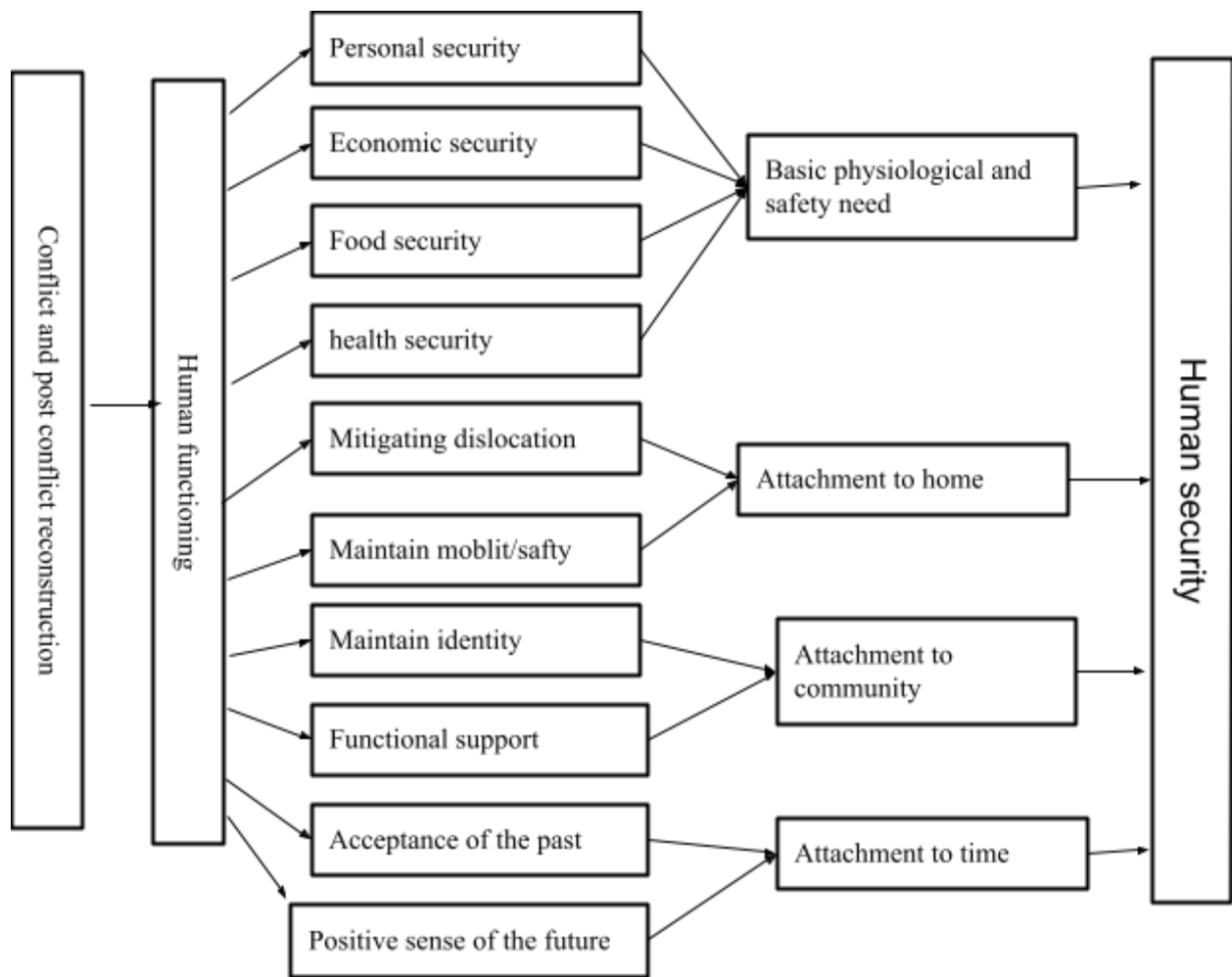


Figure 1: The analytical framework of the study

This analytical framework is adopted to limit the scope of the study because human security is a vast area, which makes the study overwhelming. So for analyzing the human security of conflict widows in the post-conflict transition period, the framework adopted in this study was adopted by adopting and combining the Leaning and Aria (2000) framework of human security with UNDP (1994) components of human security models and further informed by Joseph (2013) and Parmar et al. (2014) works. The term "functioning" used in this study is suggested by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF). The International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) defines "functioning" as the combination of a person's actions, their participation in complex and socially embedded life activities, and the structures and functions of their body and mind (Bickenbach, 2021).

2.8. Empirical data on the impact of armed conflict on women in developing countries

Introduction

Conflict has devastating effects on many aspects of human development. Conflict destroys infrastructure, disrupts development, and exacerbates insecurity in many aspects of human survival, livelihood, and dignity. Conflict in developing countries, such as Africa, can keep the country underdeveloped and exacerbate poverty. Furthermore, conflict makes the country reliant on Western aid for survival.

2.8.1 An Overview of the Situation of Women in Conflict and Post-Conflict Africa

Internal civil battles have taken place in almost all African nations. A few of the many factors that contribute to all of these conflicts include political intolerance, coups, weak post-colonial African nations, military interference in political developments, social divisions like ethnicity, regional and religious conflicts, colonial legacies, and competition among societies for scarce resources (Fouskas, 2007). According to Bowd and Chikwanda's (2010) research, Sub-Saharan African nations that are involved in violent conflicts frequently exhibit extreme poverty, unequal resource distribution, subpar service delivery, unstable political environments, stifled economic growth, and other negative effects that have an impact on development and human security in general.

2.8.2. War and women in Ethiopian history

Historically, men have fought the majority of wars, but women have also played an active role in war and politics (Morrell & Swart, 2005). In the ancient history of Ethiopia, women have always actively participated in wars before, during, and after the Battle of Adwa and the second Italian-Ethiopian War from 1935 to 1941 (Adugna, 2001). Ethiopian women's primary role in warfare begins with encouraging their men to join combat troops, and during the march, women perform a variety of tasks such as preparing food and drinks for royal feasts and the consumption of their respective rulers and husbands (UNESCO, 2019; and Adugna, 2001). Women were also expected to assist with trench digging, road clearing, and camping site preparation (Adugna, 2001).

In Ethiopian history, the main course of the war has seen significant contributions from women as well. According to Adugna (2001), soldiers and a few women guarded the camp, and other

women helped their combatant menfolk by gathering intelligence on the position of their enemy's lines of battle, their numerical strength, and so forth; they served as communicators; they deceived enemy soldiers; they boosted the fighting spirits of soldiers through war songs, ululations, and prayers; they picked up the dead and wounded; they facilitated the burial of the dead; they provided nursing care for the wounded; and some of them took part in battle as warriors; On the other hand, powerful women from the royal and aristocratic families are said to have been influential in starting and ending wars as well as leading their armies into combat (Adugna, 2001). In addition to the aforementioned roles, women played war leadership roles and engaged the Italian invaders on the battlefields during the first and second Italian-Ethiopian wars. During the Italian Invasion, women bravely fought *Fascist Italy* by participating in guerilla warfare (González-Ruibal et al., 2011; Adugna, 2001).

According to Adugna (2001), war in Ethiopian history, particularly the first and second Italo-Ethiopian wars, causes massive human loss, and this human loss has a direct impact on the lives of women, including those who did not even participate in military engagements. They were bereaved of husbands, brothers, fathers, and other relatives. Furthermore, the second Italian-Ethiopian war harmed the country's economic development by eliminating the most productive elements of the country, causing physical property destruction, moral decay, and social insecurity, and encouraging banditry (Caulk, 1976, as cited in Adugna, 2001).

The expansion of prostitution and sexually transmitted diseases during the Fascist occupation had a further impact on Ethiopian women's social lives and health, and when the Italians left their colony in East Africa, thousands of Ethiopian mothers were left with their mixed-race children (Adugna, 2001). Positively, the successive wars in general, and the Italo-Ethiopian wars in particular, had a long-lasting impact on women's lives by elevating their status in military affairs, improving the traditional division of labor, expanding their political role, and providing many women with access to new business occupations such as bars and restaurants (Adugna, 2001, p. 35).

2.8.3. Women's physical security in conflict and post-conflict environments

Every human on the planet wants security, which is also a requirement for leading a devout and risk-free existence. Women who have lost a spouse in an armed conflict must act as both the

mother and the father of the family. She must assume the position that her late husband's father had while determining the demands of the family's security. In an average family, the wife and husband divide the responsibilities. In this situation, the husband is in charge of security-related activities; but, after becoming a widow, the mother must take over the family's security-related responsibilities (Amarasinghe & Epa, 2017). For many parents, keeping a watch on their kids when they are away from home for work becomes a difficult effort (Amarasinghe & Epa, 2017).

These days, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a serious social development and human rights concern that receives global attention and recognition (Mutisi, Ogunsanya, and Ettang, 2011), cited in Maina (2012). This is why it is important to address SGBV in post-conflict nations. To end domestic abuse and violence against women, a variety of international instruments have been adopted by various international agencies. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Women's Convention 1979) (Rudolf & Eriksson, 2007), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993), the Declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (1995), and United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 all expressly condemn all forms of violence against women. In accordance with UNSCR 1325, Article 10 "calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, as well as all other forms of violence in armed conflict situations." As stated in Maina (2012), (Security Council of the United Nations, 2000).

2.8.4. Sexual and Gender based violence

Assaults on women and girls have recently gained notoriety in conflicts, and combatants continue to employ sexual violence as a technique to scare and subjugate civilian populations (Jefferson, 2004). Violence against women increases during times of conflict, despite the difficulty in obtaining precise estimates of their incidence and prevalence; sexual violence (rape and sexual abuse) and other gender-based violence (domestic abuse and beatings) have become distressingly frequent characteristics associated with violent conflict (Buvinic et al., 2013; Qayoom, 2014). Mass rape has frequently been utilized as a war strategy to undermine social structures, such as families and communities, leading to an increase in psychological damage and rape pregnancies (Qayoom, 2014).

Examples of such atrocities that have been extensively documented include the conflict in Kashmir, the 15-year civil war in Peru, the most recent civil war in Sudan, and the former Yugoslavia in the middle of the 1990s, where it is estimated that 20,000 women were raped (see, for example, McGinn 2000; El Jack 2003; Human Rights Watch, 1995, 1996; McGinn, 2000). According to Buvinic et al. (2013), an assessment of gender-based violence in 50 countries indicated a significant rise after major wars (World Bank, 2011).

A analysis of 19 studies indicated that 21% of displaced women had experienced sexual abuse; however, this proportion may be underestimated because to social stigma, inadequate law enforcement, and a lack of funding (Bendavid et al., 2021). Sexual and gender-based violence has detrimental effects on both physical and mental health, including rape-related injuries, HIV, reproductive health problems, and social isolation (Bendavid et al., 2021). According to Maina (2012) and Jefferson (2004), stigma, unwanted pregnancies, and the spread of STDs such the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are some of the long-term social and economic effects. Rape used to result in the victim experiencing severe bodily agony, trauma, and social rejection; currently, it also has the potential to result in the death of many women (Jefferson, 2004). These consequences have an impact on a person's overall health and happiness and help to create recurring patterns of psycho-social trauma. They are hardly ever taken into account during discussions for peace or attempts to rebuild civilizations (Mina, 2004).

Despite the increased attention that sexual assault in armed conflict is receiving on a global scale, two key aspects have persisted: First, it is frequently used on a large scale in wars against women; nevertheless, some of them also target men and boys for sexual assault. Second, people who engage in sexual violence frequently face no consequences (Jefferson, 2004). The main reasons why victims or victims' families do not report SGBV cases in conflict and post-conflict settings are fear of stigma and discrimination, the family's belief that the attack is a private matter in which the police cannot intervene unless it is reported, and the fact that police institutions still have patriarchal values and are dominated by men, which discourages women from reporting SGBV cases. The police's technical constraints, institutional real and perceived deficiencies, and the ineffectiveness of the judicial system all place restrictions on the reporting of SGBV.

2.8.5. Widowhood

Because too many men lose their lives in armed conflict, more widows are created. There is scant evidence to support the idea that widows and the households they frequently lead are particularly susceptible to the effects of violent conflict (Buvinic et al., 2013). Each woman's experiences are distinctively her own, and even within a particular sociocultural context, widows have extremely different experiences, claims Cattell (2003). Financial security is one of the main advantages of marriage for women, and financial stress appears to be the main cause of vulnerability for women during widowhood (Umberson et al., 1992). As a direct effect of losing a spouse, women's financial stability declines (Streeter, 2020). Stroebe and Stroebe (1987), cited in Umberson et al. (1992), claim that widowhood is linked to worse psychological, physical, and social functioning as well as a higher probability of passing away. According to research referenced by Umberson et al. (1992), depression is a particularly typical reaction to widowhood, at least in the first year or two after the death (Glick, Weiss, and Parkes, 1974; Parkes and Weiss, 1983; Vachon et al., 1982). Men and women experience widowhood differently, with women experiencing less depression after losing their husbands (Umberson et al., 1992). Role stress for the younger widow was primarily caused by economic issues, specifically the loss of a husband's salary or income in general and the cost of raising children; grieving; difficulty explaining death and dying to children; and changes in roles and responsibilities in the family (Gass-Sternas, 1994).

In Rwanda, where the bulk of the more than 500,000 victims of the genocide were men, the authors carefully examined widows' experiences during the genocide, which led to an imbalance in sex ratios following the genocide, according to Brück and Schindler (2009). Due to the loss of resources associated with men, such as male labor and land ownership, and the collapse of social networks, genocide widows and their children frequently confront distinct and more challenging barriers to employment. They reasoned that households headed by widows might be among those afflicted by conflict in many ways and in need of a particular type of care. According to Das, Friedman, and McKenzie (2008), reported in Buvinic et al. (2013), widowhood is strongly associated with poor mental health in developing countries. The welfare costs linked to male combat losses may be handed down through generations as a result of the challenges widows confront (Buvinic et al., 2013).

In their comparative study of five developing nations, Lloyd-Sherlock et al. (2015) state that they looked for correlations between widowhood and socio-economic, health, and quality of life deprivations. According to Lloyd-Sherlock et al. (2015), widowhood in low- and middle-income nations underlines the need for more nuanced, fact-based assertions about the nature of widowhood and its effects on various groups of women worldwide. They believe that by examining the situation of widows using empirical data, it will be possible to develop effective treatments, identify the widows who are most at risk, and identify those who are connected to the plight of widowhood.

2.8.6. Impact on health of women and children

Beyond their immediate impacts, violent armed conflicts have a detrimental influence on population health because of things like a higher chance of catching infectious diseases, acute malnutrition, inadequate sanitation, and a lack of access to health services (Buvinic et al., 2013). The functioning of the health system depends on roads and other infrastructure, both of which may be damaged and to which resources may be diverted (Ghobarah, Huth, and Russett, 2003). A person's susceptibility to disease may be increased by loss of assets and income, relocation of the population, or orphanhood (Buvinic et al., 2013).

The risk of illness and death for women and children was exacerbated by both direct violence and the degradation of local conditions, according to Bendavid et al. (2021), who also note that women and children experienced high morbidity and mortality as a result of armed conflict. Long-lasting violent conflicts are a significant factor in food instability, hunger, and malnutrition in people, claim Bendavid et al. (2021). In addition to concomitant diseases like measles, typhoid fever, and cholera, excessive mortality is frequently caused by malnutrition, especially in young children (Ibid.).

The majority of war-related injuries happen while engaging in routine activities like housework or traveling to and from work. Children under the age of 18 made up between 22% and 55% (median 38%) of landmine casualties, while women and girls made up 0-31%. Explosions and gunshots have a very obvious direct effect on physical trauma (Bendavid et al., 2021). According to the World Health Organization (2013) and Bendavid et al. (2002), widespread rape and sexual violence can result in the victim contracting HIV/AIDS. Rape and sexual violence are still

commonly acknowledged as war-related behaviors. Infectious diseases are also in danger as a result of the failure of monitoring and disease control systems brought on by armed conflicts (Bendavid et al., 2021). In times of violence, basic disease prevention strategies like immunizations, sanitation, and access to clean water are all threatened (Ibid.). Armed conflict exposes women and children to higher degrees of traumatic experiences, such as direct contact with violence, dissolution of the family unit, and social breakdown (Ibid.).

Women and children suffer because they don't receive medical care during and after conflicts. According to recent research, more than 51% of health facilities and their infrastructure were damaged or looted in the war-affected areas of the Amhara region. Important health services, such as those for chronic non-communicable and chronic infectious diseases, maternal health services, and child health services, were also disrupted, which resulted in maternal and child mortality in the affected area. The conflict had a big impact on the health care systems in the Amhara and Afar areas in 2021; hospitals there were routinely targeted for looting, damage, and destruction (Rubenstein, 2022; Abebaw et al., 2022).

2.8.7. Economic consequences of violent conflict and widowhood: property theft, asset and income loss, and inheritance

Private property is also lost, destroyed, or looted during conflict and violent attacks. This group of assets includes houses, land, furniture, animals, and other productive ones (Buvinic et al. 2013). In certain tragic cases, widows who become widows also lose their lands (Amarasinghe and Epa, 2017). These setbacks have the potential to bring down entire societies, intensify or deepen household poverty, and start protracted cycles of both famine and conflict. In many developing nations, livestock serves as a large source of savings and as insurance in times of need (Buvinic et al., 2013). A number of factors affect how households react and adjust to the asset and income shocks caused by war and violent attacks. For instance, women frequently face severe asset and land constraints, making it challenging for them to manage farms and households when men are absent or in the event of their passing (Ibid.).

Women's inheritance and property rights are one of the key areas of attention for the women's movement in developing nations; enhancing their legal standing in these areas is a significant and effective way to reduce poverty and boost gender equality (Berg, Horan, & Patel, 2010). However, a sizable section of the developing world still habitually denies women's access to land and property rights. It increases women's possibilities for earning a living and is crucial to their capacity for decision-making and economic empowerment to have access to assets through multiple channels of transfer, one of which is inheritance (Berg, Horan, & Patel, 2010). When their fathers, husbands, or in some cases, even siblings or uncles pass away, they are frequently left penniless, making it challenging for them to take care of themselves and their immediate family members. As a result, women discover that they have few options and opportunities to improve (Berg, Horan, & Patel, 2010). The rights of women are enhanced by a number of clauses in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's constitution. In accordance with Articles 34, "equality between men and women while entering into, during, and at the time of marriage and divorce," and 35(7), "women shall have the right to acquire, administer, control, use, and transfer property." Women have the same rights as men when it comes to inheriting property (Ibid.).

Ibrahim (2016) claims that due to culture, customary law, and inequalities in Uganda's inheritance law, the widow in that country suffers greatly from the right to inheritance. They explained how widows frequently experience expulsion from their families, eviction from their homes, theft of all of their goods, and isolation from their own children after losing their husbands. According to Ibrahim (2016), family members frequently take over a widow's house and take possession of the entire estate as well as the surrounding property. In their study titled "The Economic Consequences of Widowhood for Older Minority Women," Angel et al. (2007) discovered that a woman's financial situation in her preretirement and later years is influenced by both her past and present marital status. They point out that widows experience considerable losses in income and net worth, and that the absolute loss of income due to widowhood can be greater for women whose husbands had higher earnings than for women whose husbands made less (Angel et al., 2007). They advised that women rely more on their own income and wealth accumulation and that public policy should focus more on individuals and forsake the more

traditional male-breadwinner paradigm due to the obvious negative economic effects of marital status, notably following widowhood (Ibid.).

2.8.8. Migration and displacement of families

There are currently more women and children affected by conflict than there were in 2000, in part because of population expansion, a stable-to-increasing number of armed conflicts, the urbanization of conflict, and an increase in refugees and internally displaced people (Bendavid et al., 2021). The number of women and children affected by conflict, which was over 630 million in 2017 and included over 50 million who were displaced by conflict, is startlingly high—more than 8% of the world's population, and the majority of those who are forcibly displaced worldwide are women and children (Bendavid et al., 2021).

Displaced people typically suffer significant asset losses in addition to facing difficult economic and social obstacles during the resettlement process, according to Buvinic et al. Due to internal conflict, a sizable population is blocked off from economic opportunities, which creates a difficult-to-break cycle of household poverty and eviction. Amirthalingam and Lakshman (2013) determined the following, in decreasing order, as the impact of relocation from the qualitative study conducted in the Sampur IDP village in Sri Lanka:

***loss of village, the IDPs need their village because the current village is not supporting the livelihood activity they had before in their village; and they don't like the livelihood activity they have in Sampur IDP village. loss of assets and properties, mostly due to the sale or mortgage of gold jewelry, affected Psychological problems and poor camp facilities; education and safety of children; financial difficulties; loss of or injury to family members.** Amirthalingam and Lakshman find that, except for the financial difficulties, all the other impacts are higher for the women than the male IDPs.*

There have been numerous internal displacements as a result of the recent wars in Ethiopia (World Bank Group, 2022). According to the International Organization of Migration (IOM) (2021), Ethiopia has one of the greatest numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) in the world, with 4.17 million IDPs. Of them, 84% have been uprooted due to unrest in different regions of the nation (Ministry of Finance, 2022). There are more than 1.37 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in host communities and IDP sites in the Amhara region, which is the biggest number of IDPs compared to other regions in Ethiopia, according to Ethiopia Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6, which was published in July 2021. As a result of the

Tigray conflict [Tigray war] escalating, almost 674,000 of these are new internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Ministry of Finance, 2022).

2.8.9. Psychological and emotional stress

Stress and mental health issues are linked to bereavement, according to Basnet et al. (2018). Their research in Nepal found that two out of every three war widows had anxiety and one out of every two had depression. They discovered that knowledge helped people avoid depression. According to a study done among South Asian women, having a low educational status is linked to having poor mental health (Trivedi et al., 2007). According to Basnet et al. (2018), war widows who have high levels of social support are less likely to have depression and experience less anxiety. According to Guruge, Thomson, George, and Chaze (2015), referenced in Basnet et al. (2018), support from family, friends, and community members has been recognized as a crucial source for resolving issues and coping with challenging life circumstances.

According to Hadley et al. (2010), referenced in Basnet et al. (2018), the relationship between women's autonomy and health is complicated. For instance, whereas greater decision-making autonomy was associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms, freedom of mobility was not (Hadley et al., 2010). Balkir et al. (2013) found that Turkish and German women who said they felt more independent had better mental health. According to them, the relationship was country-specific (Basnet et al., 2018). High autonomy was linked to a lower risk of sadness and anxiety in Nepalese war widows, according to research by Basnet et al. (2018). The stigma and marginalization of widows in society, as well as cultural standards, can be used to explain this conclusion.

2.8.10. Exclusion and social stigma

According to Blackburn (2010), who referenced sociological studies on widows conducted in a number of nations, widows experience varied degrees of stigma, which is mostly due to the fact that they are single women in patriarchal settings. Such women are frequently vulnerable to exploitation of the economic, sexual, and financial kind since stigma is frequently ingrained in religious and societal views as well as legal systems, notably laws and practices regulating inheritance and property ownership (Blackburn, 2010). Additionally, widows' circumstances may have an impact on both their children and themselves. Children without fathers frequently

struggle because they lack the connection to social authority that men typically supply, which women typically have less access to (Amarasinghe and Epa, 2017).

2.9. Post conflict reconstruction

The term "conflict" is a general and broad term that can refer to anything from little disputes between individuals to more serious disputes at the sub-national or regional levels (Nyborg, 2019). Conflicts, according to Burton (1990), are actions that have the potential to harm people, property, and systems. The time after a conflict has ended in a particular nation is referred to as the "post-conflict" phase. Even though it seems straightforward, determining the start of the post-conflict era is challenging (Burton, 1990). It is often impossible to determine when a disagreement is meant to end. Even after the parties sign a peace agreement, low-intensity fighting could still occur. However, post-conflict reconstruction begins when a peace treaty is signed or another event heralds the end of a war (Anderlini and El-Bushra, 2004). The beginning of the post-conflict reconstruction period is established as follows, in accordance with AU (2006)'s Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD):

“PCRD commences when the African Union mechanisms, in line with the Constitutive Act, determine that a situation warrants attention or when parties to the conflict have demonstrated political willingness to resolve differences through political negotiation, have ceased hostilities, and/or have signed a peace agreement.”

The signing date of a comprehensive peace deal by the warring parties will serve as the benchmark for the conclusion of the armed conflict in northern Ethiopia and the beginning of the post-conflict phase in this research study. The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement Between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) was signed on November 2, 2022, in Pretoria, South Africa, and it stipulated a "permanent cessation of hostilities" to put an end to the war and hostility between the two parties. This was the starting point for the post-conflict reconstruction period, according to the researcher.

2.10. The conceptual framework that shows the relationship between variables.

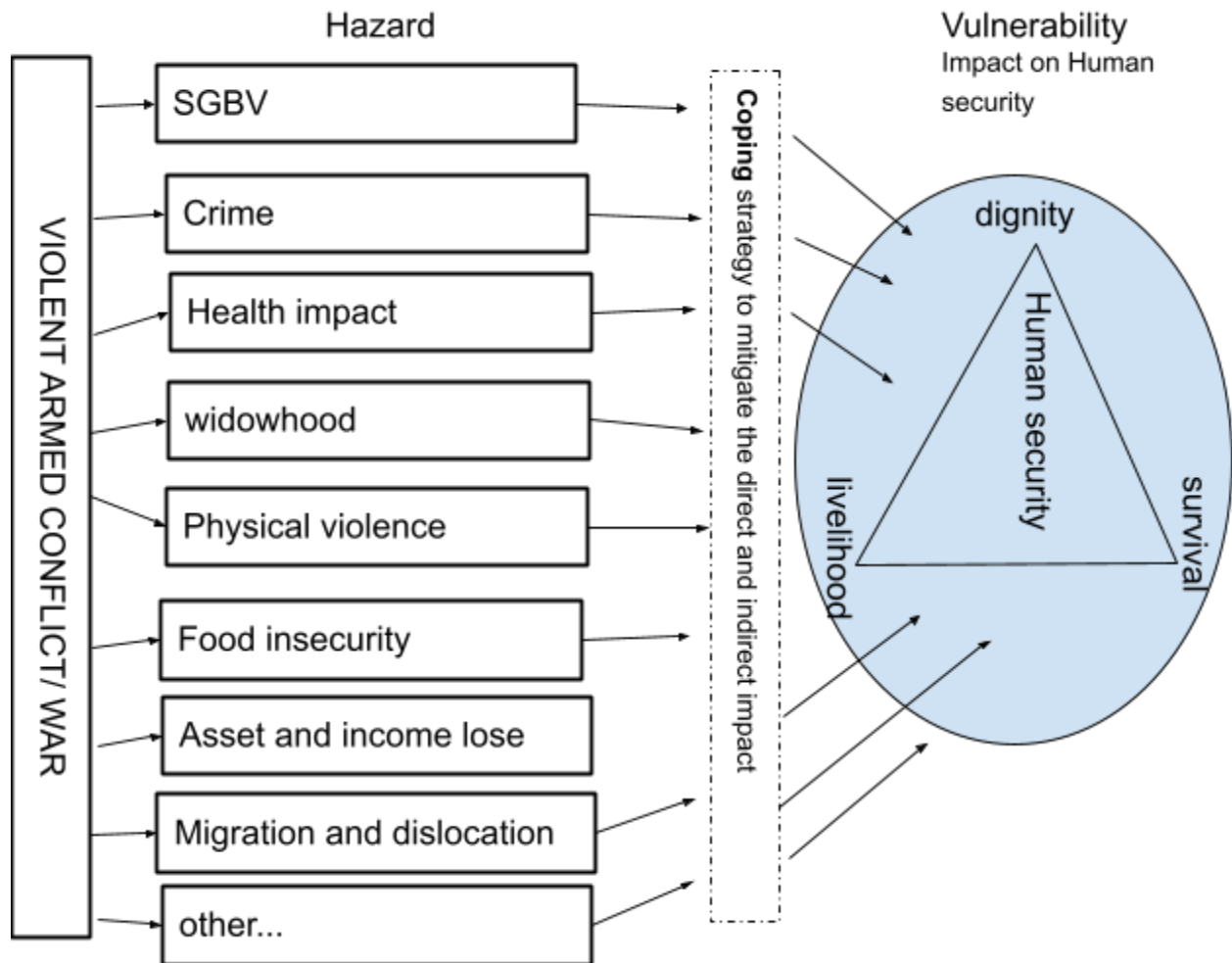


Figure 2: The conceptual framework of the study

adopted and modified for the purpose of this research from Sabarwal et al. (2010), a possible transmission channel for the impact of the economic crisis on women, and from Buvinic et al. (2013), a possible transmission channel for the gender impact of conflict.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

In order to more fully understand the consequences of conflict, post-conflict reconstruction, and widowhood on conflict widows from the viewpoint of the human security paradigm, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach in this study. This enables the researcher to fully comprehend the phenomenon from the viewpoint of the people. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), qualitative research is a tool for examining and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups attribute to social or human problems. To develop a comprehensive, multifaceted understanding of a complicated topic in its actual setting, the researcher will employ a case study research approach (Cresswell, 2012; Crowell et al., 2011). According to Creswell (2012), cases are constrained by time and activity, and researchers gather comprehensive data over an extended period of time utilizing a range of data gathering techniques (Stake, 1995). The span of time selected for this study is from November 2020 to June 2023. In addition, although not with the goal of employing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers employed quantitative data to describe the demographics of the respondents. Instead, a qualitative method of data analysis was predominantly used in the research.

3.1. Population and sampling procedures

3.1.1. General and target populations

According to Best & Kahn (1998), a population is any group of people who share one or more traits the researcher finds interesting. A researcher creates a "universe" or "population" by selecting samples from all the factors in a given field of study (Kothari, 2004). As a result, the researcher regards Woldia town's citizens as the study's overall sample or universe. The study's target demographic is war widows.

3.1.2. Sampling techniques

The researcher chose samples from the study population using judgmental or purposeful sampling approaches. The inhabitants of Woldia City make up the study population. In this study's population, the researcher specifically chose a group of women who lost their husbands due to armed conflict in Ethiopia beginning in November 2020. Accordingly, there are two categories of women who become widows. The first are widows as a result of the armed war

between the TPLF and the Ethiopian government, and the second are internally displaced individuals who are currently living in Woldia town as IDPs and who became widows as a result of the purported "OLA-Shene" armed group. The researcher used a stratified sample among these widows to choose a small sample for the case study and to maintain variety in the sample, so the wives of a civilian, a member of the Amhara Special Force, and a farmer are used as strata. The convenience sampling technique was then used to choose a respondent using the "first come, first served" method. When convenience sampling is utilized, the population sample used reflects people who were accessible or available at a specific moment (Galloway, 2005).

3.1.3. Sample size

A sample is a condensed group of people who share at least one attribute that the researcher is interested in (Best & Kahn, 1998). The sample size shouldn't be either unreasonably enormous or overly tiny. It ought to be ideal. According to Kothari (2004), an ideal sample is one that satisfies the criteria for effectiveness, representativeness, reliability, and adaptability. As a result, the researcher will use the principle of data saturation to select samples that are adequate. Thematic saturation, the point at which new data appear to no longer contribute to the conclusions due to repetition of themes and participant comments, was used to calculate the final sample size (Morse, 1995). Data generation was stopped at this time (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

3.2. Method and source of data collection

Primary data and secondary data are the two categories of data, according to Kothari (2004). The researcher will gather the primary data in the field at Woldia Town, either in person or over the phone in some circumstances when the researcher is unable to personally contact the key respondent. The primary data are unique since they are being collected for the first time. In order to fill in any gaps left by the primary data or to increase data saturation, the researcher also plans to gather secondary data, which has already been gathered by someone else and is readily available in government offices, on the internet, or from any other reliable sources in written document format, video format, or text. The objectives of the secondary data collection with regard to post-conflict rebuilding and the repercussions of war are to record current policy provisions, the status and structure of governmental institutions pertinent to the thesis, as well as current facts and figures from reliable sources.

3.2.1. Data collection instruments

In-depth, open-ended interviews, direct observation, and written documents are the three types of data gathering procedures that make up a qualitative approach, according to Best & Kahn (1998). Direct observation, in-depth, open-ended interviews, focus groups, secondary documentary materials, videos, news articles, and web sources will all be used in this study to gather data. In order to answer the major research questions, the researcher will use a variety of data collection tools to gather data from primary and secondary data sources:

Primary sources of data collection: Kothari (2004) lists a number of techniques for gathering primary data. The researcher will use key informant interviews and open-ended semi-structured interviews from the list of data gathering tools. Since the majority of the target group speaks Amharic, the researcher employs it for the interview guide questions. Similarly, this will be asked in Amharic. The researcher intends to get first-hand information from the key informants utilizing key informant interview instructions. The study's primary informants will be government representatives who are concerned with women's issues, as well as NGO employees and other people who try to improve the lives of conflict-affected women. supplementary data gathering According to Kothari (2004), secondary data is information that has been gathered and examined by someone else. To gather such secondary data, the researcher turned to reports from both government and non-government organizations, newspapers, online sources, films, and websites.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a technique for studying qualitative data that entails looking through a data set to find, look into, and report recurring themes. This is a suitable and helpful strategy to apply while seeking to comprehend a collection of events, thoughts, or activities throughout a data set (Braun and Clarke, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke's (2006) definition of a "patterned response or meaning," a theme is a synthesis of the facts that answers the study question (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The number of times a certain notion or item related to a theme appears in a data collection does not matter when doing a thematic analysis (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Furthermore, the importance or centrality of a subject is not always indicated by how frequently it appears in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Semantic (sometimes referred to as "manifest") or latent (which represent deeper, more underlying meanings, assumptions, or ideologies) themes are two different types of themes. Semantic themes discuss data elements' more overt or obvious meanings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this study, the researcher employed semantic themes.

Inductive and deductive approaches to topic identification are also used in thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). According to Kiger & Varpio (2020), an inductive technique, as utilized in grounded theory, draws themes from the researcher's data (Varpio et al. 2019). These themes are not necessarily representative of the researcher's own interests or opinions in the field because they are data-driven (e.g., if participants wandered off topic), and they may not mirror the exact questions posed to participants (Braun and Clarke 2006). As mentioned in Kiger & Varpio (2020), deductive techniques, on the other hand, leverage an existing theory, framework, or other researcher-driven focus to find themes of interest (Braun and Clarke 2012; Varpio et al. 2019). In this research, the researcher used mainly deductive data analysis procedures for the predetermined thematic area and some inductive analysis in order to generate codes, concepts, and relationships among codes under the predefined broad categories. For example, the researcher determined some themes that were available in the research concerning one big category of human security in the analytical framework, but under the same component, new themes, codes, and relationships emerged from the data, so the researcher used both deductive and inductive analytical methods.

Each research question's themes should be used to organize the subject under study. The six-step technique used in this study is the most popular method for conducting thematic analysis. It involves familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and labeling themes, and writing them up (Braun and Clarke 2006). A useful method for deciphering people's views, knowledge, experiences, or values from a group of qualitative data is thematic analysis.

Chapter Four: Data presentation analysis and discussion

4.1. Socio-demographic data of conflict widows

introduction

In this section, the respondents who are selected for this case study are presented in two ways: the first way of demographic presentation will follow the quantitative descriptive way of data presentation in order to show their status descriptively. and the second way is to use the demographic background of the sole case study participant widows to introduce their status. The respondents were selected in two steps, namely, the widows who became widows starting in November 2020 due to the conflict by the armed forces. From this conflict, the researcher further categorizes widows with further criteria due to their husband's job status. So in this research, the researcher concludes that the wife of a civilian who worked different jobs, the wife of a farmer, and the wife of the Amhara Special Force maintained a variety of data. So the researcher uses a stratified sampling followed by convenience sampling in order to reach the sample easily by the "first come, first served" technique. In this section, social factors such as age, level of education, occupation status, type and length of marriage, and the number of children and dependents will be incorporated.

4.1.1. Age distribution of conflict widows

The age of widows is very important to describe here because it can show the age group of widows that are affected by the conflicts in Ethiopia, especially those affected by the alleged OLA-Shene armed group and TPLF armed group conflicts. Here, the respondents are selected purposefully because they are affected by armed conflict in different areas of Ethiopia but are currently residents of Woldia as of November 2020. Age has a significant relationship with the ability of the individual to cope, their choice of coping strategy, and their capacity for resilience. The distribution of the age group of conflict widows is presented in the table below.

Table 4.1 Age category of conflict widows

Age category	Frequence	percentage
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18- 25	-	0%
26-35	3	37.5%
36-45	5	62.5%
46-50	-	0%
Above 50	-	0%

source: field note

In this research, I purposely selected the widows based on their status as conflict widows since November 2020, only considering that they became widows in November 2020 due to a conflict of armed struggles. Therefore, due to this criteria, I was selected by the conflict widows who became widows because of the conflict, and now the residents of Woldia are selected randomly by gaining information from the Women's and Social Affairs Bureau and from the community. I traced the respondents using the previously defined criteria. Some of the widows are called by the women's and social affairs bureau contact officers, and others I went to by myself, collecting information from the residents on where I found them. So from the data, it is clearly observed that the widows are in the age group between 26–35 and 36–45, which is a young age, and we can infer from this that the conflict killed the young and left the young woman behind.

4.1.2. Educational level of conflict widows

Education can be related to a widow's understanding of things around them, their choice of coping strategy, and their choice of income-generating activity. In the table below, the conflict widows' educational level is presented in order to better understand their educational status, which has an impact on their current survival and livelihood strategies.

table 4.2 educational level of conflict widows

Educational status	frequency	percentage
No education	2	25%
primary	4	50%
secondary	2	25%
college	-	

university	-	
other	-	

source field note

This table shows the educational background of the respondents. Here it is seen clearly that the conflict widows are mostly of primary-level educational background; some are illiterate with no education history; and some are of secondary-level educational background. According to the data, 75% of the conflict widows who were participating in this study have low-level (primary and secondary) educational status, and 25% of the study participants totally don't have any formal education. Here, the widows range from no education to a secondary educational level, indicating that as many Ethiopian women as these conflict widows have a low educational level. Low educational status can make a difference in the lives, livelihoods, and psychological aspects of conflict widows.

4.1.3. Employment status of widows

The data from this study indicates that all of the respondents have no previous or current employment status in a formal sector. The widows were housewives, farmer-housewives, and ran small businesses like traditional hairdressing and retail businesses. Getting a job with a formal-sector employer is a difficult task. In our study, according to the findings, all the conflict widows had a lower educational background, making it difficult for them to get a job in the formal sector.

Some of the conflict widows ran small businesses on their own to supplement their husbands' earnings, but they had a largely housewife role, which made them entirely dependent on their husbands' earnings. All the conflict widows may now face difficulties obtaining formal employment with a formal-sector employer due to their lack of education. In the future, these widows may have to put in a lot of effort and work odd jobs to support their families.

Due to the conflicts and violent attacks that have affected their assets and other effects of the conflict, the widows who were previously operating a small business are no longer able to do so. Among the main reasons is that they lack the funds necessary to restart their business. The following table illustrates the widows current and previous status of employment

Table 4.3 Employment status of widows

Widows employment status	Previous employment status	percentage	Current employment status	Percentage
unemployed/ only housewife	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
employed	-	-	-	-
Self employed/ small business like retail and hair salon	3	37.5%	0%	
Farmer-housewives	4	50%	1	12.5%

source field note

Aspects of well-being tended to be higher for mothers who were young and well educated, regardless of family type (Amato & Partridge, 1987). The data clearly indicates that there is no conflict widow who has the status of an employer before or after the conflict. In the previous section, the data indicated that conflict-widows have low educational status, which may affect their chances of employment. Further, the data indicates that only 37.5% of the respondents have a small business run by them to generate additional income to support the income generated by the husband, but after the conflict, this figure was changed to 0%. The conflict and its direct and indirect impacts totally affect their small business generation activities. The other criteria I was put on the table were being a farmer-housewife. Gender norms affect perceptions of who qualifies as a farmer at the household and community levels (Galiè et al., 2013). But the wives of the farmers in Ethiopia conduct many activities on the farmland as a matter of duty. See This activity of the women I considered "farmer-housewife" as an income-generation activity, and I am incorporating it in a different row. So, according to the data, the farmer-housewife ratio decreases because, as a result of the conflicts, widows are forced to flee by the armed forces and lose their land, rendering them unable to generate income from the farm in any way. According to the data, there is still a conflict widow who earns income from her land because she was not

forced to relocate from her area. So she kept plowing the land. However, data show that conflict widows also lose their land and additional sources of income.

4.1.4. Type of marriage and years of marriage

This data can indicate the length of time the widows were engaged in marriage. This may have a relationship with the coping strategy they adopted for each of their plights and the remarriage plan for the future in order to get additional benefit from the second husband in terms of economy, labor force, security, or other components of human security. Therefore, understanding their years of marriage will help us understand their coping strategies and remarriage plan.

4.1.5. Number of children and dependent and their age

It's important to know how many widows have kids because widows are expected to care for their kids alone while they're widowed, which adds to their burden. If the widows have adult children, they might be able to help them out in a number of ways, from taking care of the house to finding different sources of income. Taking on the role of his father allows a widow with a male child over the age of 18 to assist her with tasks typically performed by men, generate additional income, and provide security. But most of the time widows with dependent children are left behind due to the armed conflict because most of the combatants are young and male, and even in violent attacks on civilians, mostly the combatants kill young male civilians, but older civilians also die due to a lack of medical care because most of the time during and shortly after the armed conflict it is difficult to get medical care due to the destruction of the health care institutions and related factors. Therefore, mostly young widows are left with dependent children after an armed conflict.

The study conducted by Amato & Partridge by comparing widowed mothers with dependent children with divorced and married mothers found that, compared with married mothers, divorced mothers consistently showed lower levels of economic well-being, whereas widowed mothers tended to have lower levels of personal well-being. (Amato & Partridge, 1987). This study shows that having a baby and being a widow have an additional burden on the material, psychological, and social wellbeing of widows with dependent children (Amato & Partridge, 1987). Children of widows are typically neglected, abandoned, and uncared for, and widowhood

has been found to have negative effects on widows and their children everywhere (Adeyemo, 2014).

4.1.6. Training and skill of conflict widows

We discovered that the respondents' educational backgrounds were lacking, which may have an impact on their ability to find employment in the formal economy. The best way for war widows to start earning money and become independent is through training and skill development. The practices of widowhood are positively and significantly impacted by programs for the development of vocational skills (David Oboqua et al., 2021). The training and acquisition of skill for conflict widows are presented in the table below.

table 4.4 training and skill of widows

parameter	frequency	percentage
Formal training	1	12.5%
No formal training	7	87.5%

Source field note

Here the data shows that among the respondents of conflict widows, only 12.5% were taking formal skill development training, and the rest, 87.5%, did not take any training. So those widows who have low education plus no formal training will face difficulty in income generation and will be unable to become independent widows who have well-being in material, personal, social, and psychological areas.

4.2. The background of each respondents of the study

Introduction

In order to give the reader a sense of the respondents and help them understand the study's findings, which are further discussed below, it was decided that it was essential to describe each respondent's background.

Case study 1: Coode W-001

pseudonym: Abeba Kebede

Abeba Kebede was born in Amhara Regional State, North East Wolo Zone, Woldia City. She is now 40 years old. She is orthodox, and she was educated until grade 8. She lost her father in her early childhood. She is the only daughter in her family. After her father died, her mother didn't marry again. Her mother raised her by doing different small business jobs; at last, she was selling vegetables like onions, tomatoes, potatoes, and so on in the market. At the age of 20, Abeba was given birth by her boyfriend. She became the mother of a daughter. At the time, her boyfriend was not willing to marry her, and she raised the child alone in her mom's house and was forced to quit her education in grade 8. After three years, she was married to another man. He was working on metalwork in his own workshop. He is able to support his family with the good income he generates from his work. When *Abeba* explained about him, she said that “he was a believer, and he had very nice behavior So, "He was loved by everyone. He was a good worker, and he had many customers. He had earned good money from his job”. From him, she got two sons, and she was responsible for taking care of three children at home, so she had not worked for a long time. The older daughter is currently a student at a private university, and the school fee was covered by her father-in-law.

Abeba got training in swing clothes on her own, with payment. After that, she worked for some time in a swing cloth business, but not for long. Because of the low income from the business and her household responsibilities, she quit her new job and became a housewife again.

Abeba and her family lived in a rental home, and her husband covered all the necessary bills for the rent, both for the home and the working workshop, the school fee, food, and clothes.

When the war in the north between the TPLF and the federal government started to march all the way to the Amhara region and hold Kobo town, and the conflict became very close to Woldia, many of the residents of Woldia started to flee to Desie, a town found 119 km south of Woldia. At that time, *Ababa* and her husband sent their three children to Dessie Town to live in the house of their father's brother to protect them from the dangers of the conflict. But when the TPLF fighters hold Dessie town, they bring their child home. After some time, while the TPLF fighters took control of Woldia City, her husband was killed by them near his home when he went to fetch water from the river. At the time, he was holding a plastic jerrycan to fetch water.

Case study 2 : code W-002

pseudonym, *Lishan Abrham*

Lishan Abrham was born in Woldia Town. Both her father and mother died a long time ago, before she married *Ywekal Yebeltal* (member of the Amhara Special). She attended her school until grade 8 and passed to grade 9, but she can't continue her education due to a lack of support. She has two children, one male and one female, and their ages are 8 years and 18 months, respectively. Her husband was a member of the Amhara Special Forces. She hasn't taken any formal skill training, but she has a skill in traditional women's hair making, and she was working with it until the conflict erupted and the fighters held Woldia City. *Lishan* explained that her husband gives her money monthly from his salary, and she also works on a traditional women's hair and beauty salon business and earns income to support it. She said the “monthly income we got was enough for us to live like any ordinary Ethiopian. We lived in a rented house near his family's home for security reasons because, because of his job, he was often away from home”. Due to the conflict, when he was fighting against the TPLF force, he died on the battlefield near Woldia town. At the time of the war, the young people followed the Ethiopian Defense Force and Amhara Special Force to help in different activities like taking care of the wounded and burying the dead, and in their activity of burying the dead fighters, they found her husband. Her husband was born in Woldia, and the young people knew him well and made it to see him buried in church the day after. But the government still has not reported his death to her, and due to this, she has not received anything from the government since this data collection was conducted.

Case study 3: code- W-003

pseudonym: *Yetenayet Zenabu*

Yetenayet Zenabu, whose age is 45, is a farmer in Woldia. She was born in a place around Lay Alwaha, near Woldia Town. *Yetenayet* does not have a formal education. She did not also take any skill training in her lifetime. She was married to *Ayele Kebede* (pseudonym); their marriage was a traditional marriage. He was a former x-soldier (*meles wetader*), but when the conflict started, he joined the Amhara Special Force to fight against the TPLF. They have a farm, and they live near the farm, far from Woldia Shek Alamuddin Stadium. They have five children: two males, ages 20 and 10, and three females, ages 17, 15, and 13. The two male children are attending the school currently, but all the females stopped attending school in grades 9 and 10, and the last one was in grade 4, because of the death of their father. Her husband was killed in the battle. She was

informed by the government that he had passed away. At the time of data collection, she was processing the legal options open to her and his children following his passing.

Case Study 4: code W-004

pseudonym: *Kelemua Tsadkan*

Kelemua Tsadkan was born at Guba lafto woreda dabot kebele, 50 km from Woldia town. She is 40 years old and the mother of four children. Three of them are male, and one of them is female. The ages of her male children are 22, 18, and 10. The girl, whose age is 13, was born out of wedlock to other men during the temporary separation from her first husband. After some time, they again come together, solve their problem, start to live together with the first husband, and give birth to the fourth child, now 10 years old. Before the start of the conflict, *Kelemua* was a nanomerchant. She was selling chili peppers, which are a raw material to make powdered red pepper. Her husband was a miller; he operated a machine that grinds grain. Kelemua and her husband also further support their income by taking other farmland and plowing it for a 50% share with the land owner. She has a home that has 15 sheets of roofing and one classroom. The home was built when they were married 23 years ago. Now the home is not in good condition. Her husband was killed by the TPLF in July 2022 when he was going to his working site.

Case study 5: Code W-005

pseudonym: Wizero Bitul

Bitul was born close to Lalibela in northern Wolo. She has a son who struggles to walk because of a spinal cord condition. Due to the conflict, she lost both her husband and one of her sons, a ninth-grader. Her son was killed by the combatants in front of his home, and her husband, a militiaman, died on the battlefield. She was a housewife who also ran a small vegetable-sealing business in the market. However, after losing her initial investment and support from her husband, she is no longer able to sell vegetables and is now making a meager living by providing close cleaning services.

Case study 006: Code IDP-W-001

pseudonym: *Tigist Yehune*

Tigist Yehune was born in Wollega; her father and mother were sent there by the government resettlement program in 1974. She was traditionally married to *Bogale* (a pseudonym) 13 years ago. They were married in Wollega and live together in Gawa Qanqa Kebele. They were farmers

until her husband was killed by the armed forces, alleged "OLA-Shene," and forced to displace her and her child. After they were displaced, they now live in Woldia town in the IDP camp located around Gonder Bere inside the compound of *Gebrena* Bureau. Inside the camp, there are 7 tents, and in one tent, there are 6-7 household family members. She has two children, and I noticed that she was pregnant. She refused to discuss it, merely stating that it was "the luck of a bad day," and it is obvious that the pregnancy was not wanted because she affirms that there had been no sexual assault. She has two children whose ages are 11 and 7, but she has not sent her children to school until the time of this data collection.

Case study 7: Code IDP-W002

pseudonym: *Belayenesh*

In or near Woldia, in North Wollo, is where Belayenesh was born. She had returned from the area and was residing in Wollega. She first wed another man, but after his passing, she wed Bertha (a fictitious name), and she began to live the life of a farmer's housewife. Despite not owning any land of their own, they cultivate other land in order to split the profits equally. During the armed attack on civilians on November 1, 2020, by the alleged armed force "OLA-Shene," her husband was also killed, and she and her children were forced to flee the area. Now she is an IDP conflict widow living in Woldia City in the "*Lam Ereбата*" IDP camp. The camp was previously the shed of Milk's cow farm.

case study 8: code IDP-W003

pseudonym: *Teruwork*

Tetruwork was born in Wollega after her parents were relocated to the area in 1974 by the government resettlement program. She was the wife of a farmer, and they have a home, cattle, and farm land in the area. She has two female children.

During the violent attack by the armed forces, her husband was killed on November 1, 2020. After she was forced to displace she made her resident place in Woldia and live in "*Lam Ereбата*" IDP camp

4.3. data presentation and finding

4.3.1. Women's physical security in conflict and post-conflict environments

Throughout the conflict, combatants purposefully assaulted Woldia women in various ways. In the case of the Woldia War widows, women reported that during the conflict they had much fear for their own and their family members' personal security. When the conflict expanded to the Amhara regional state and the combatants of the TPLF marched south to Woldia city, most of the residents of Woldia fled to the neighboring towns, especially Dessie town, and others took shelter in religious sites. Additionally, it is difficult to move from one place to another for any reason because of the restriction placed on mobility by the fear of being attacked and killed.

W-001 reported that

At first, we were not thinking that they would enter Woldia, and after they entered, we were not thinking about the kind of problem we faced, though it was war we feared, so we sent our children to Dessie in my husband's brother's home. We spent the day in church first, but when we heard about sexual attacks performed by the combatants, we spent day and night in the church until the TPLF combatants held Dessie town, then we brought our child home. It was frightening to go outside, even to fetch water.

The Tplf fighters, after they held Woldia Town, were searching homes for firearms. And they also deliberately attack the wives of the militia, soldiers, or special forces.

W-002, who was the wife of the Amhara Special Force, reported that

One day when I was home, they were coming, and we were told that there was a special force member and his wife in this area. Do you know which one is his home? And I replied, "I don't know." And they're gone back that day, but other groups came another day and asked me a similar question, and when I replied, "I don't know," one of them became angry and said, "You liar donkeys," and then he kicked me a slap. When I was down, he kicked me with his foot too. One of them pointed a gun at me, and they searched my home, but they didn't find anything. Then the other one kicked a dish I had put on the fire, and they were gone.

The TPLF fighters sexually assaulted the war widows in Woldia Town during the fighting. Without regard for age differences, a fighter performs a sexual assault on both women and children. W-004 reported that,

The fighters sexually attacked us without considering our age. They rape young girls and old women. In October 2022, when I was protecting a sorghum farm, two fighters who held guns came to me and asked me why I wore black. I replied that my husband was killed, and then he asked me who killed him. I replied, "I don't know." One of them became angry and said, "You want to complain to us. Is that what you want? and ordered

me to come closer to them, and they very much insulted me with amharic and some with tigre language. One of them gave his gun to his friend, held me tight, and raped me with force. I was begging him a lot to prevent him from doing that, but he did it mercilessly. At that time, the whistle blowing was heard from the distance; maybe it was from their boss, so after one of them raped me, they were gone and left me behind.

The victims of the sexually attacked widow reported that they don't want to report the case, fearing further victimization in the form of gossip, ostracism, and for the sake of their children and family morale. And also, after they report and are known, they separate themselves from the people because they feel that they talk about them and their history of rape. On my personal observation, I also observe that the victim's widow, after I interviewed her in the compound of the Women and Child Affair Bureau, was afraid of seeing the other person and tried to avoid contact with the other people when they left the compound after the interview. W-004 said that

My sexual assault by the TPLF fighter was reported by the one who saw my attack from his hiding place. I did not want to report this attack to protect myself and, especially, my family's morals. After it was known by the government officials, some of our village people heard about my attack and knew I was raped. Now I feel that when people talk about anything, they are talking about my rape history, and I was separating myself from gatherings, especially when the discussion title is about sexual violence.

This sexually assaulted widow also reported that she was afraid of walking somewhere where there were no people, like in the jungle to collect wood for fuel. After she was sexually assaulted, she became suspicious and afraid of strange men. W-004 reported that

Before the conflict, me and other women in the village would frequently go to the jungle to collect wood for fuel, and we would also frequently go to the farm to protect the crops alone, without any fear. Most of the time when we collect wood from the jungle, men help in breaking the wood, and we accept that, but after the incident of being sexually assaulted, I am very afraid to go to the jungle or farm land alone or without my very close relative or neighbor. I am also afraid when I see strangers or a man who is not my relative or neighbor in the jungle when we collect wood or around the farm land.

Widow 004 also reported that during the forced sexual assault she was physically injured on her leg, and the pain is still present. Due to this, she is unable to perform many of her tasks, like carrying heavy goods.

4.3.2. Economic security

The violent attacks on civilians and armed conflict cause many deaths, especially of men, and leave orphans and widows behind. In Ethiopia, it is the man who supports the family by

generating a large share of the income, even if the wife also generates some income to support the family.

In Woldia, there are widows who lost their husbands due to the armed conflict and some others who lost their husbands due to the attack by the alleged “OLA-Shene” armed group. These widows were asked to explain the economic impact they suffer due to the violent attack and conflict, and they explained their economic insecurity as follows:

4.3.2.1. Income loss

W-001 She said that her husband was killed by TPLF fighters in front of his home. He was the owner of a metal workshop and a metal worker. She explained that he was the only income generator in her home. With the income he generates, she pays house rent, food expenses, school fees, and other living expenses. After he was killed, she lost this income, which was the main supporter of their livelihood. She is supported by her mom and other people for some expenses, like school fees and rent. She expressed it as a painful experience to be supported by her old mom. W-001 said that

After I lost my husband, I worked many small jobs to generate income to support my family. I started a small business selling tea and coffee and stopped it because the working site was not good for such a kind of business and it did not generate a good income. I then shifted to start a game zone, but it became non-profitable. At last, my mom helped me and bought me a cloth sewing machine by selling her land, and now I am working on sewing. Now it is better than the previous business ideas, but I am still not able to generate enough money. My mom supports me by paying my older daughter's school fee, and there is also a person who supports me by paying the house rent fee.

W-002 She was the wife of a member of the special forces, and he was killed on the battlefield fighting the TPLF near Woldia town. She did not receive a report about his death from the government. She still doesn't receive any blood money or monthly payments like a pension for his children in the name of her husband. She lost income from her husband to support the family and her livelihood. She also lost her small business because she faced difficulty restarting it due to the financial problems she faced and the loss of some materials. W-002 said that

After I lost my husband and stopped receiving any monthly money as before, I couldn't pay for my livelihood expenses.

Due to the start of the conflict, W-003's husband joined the Amhara Special Force and went to the battle. Due to this, some of their farmland has not been plowed for consecutive years. In

Ethiopia, to plow the farm, men are needed because, culturally, it's considered a man's job.

W-003 explained that

Some of my farm land was not plowed after my husband went to war. I can't plow the land, and my older son can only plow some of the farm. And also, sons: I want to educate my sons; I don't want them to stay home as farmers.

Due to this problem, I asked my daughters to marry, but they refused. If they were married, our farm could be fully plowed, and we could get enough. But now we have a food shortage.

Widow W-003 further explained that currently they are supported by a safety net program, and she is also supported by the farmers' aid program, which is a special program to support the farmers. She explained that in this program, only those who aren't supported by safety nets are eligible, but for her, they are especially allowed due to the fact that she became a war widow.

4.3.2.2. Inheritance problem

W-002 also faces an inheritance problem. She does not get the property of her husband; he has a share of inherited land.

His share of inherited land is still in the hands of his sister, and his sister refused to give me his legal inherited share. Because of this, I went to court to get his inheritance, but I had financial difficulty paying for the attorney and was also unable to get free legal support, and now I am afraid I may lose the inheritance due to my poor finances and legal knowledge and being unable to get free legal support, and his sister can have a chance of having a good attorney and take advantage of that over me.

4.3.2.3. Loss of income-generating activities (livelihood)

The conflict widows also explained their activity to generate income and how this activity was affected by the violent attack and conflict. Before they face a problem due to violent attack and conflict, the income-generating activities of widows range from being farmers to being small business activities. In this conflict, the widows explained that in their daily activities, they were working different income-generating activities to secure the basic necessities by supporting the income generated by their husbands, but they said that the conflict and the violent attack affected their activities, and all of the widows could continue their livelihood activities as before. The violent attack widows are forced to be displaced from their living areas, and due to this, all are now living in different IDP camps in Woldia City, and all three interviewees replied that they have lost all their previous income-generating activity.

The conflict widow (W-002) said that she lost her previous income-generating activity after the conflict. During the conflict, the TPLF fighters controlled the city for about 5 to 6 months, and the livelihood activities of the area people were greatly affected. Due to this, she closed her traditional hair-making salon mostly due to insecurity reasons, and there were also no customers at that time because everybody was afraid to go outside from home.

W-002 said that during the time when the TPLF fighters held Woldia City, the situation forced me to close my small business. I was making shuruba (a traditional hair style) in the rented business shop. But after the conflict, I couldn't restart my business because I didn't have a rent payment; some materials were also destroyed during the conflict; and now I also don't have good health.

4.3.2.4. Property loss

All of the violent attack widows who were evicted from the Welega areas of the Oromia region as a result of the violent attack committed against them are said to have lost every item they owned there. They lost their land, their home was burned, and their cattle were looted by the armed attackers.

IDP-W-003 said that: "I was born in Oromia, Wollega Zone, Gulliso Woreda, at Gaw Qanqa Kebele." Me and my husband had cattle, homes, and farmland there, but by the attack of the "Shene" armed force, my husband was killed, they burned our home with its property, and they took the cattle. I fled the area by holding on to my children without any property in the form of items or cash.

IDP-W-001 said that

Before the Shene group came to our village, we heard that they were entering other neighboring kebeles. We were afraid and prepared ourselves to flee, but the Shene fighters reached us before we fled. They send the young Oromo people to us, make us calm, and convince us to gather in the school yard for a meeting. Then, after we gathered, they insulted us, and then we feared they were going to kill us. and they took us out of the school yard and took us to the bush and circled us with the armed men, then burned our houses and took the cattle, and then they started to fire on us, killing many people. The rest of the survivors, including me, fled to the jungle and saved our lives.

4.3.3. The health impact of the conflict and violent attack on the widows

The data shows that the conflict had various direct and indirect effects on children's and women's health. There were no health care services or access to clean water in Woldia City during the armed conflict, when the city was under the control of the TPLF combat force. Woldia City residents and the IDPS were present both during and after the conflict. During the conflict, fighters killed people at random and raped women and young girls. After the government retakes

control of the city, many widows face financial hardship, making it difficult for them to access health care.

4.3.3.1. Lack of access to clean water

During the conflict, clean water was not accessible in the city.

W-001 explained that *during the conflict there was no tap water, so we were forced to use river water. We know the river's water is not clean, but we don't have any other option but to use it.*

In the post-conflict period, the government made the clean water service resume, but clean water was not sufficiently available.

W-002 said that in our area at the side of the city, we do not get water even once a week. Most of the time, water comes once every two weeks.

I also observed that during my stay at Woldia, there was not adequate water availability. Many times I do not take a shower during my stay because the water comes in at some point in the day.

4.3.3.2. shelter

The conflict widows live in homes that are not good for their health. The IDP conflict widows are living in the shelter, which is very dangerous for the health of humans. W-002 After her husband was killed, she was forced to live in her previous rented home and now lives in a very small house. The roof of the house is porous, and water comes into the house during the rainy season.

W-002: In the previous home, the landowner was forced to leave her home; we are now sheltering in a small home. One good lady allowed us to live in it without payment until we had the capacity to rent a good home. I can't afford rent during the binge.

IDP w-001 said that they live in the IDP compound in a tent with no access to sanitation or clean water, making it a very unhealthy place to live.

We live in a tent. The floors have gotten extremely wet, and we always dry the mattress and the floor every day to prevent dangerous bugs from developing. When it rains, we can't sleep. We sit by collecting our stuff and putting it on stones because floods come to the tent. The cold and the bad smell make people sick. My daughter also coughed. We take them to the government hospital, where we are given medication, but it has no lasting effect. We are very worried now. To get better care, we need money, which we don't have now.

4.3.3.3. healthcare services

During the conflict, there were no health services at all. But after the government took control of the city's infrastructure, it began to rebuild and provide service to the people. Health services are

resumed and start to provide a service, but most of the widows don't have sufficient finances to get a good health service. But the people, especially conflict widows, are in a bad financial situation, so they can't access a good health care service.

W-002 said that after my husband is dead on the battlefield, I can't get good health care because of my financial problems. I have a pain in my upper leg that requires treatment. My last daughter, whose age is 1 year and 9 months, is also a patient; she has a health problem that needs attention. I was asked for a free service, but I still do not get it. They asked me for 6,000 birr for my operation treatment only, which I now can't afford.

4.3.3.4. sexual and gender base attack

Throughout the conflict The TPLF fighters sexually assaulted the village's women and girls. One of the widows I interviewed had been the victim of a GBV attack. She explained how the attack had affected her health and dignity. The combatants launched a GBV attack on W-004. He raped her and injured her leg, causing a dislocation. There was no health care service in Woldia City during the conflict, and the majority of the victims were not treated by a doctor. Some of them sought medical attention in the Tigre region.

W-004 explained that after I was raped, I suffered a health problem. I injured my leg. My right leg is dislocated because he raped me by force. At the time, there were no health care services in Woldia. I went to Alamata, and there I got health care services. I am ashamed of this and do not want to speak about it with anyone.

4.3.3.5. develop trauma and bing mental illness

After discovering that his father had been killed by the combatants, one of W-004's 22-year-old sons became mentally ill. Due to the conflict, he fled to Addis Ababa and wasn't aware of his father's death. When he returned home after the war, he discovered that his father had died, and he became very ill. His mom was going through a lot to get him well. She was taking him to various religious sites, and I'm out of money. Widow-001 reported that she has now developed trauma due to the unexpected killing of her husband.

Widow-001 said that when he lay down on the ground, she reached out to him before he died, and now when I see that place, I hear his last agony sound, and it disturbs me a lot.

4.3.4. Food security

Food security means that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food. Access to food comes from access to assets, work, and an assured income (UNDP, 1994, p.

27). Conflict affects the food security of widows. Due to the conflict and violent attacks, the conflict put the widows' food security and that of their children at risk.

All the conflict widows who are displaced from Wollega lose all their property, including their farm land, cattle, and homes, and they live in Woldia by depending on food aid. They are putting emphasis on their and their child's food insecurity by saying that the food aid is not sufficient, and due to this, they can't feed different nutritional foods to their children.

IDP widow W-003 said we depend on food aid. We receive some amount of food materials every 2 months, but now we have not received any for the last 3 months, and we are now facing hunger. Total aid is not sufficient; it does not allow us to give our children what they need. And we are also eating a small amount of one type of food.

The widows, who were residents of Wodia and who lost their husbands in the conflict due to the TPLF and Ethiopian government, said they are in a very critical state of food insecurity. All of the widows were dependent on their husband's economy before. And it is now reported that they have difficulty getting the food they need by themselves.

Widow W-001 said that, "First I give the available food to my little children, then me and my older daughter eat what is left, or sometimes we end the day by only eating some "kollo."

Widow W-002 said we face a lot of problems. I asked the kebele leaders to include me in a safety net by telling them about our hunger; but they didn't include me in a safety net program; they told me that they consider me the latter. We don't have food, and I tried to feed my children by asking some people I knew before. We eat a small amount of food once or twice a day.

Widow W-002 relied on her husband's income and her small business for the family's expenses. Now she is totally without any income from either side. She is now dependent on some gifts she found from her previous friends. I observed that she was crying by putting her head down during the interview when she spoke about her choice of food source. She doesn't have formal sustainable food generation or any aid for the binge.

During the conflict, when TPLF controlled Woldia for 5–6 months, I didn't have any food to feed my children, but we were supported by the church, and we were able to get some food. And after the conflict, I tried to feed my children by collecting aid from those I knew before. I don't have sufficient food to give to my children. My child asked me why I was not putting different foods in his lunch box when he went to school like other children, and he related this shortage to his father's death. I am now in a stressful situation trying to find food.

Widow W-003 reported that her family was dependent on the farm and her husband's extra income from his home builder job. But during and after the conflict, she reported that only some of her farmland was plowed, and therefore she faced a food shortage in her home. She is now supported by the safety net and farmers' aid (a special program to support farmers with food insecurity).

Likewise, widow W-004 stated that she and her family have become reliant on the safety net program. She also explained that the food they found through the safety net was insufficient, and she was unable to return to work and earn extra money due to caring for her older mentally ill son and a lack of funds to restart the previous small trade. Due to this, she was forced to feed her children twice a day, and she was not buying clothes because she shifted the money to buy food items. And it was reported that she made one of the sons, who was 18 years old, stop his education and become an assistant driver to generate extra income for the family.

4.3.5. relationship with location

Forced displacement affects people. Due to displacement, people lose their land, cattle, property, and other assets. Therefore, they became vulnerable to human insecurity. Sometimes the area they need to live in does not have a lot of land or usable land, other resources are limited, or there is no job opportunity in the area; therefore, being unable to relocate to an area that has good resources like land and job opportunities is also a threat comparable to forced dislocation. Several questions were asked in this study to determine their relationship with location in order to understand their sense of belonging and safety. The themes are their feelings of safety and sense of belongingness in their current living environment.

Woldia residents were affected by the conflict between the TPLF and the Ethiopian government. The majority of them were born in Woldia, while others were born in the surrounding area and moved to the city after marrying. The IDP widows who had become widows as a result of the violent attack by the "OLA-Shene" Wollega were forced to flee. Two of the three respondents were born in Wolga, and one of them moved there as a child after following her parents. All of the respondents have relatives in and around Woldia.

All of the respondents reported that they have a plan to stay for the next 10 or more years in the city. All the respondents do not want to change their living area. But some of them need to

change homes in the city. All the IDP violent attack widows need to have a better home in the city because the IDP compound is not comfortable. And two conflict widows need to change their homes because one of them reported that her husband was killed in front of his home, and she is afraid this bad memory can affect her children; otherwise, she feels safe and at home in the area. W-001 said

My husband was violently killed in front of our house, and my children see and know that. This violent memory can harm my children, and I do not want this memory to harm my children, so I want to change my resident village but not the city. This city is the place of my birth, and I want to live and die in this place.

All the widows reported a feeling of safety and security in the area. The conflict widows explain that the area is the place they live, most of the people know them and love them, and they also bring as evidence of their safety that they have a relative in the area.

The violent attack widows are the IDPs, and they have lived at Wollega for many years. In Wollega, they reported that they don't have a feeling of belongingness or safety. The respondents were told that because of their ethnic differences, they are not welcomed by the other ethnic members in the Wollega area. Most of the respondents were born there and have not lived in Woldia for a long time. But the IDP widows reported that they have a feeling of belongingness and safety at home. Violent attack IDP widow 001 reported that

Here, I feel like I am in my home country. I speak Amharic as I want; I go along with my ethnic group. In my previous village, even when we spoke Amharic, they said "yuck." In the market, we were not welcomed. I am happy now that I have my people. That is enough, and it gives me a hop.

All of the widows reported that they did not want to go to other areas for a living. All of the widows want to live and die in Woldia. The conflict widows reported that they want to live in Woldia and don't want to go to another area. The violent attack IDP widows also reported that they have no tendency to go to other areas for a living. They have violent, unforgettable memories, and they think that they will become victims again if they go to other places.

IDP-W-002 said

After this, I intend to spend the rest of my life here. I don't want to go anywhere else. I was having bad luck with violent attacks, and I always see things as they are. I feel like I'm going to die if I go to a different dwelling after this. It's difficult to accept that my husband was brutally murdered in the jungle. It's as if the attacker forgets, but the victim doesn't. After all of this, I feel as if I will be violently attacked if I return to my village, and I do not believe I will be able to live in peace if I relocate.

4.3.6. relationship with the community

Maintain identity through connection with the community. All the conflict widows reported that they have a good connection to the community of Woldia Town. They express the love and kind support of the community as follows: Widow W-001 reported that

I saw the community's love. When my husband was killed by four bullets and I fainted and laid down in the middle of the gunfire upon seeing his dead body, the community rushed to our aid and brought me and his dead body home immediately. Even after that, they remained by my side with their prayers and material assistance.

Widow W-002 After her husband was killed on the battlefield, the widow got into a serious fight with his sister. and she was forced to leave the rented home, which was beside his family home, where his sister lived. After she was forced to leave a rented home and became homeless, a good lady helped her and gave her a small house for her and her child to live in until she started to help herself and was able to rent another home. Widow W-002 She said:

After I was forced to leave the home, one good lady gave me a shelter, which is one room, and the roof is very porous, but she can help me from being homeless." I want to thank her now that I am able to collect my children until things get better.

The respondents also reported that the community is also a good friend, supportive, and gives them hope. Widow W-005 said that:

The community is strongly supportive. They show me a lot of love and encourage me to become strong. The community helped me in many ways.

The violent attack IDP widows also reported that the community is supportive, showing love, and that they are engaged in social life. IDP conflict widow W-003 said that:

The community is supportive. They are with us. They showed us love by visiting us in different social situations. The majority of the community and I established social lives during social life events such as birth and death. I have friends from the community who showed me different businesses, and we started to sell vegetables, but I stopped the business to follow up with my kids because I don't have a person who takes care of them after my aunty leaves the area because of her sickness.

IDP-conflict-W-001 reported that she had the feeling of having her own people. She described the situation and her filling by comparing the situation with her previous resident area in Wolga and the current situation in Woldia City as follows:

Here, I have a feeling of excitement. I got my people, my ethnic groups, to hear that I can speak Amharic without any fear, and I educate my children in Amharic schools, but in Wolga, we don't have a good relationship with the community; even when we speak Amharic in the market, they are not welcoming us, and we have no schools to teach our children in our language.

4.3.7. relationship with time

4.3.7.1. Accepting the past and having a positive grasp on the future

The widows' current lives have been influenced by the TPLF conflict, the "OLA-shene" violent attack, and forced displacement. They are bereaved and find it difficult to accept the past. The widows of the TPLF conflict reported that they find it difficult to accept their husbands' deaths and the suffering they received. They reported that they had been broken by their husbands' deaths. Women whose husbands were violently killed by combatants when their husbands were civilians and had no involvement in the conflict are highly bereaved and face difficulty accepting it. Widow W-001, whose husband was a civilian and killed in front of his home, reported that

I'm still struggling to accept my husband's death. My husband and I have never been apart in our lives; we love each other, we help each other, and we travel together. I am deeply saddened that he was killed just as everything was coming together and things were looking up. I want to raise my children without resentment or hostility.

Widow W-004 was the wife of a civilian who was killed violently, and after he was killed, she was sexually assaulted, and her older son became mentally ill. She is now depressed and says she is having difficulty accepting the past due to all this suffering.

Widow W-004 said that

My husband's untimely death, the subsequent illness of my child, and my sexual abuse—all this makes me deeply saddened. I am sorry to say that if his father had been there and not killed by them, my son would not have become ill, or his father would have taken him to the doctor.

Even though all of the widows reported having difficulty accepting the past, they all agreed that they should accept it and look forward to a better future for themselves and their children. Otherwise, they believe that their child's future will be bleak, and they believe that it is their responsibility to accept the past while hoping for the best. Widow W-002 said that

In order to live for my children, I must accept and resist past suffering while also struggling to resist future suffering. My children will grieve if they lose me after the loss of their father. I need to get stronger and do this on my own. And I will pray to God that the future is bright for us. And I will hope, in God's name, that the future is good for us.

In my observation, I saw the widows' deep sorrow and broken hurt when I interviewed them; they were crying, and I also felt their internal strength when they spoke about their child's future. They are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their child's bright future.

I am also asking them about their plan to remarry again. But all the widows replied that they don't want to remarry again for different reasons, but they all have the same reason: they don't want to marry for the best of their children's future. Widow W-001 said that

I never want to remarry. I want my children to grow up. My morale does not allow it. I've been married for about 20 years and don't have any excitement for marriage. After this, if I die, I have lived. If I live, it is for my children. I don't want my children to be treated badly by another stepfather, and I don't have a feeling for remarriage.

The widows believe they will never find someone like their husband who will be a good person for them and their children. They refuse to remarry because they believe they will be unable to find a suitable partner for themselves and their children. Widow W-002 said that

I don't want to remarry again. My husband has good love and behavior for me and his child. I want to raise my children by myself.

Widow W-003

I don't want to remarry again. My husband was a good person, and now I don't feel that I'll get a person like him who was good for my children, so I don't want to marry again.

The IDP violent attack widows also reported that all of them have difficulty accepting the past.

IDP violent attack W-002 said that

I was so bereaved by my husband's death. I suffer from anxiety. When we pass through such suffering and problems with having a fatherless child, it makes me wish my death was there with my husband.

IDP violent attack Widow W-003 also reported that she has difficulty accepting the past because of her current suffering. And she also doesn't want to marry again for the sake of her children's better lives.

I did not think about remarrying in the future. I have enough children for myself. If I marry, maybe he needs another child, and he will not be suitable for my children either. I am thinking that whether things are comfortable for me or not, it is better to raise my children by myself. I don't have any plans for another child, and I don't want anyone else to punish my kids for anything.

4.3.7.2. grasp of the future

All the widows believe that the future depends on their strength and their income-generation abilities. They understand that they permanently lose their husband's support, and the conflict and the violent attack also snatched their income-generating activity, their property, and their assets. Therefore, they reported that they now think that they should be strong in order to support their livelihood and make their child's future bright. For this, they say they need support from the government in order to have a sustainable livelihood. All the widows reported that they believe

the future will be good and bright. They struggle and can make their children educated, and they can be happy if they become self-help people in the future. And also, some of the widows believe that their future can be bright with their children, and they are ready to give everything they have to their children to build their and their children's futures. The widows set different priorities in order to become self-sufficient. Some widows, particularly the widows of armed conflicts, are concerned with whether the government will provide them with a shade to start businesses and a starting budget. But the IDP violent attack widows prioritize a home, a working shade, and a starting budget.

All the widows reported that in order to be strong, they understand that they should conceal their feelings of sadness from their children and try to stop binging on sadness and be happy to energize the future.

The armed conflict, Widow W-004 reported that being strong and looking to the future would be the only choice for a bright future for her and her children.

By thinking of my child, by considering the situation not becoming more unpleasant than this, and by understanding that if I became mad, they would become more injured than this, I will try to console and protect myself and make myself strong.

Armed conflict widow W-002 reported that she should conceal her sadness and try to be happy in order to make the future good for the family.

I try to be happy in front of my children because they also become sad when they see me sad. I go to church and pray to make me feel better. I should protect my children, I should be happy to make them happy, and I should be strong for my children's future.

Widow 005 reported that she was very bereaved and cried a lot every day until she felt pain in her eye, and due to this, her handicapped son became worried and tried to make her stop this.

My child advised me by saying, "Why don't you see me? Why do you become sad like this? This is not good for you or for me either." And now I am trying to stop my sadness by fearing he will be harmed. I am now trying to be strong to make my child's future good. He is handicapped, and he needs my help, and I should do that.

IDP violent attack widow W-003 said that they have a will to work and generate income in the future and be able to support themselves by enrolling in different income-generation activities.

We are hardworking individuals. If the government assisted and supported us in beginning to generate income, we would be able to support our family on our own. We can even pay taxes to the government. But we need a home and a starting budget to be supported because we lost all of our property in the violent attack and are now living in an IDP camp without a job. We need a

sustainable income-generating job and to start feeding ourselves; otherwise, this aid will be cut off and we will become very depressed

4.4. Discussion of findings

Introduction

Armed conflict produces a large number of widows, who have suffered more than other conflict-affected community members, including other women. In a post-conflict situation, they are the most marginalized and forgotten group. The literature on widowhood focuses primarily on their psychological and social plights while ignoring or paying little attention to their material plights. The main goal and purpose of this research endeavor is to create a complete picture of their human insecurity in the post-conflict period and to bring this deep and unique insecurity to post-conflict reconstruction actors. The conflict's impact on their human security is being investigated. Their choice of coping strategy, as well as the assistance they receive from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or post-conflict actors, are investigated to understand the human insecurity due to the conflict in the post-conflict period. This is critical for drawing the attention of post-conflict reconstruction actors to their deep insecurity in order for the post-conflict reconstruction program to prioritize this most vulnerable, forgotten, and marginalized group of conflict-affected communities.

4.4.1. The impact of conflict on widows human security and their coping strategy

4.4.1.2. Death of loved ones

On November 4, 2020, the armed conflict in the Tigray region broke out immediately following the violent attack by the alleged OLA-Shene ethnic Amhara in Oromia Region, Welega Zone, Gulliso Woreda, and Gawa Qanqa Kebele on November 2, 2020. The armed insurgency of the OLA-Shene and the TPLF armed conflict created mass casualties, displacement, and death in Ethiopia. In Woldia City, there are many widows due to these two armed conflicts. The widows from the alleged attack by the OLA-Shene armed group are IDPs and refugees in Wolodia, but the widows from the TPLF armed conflict are residents of Wolodia town.

The finding reveals that the armed conflict between the TPLF and Ethiopian government and the OLA-Shene insurgence conflict create physical insecurity in the community, especially for women, in many dimensions of human security. Women and children are the most vulnerable groups in many armed conflicts. During the conflict, the combatants are men, and they die in the armed conflict as fallen soldiers. The armed combatants also kill civilians as a war technique to create fear, influence the civilians, send messages to the other combatants, especially the government, and for many other reasons. The women and their children live behind. This puts many women's widows and many orphan children in a high state of insecurity. The conflict creates crime, GBV, fear of mobility, and other physical security problems.

4.4.1.2. Physical security

Protecting people from the physical violence of the state and other entities is the goal of personal security (Gierszewski, 2018). Personal security aims to protect individuals from any types of threats that can potentially affect their physical and psychological well-being and property. Perhaps no other aspect of human security is as vital for people as their security from physical violence (UNDP, 1994, p. 30). Among the worst personal threats are those to women (UNDP, 1994, p. 30). As discussed in Chapter two, women's physical security is violated during times of conflict by the combatants. In Woldia town, there are conflict widows who lost their husbands due to a violent attack by the OLA-Shene armed group and the TPLF armed forces.

After the TPLF forces control the city of Woldia, there is no government body in the area to provide security or justice. There has been no police or justice system in the area for 5 to 6 months. The time was expressed by the respondent as a time of fear and insecurity; with no security agency to protect them or a justice system to give them justice, it is a total no-rules-of-law period. At that time, arbitrary killing, looting, and sexual assault of women and children were day-to-day news. The finding revealed that the widow's physical security was affected by the killing, looting, fear, restricted mobility, GBV, physical assault, and illegal home surveillance and search.

Crime

The findings of the research revealed that the combatants looted and intentionally destroyed civilian and government property. It is historically known that in many wars and armed conflicts,

combatants looted the property of others to create wealth or for show and victory celebrations. Similarly, the combatants of the TPLF forces looted and destroyed government and civilian property. In Woldia City, it is revealed that their property was looted forcefully by the TPLF combatants. The OLA-Shene armed force took the cattle of the civilians after killing many individuals, and then they made them homeless by intentionally burning their houses to make the rest of the survivors, especially women and children, flee from the area and fear going back to the area again.

Sexual and gender based violence

Conflict and displacement leave women and children vulnerable to sexual violence, early marriage, harassment, isolation, and exploitation (Bendavid et al., 2021). The conflict creates GBV victims. Combatants sexually assault civilians both individually and in groups. The first reason may have been for personal sexual gratification, and the second reason may have been to use it as a war strategy to send messages to prevent others from resisting them. The research findings revealed that women are victims of widowhood and were also sexually assaulted by combatants during the TPLF fighters' hold on Woldia Town, as well as a lack of medical care in the area due to the looting and destruction of the health care service centers, including Woldia Hospital.

To deal with the effects of their experience, sexual assault victims need comprehensive healthcare services (Shahali et al., 2016). The research findings also revealed that the widow, who suffered a sexual attack by the TPLF fighter, cannot access medical treatment near her hometown. After the city is under the control of the TPLF fighters, the health centers are closed, and there is no medical treatment for the victims of sexual abuse in the area. The sexual assault widow suffers a lot, and she was forced to go to Alamata town, which is in the Tigray region under the control of the TPLF fighters, and get medical treatment. This was not accessible for many sexually assaulted victims because Alamata was found in the Tigre region, and going to the area is much more insecure due to the conflict. Even during the war, the residents did not live freely in the war city. The research findings also revealed that the civilians were in great fear and hid in their homes and religious areas like churches in order to secure themselves from the arbitrary physical attack, killing, and sexual assault of the combatants.

From the research findings, it is clearly observed that the victims of GBV servitude do not want to report the case. The finding demonstrates that the sexually abused widow is afraid to report the case to any government agency for fear of further victimization for herself and her child if the case is heard by others. This finding indicates that the number of people who are victims of GBV is not well known due to unreported cases, and they fear further victimization from their own community. After the government took control of the city, hospitals, other health-care facilities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) began providing medical care and support to victims. Widows who had been sexually assaulted were also medically treated.

The discovery also revealed that they had additional health issues as a result of the forced sexual assault. In our case, the widow was injured when the perpetrator sexually assaulted her and dislocated her leg.

4.4.1.3. Economic security

Loss of property and income

Due to the direct and indirect impact of the conflict and the widowhood effect, widows' incomes are completely lost or significantly decreased. In Ethiopia, women are mainly dependent on their husbands' income-generation activities. This study's findings revealed that most of the women were housewives or worked a small income-generating activity, and most of their income, which is used for day-to-day expenses, was generated by their husbands. The finding in this study indicates that widows face a loss of income, which is crucial for their living expenses, which are mainly generated by their husbands and supported by their small income-generating activities. After they lose this income, they are prone to financial problems, which result in other problems like food insecurity and other threats like not having any financing for their health care expenses, their rent, and their children's educational expenses. The finding revealed that the widow who lost this income is unable to pay for the rent on her home and is forced to live in a small, unhealthy home on the outer side of the city, which does not have basic service access like clean water and proper sanitation.

In the study, most of the respondents were housewives before they became widows, and some of them ran a small business only to support the income generated by their husbands. The conflicts have snatched not only their husbands from them but their property and assets too. The IDP

conflict widows who were living in Wolga also lost all their property by looting their cattle, burning their homes, and being forced to displace and lose their lands, which caused them to lose their livelihood activity and forced them to shelter in IDP camps in Woldia. They are now dependent on food aid without any livelihood activities. This may, in the future, make them addicts to aid and not motivated to work. The discovery also demonstrates that widows who lost their husbands during the TPLF conflict and have a small business to generate an income cannot now reopen it after it was closed during the conflict. They spent the majority of their small business budget during the conflict and after their husbands were killed, and they now face difficulties restarting it, having lost their livelihood and income. As a result, this finding indicates that armed conflicts significantly affect widows' income by causing them to lose their husbands accidentally without their expectation and lose the income generated by him; by losing their cattle through lotteries; by destroying their property; and by forcing them to leave their place of residence, causing them to become IDPs and lose their land and livelihood.

Challenge of inheritance

The finding indicates that widowed women also have a challenge with inheritance rights. The families of their husbands are not willing to give them their inheritance property. According to some research, access to assets through various channels of transfer, one of which is inheritance, enhances women's livelihood options and is vital to their decision-making power and economic empowerment; yet, women continue to be routinely denied land and property rights in much of the developing world (Berg, Horan, & Patel, 2010). As a result, they are frequently left penniless when husbands make it difficult for them to take care of themselves and their children. Women consequently discover that they have few options and chances to get better (Berg, Horan, & Patel, 2010).

Coping strategy for income loss

Widows decide on a coping method for their lost income and declining financial situation in a way that may have an impact on their lives or the lives of their children. Most of the widows don't have any formal skill training, and their formal education ranges from uneducated to grade 10. This widow's low educational status and lack of any skills they get from formal training, along with the other extra factors, force them to choose a very problematic coping strategy for their financial and income losses. The finding indicates that conflict widows chose to evict their

female children from school and convince them to marry. Conflict and displacement leave women and children vulnerable to sexual violence, early marriage, harassment, isolation, and exploitation (Bendavid et al., 2021). The study conducted in the Amhara region indicates that many determinants are detrimental criteria for early marriage; among these, one of the criteria mentioned was family monthly income (Tekile et al., 2020). This leads to gender inequality in the future because this widow chose to educate her male sons rather than her female ones due to the labor force that comes from the marriage of her young, underage daughters. The study findings clearly show that this farmer widow's coping strategy was to stop education, make the females uneducated, and force them to marry in order to fill the labor force gap, which is critical for farmers' livelihoods. The findings show that their coping strategies for this economic insecurity included not sending their children to school, forcing their underage child to marry, seeking assistance from previously known friends, and receiving assistance and food. This coping strategy undermines their dignity and contributes to gender inequality; in the case of IDPs, they may be reliant on aid and unwilling to support themselves through work in the future.

4.4.1.4. Health security

Psychological and emotional stress

According to Basnet et al. (2018), bereavement is associated with stress and mental health problems. According to their study from Nepal, one in two widows had depression, while two in every three had anxiety. In our study, the findings indicate that all the armed conflict widows are in deep sadness, sorrow, and bereavement. Due to this and other economic-related stressors, the widows have difficulty sleeping and face anxiety and stress. They have difficulty getting good and healthy sleep, and this makes some of the widows hospitalized due to the overburden on their nervous systems. The findings also indicate that they are very stressed by their condition due to having no income to support their lives and being unable to regenerate a sustainable livelihood to support their daily lives. Even if the widows who lost their husbands during this one year are very much in sorrow, the finding indicates that all the widows may be in a stressful mental state.

In this finding, the widows who witnessed their husbands' deaths due to the armed insurgents also developed trauma. The widow who saw her husband shot and killed in front of her home

experienced trauma because, even as she stood over the spot where her husband had been shot and laid down, she could still hear the sound of his final screams. As a result, she frequently felt numb. She is unable to complete her task effectively because of the trauma and numbness she is experiencing. Additionally, other widows experience severe stress, which keeps them from sleeping and forces them into hospitals because their nervous systems are overloaded.

As a result of armed conflict, children experience immediate stress reactions, an elevated risk of developing particular mental disorders, distress from being separated from their parents, and concerns for the safety of themselves and their family (Bürgin et al., 2022). The results of the study indicate that the armed conflicts have a detrimental effect on the mental health of the widows' children. The study's findings show that a young male child of a widow experienced mental illness after he heard that his father was violently killed. His mental disorder may be a result of the brutal assassination of his father by the combatants. Due to this health impact on the child, the widow also suffers stress and extra financial expenses for the care of their children's health.

related health problems of sexual assault and lack of health care access

Research indicates that assaults on women and girls have recently gained notoriety in conflicts, and combatants continue to use sexual violence as a tactic to terrorize and subjugate civilian populations (Jefferson, 2004). The findings of this study also indicate that in these conflicts, widows face GBV attacks by the combatants. According to the study's findings, widows are physically harmed during sexual assaults, resulting in long-term health problems. The sexually abused widows are also anxious and stressed because of the attack and their feeling of fear that their story will be heard by the community, particularly by their children and very close relatives. Furthermore, they have developed the impression that the community member is discussing them and their sexual assault story. They also develop trauma and a fear of places and people who remind them of their sexual assault.

The study revealed that during the conflict, these widows did not have access to health care services because of the intentional destruction and looting of the widow hospital and other health sectors by the combatants. Therefore, the widows who were survivors of sexual assault don't get medical care in their area. And also, mobility was restricted by conflict, and it is difficult for

them to get medical access in other areas. Medically untreated sexual attacks will lead to further health problems. The study's findings showed that the combatants sexually assault women and that the majority of the sexually assaulted victims have a very difficult time accessing medical care, which leads to further health problems.

The research also revealed that widows continued to face financial hardships that prevented them from accessing medical care for their own and their children's illnesses, even after the government rebuilt the Woldia Hospital and other health infrastructures during the post-conflict period.

Living in an unsafe home which has a health problem

Living in unsafe or unsuitable housing conditions can contribute to health inequities and be a factor in health issues like chronic diseases; However, a safe home away from potential hazards can promote well-being (Morales-Brown, 2021). The study findings show that the conflict widows are forced to live in unsafe houses because of the financial problems they face after the conflict and forced displacement. Therefore, the widows are forced to leave the previous house and live in the house, which does not have good ventilation, is small and suffocating, and has an old roof that lets water in during the rainy season. The widows' and their children's health is affected by their subpar housing, making them susceptible to chronic illnesses like cardiovascular disease. Additionally, IDPs are housed in very unsanitary tents where the floor is always wet, floods frequently occur during the heavy rainy season, there are too many people in each tent, bugs are present, and many of the residents—particularly children—have cardiovascular diseases and receive inadequate medical attention. As a result, the IDP conflict widows are more susceptible to illnesses linked to inadequate housing, and the bugs and overcrowded tents could potentially lead to an epidemic or pandemic, which could pose a direct threat even to Woldia City.

Poor sanitation and clean water availability

Access to clean and potable water is a global issue. Despite having a year-round running stream of clean water, the semi-arid town of Woldia in Ethiopia's Northern Wollo region generally struggles with a lack of water supply (Andavar et al., 2020). The finding indicates that during the conflict, all the widows in this case study used river water, which is not safe for their health.

After the conflict, in the post conflict period, the government resumed the clean water supply service, but it was not adequately distributed. The finding indicates that due to the low availability of government water supplies, the widows chose to use river water for sanitation purposes and for other household activities. The results show that the IDP has very poor sanitary conditions. The compound is devoid of functional bathrooms. The welfare and well-being of widows and their children in post-conflict settings are jeopardized by poor sanitation and limited access to clean water, which create unhealthy circumstances for them.

4.4.1.5. Food security

Income and food accessibility are closely related. We discovered that the conflicts and the death of their husband had a significant impact on the widow's income. They lost their source of income, assets, and small businesses due to the armed conflict, binge widows, as well as recent food price increases and country inflation, all of which had a significant impact on their ability to maintain a healthy diet. It is evident from the results that the widows and their children experience hunger and poor access to food. Being a widow makes households more vulnerable to food insecurity. According to Kisi et al. (2018)'s research on pensioners in Jimma Town, households headed by widows are nearly twice as likely as those headed by married people to be food insecure.

Armed conflict Widows coping strategy for food insecurity

The results of this study show that the widows used various coping mechanisms to deal with their food insecurity. Armed conflict Widows compromise on food quality and quantity, and they rely on food assistance from friends, family, the government, and non-governmental organizations in order to reduce hunger due to the insufficient food they can get in the aftermath of the conflict. In this study, the coping mechanisms of widows are revealed, including the use of cheap or low-quality food, reduced food consumption for themselves and their children, skipping meals, reducing the items of food they used before, and reliance on help from friends and family. They also start receiving a safety net and other forms of assistance, such as "farmers' aid." This result has a similarity with the study conducted in Jima on household pensioners, which finds that food insecure households used both consumption and asset-based coping strategies such as eating less preferred, lower-quality, or less expensive foods and receiving donations from relatives or friends (Kisi et al., 2018).

4.4.1.6. relationship with location

A sense of home and a sense of place are considered a most important buttress to the human sense of identity and “rootedness” in the world, a crucial constant across all cultures that have been examined (Leaning and Arie, 2001). When we consider the sense of place, it seems nebulous and challenging to conceptualize. Many terms have been used to refer to these human connections to place, but most people would probably concur that "sense of place" is the most comprehensive term (Farnum & Kruger, 2005). It refers to the entire group of cognitions and affective sentiments held about a specific geographic locale (Altman and Low, 1992; Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001), as well as the meanings one ascribes to such areas (Fishwick and Vining, 1992; Kaltenborn, 1998; Relph, 1976; Stedman, 2003a), as cited in Farnum & Kruger (2005).

In this research, to understand the relationship of the respondents with their location, the researcher used two main indicators: sense of home, which is feeling safe in their surroundings, and social dislocation by measuring their intention to live in the area for a long time.

In academic literature, the concept of "home" has been understood in a multitude of different ways. "Home" has been seen as a socio-spatial entity (Saunders and Williams, 1988), a psycho-social entity (Giuliani, 1991; Porteous, 1976), an emotive space (Giuliani, 1991; Gurney, 2000), or a combination of the three (Somerville, 1992, 1997), as cited in Easthope (2004). The commonality among all of these approaches is that while a person's home is typically understood to be situated in space (and time), it is not the physical structure of a house or the natural and built environment of a neighborhood or region that is understood to make a home. Instead, homes can be understood as "places" that hold significant social, psychological, and emotional significance for individuals and communities (Easthope, 2004).

The findings of the study indicate that all the respondents have a sense of home and feel safe living in the area. They have no fear of insecurity; they believe they are in the right place to live. The TPLF conflict widows lived in the area for a long time, and most of them were born in the area; some of them were born near the city of Woldia. The IDP conflict widows have relatives in the area, and they have a history of origin. Their parents were relocated during the time of the Derg regime in Ethiopia to a place where there was a resource, especially unoccupied land.

The finding indicates that all the respondents have a strong intention to live there for the rest of their lives. All the respondents do not want to go anywhere for the sake of getting a job or land in a faraway area where they don't have a sense of belongingness, especially the IDP conflict widows, who strongly disagree with the idea of resettling in another area where resources are abundant or migrating to another city where there are job opportunities because of the trauma they developed due to the attack in their previous living area. But this feeling of fear and not wanting to relocate to another area where resources are available can equally threaten their human security as forced displacement does because their current living area may not have enough resources, job opportunities, or land, and they may face difficulty living in the area in the future by fulfilling their basic material needs.

4.4.1.7. relationship with the community

In this component of human security, the researcher intended to capture the feelings of the widows towards the community in order to understand their sense of community. A sense of community for human beings gives them a feeling of safety and continuity. Human beings are social animals, and they need to be together. Through interacting with others, an individual expands his or her own perceptions, develops a system of moral values, finds emotional support, and builds the reasons to continue to stay attached to life (Leaning and Arie, 2001). According to McMillan (1976), the definition of a sense of community is "a feeling of belonging, a sense that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together." (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In this proposed definition by McMillan & Chavis (1986), there are four elements that show a sense of community:

Membership (belongingness): a feeling of belonging or sharing a sense of personal relatedness

influence: a sense of mattering, of making deference to a group, and of the group mattering to its members

reinforcement: integration and fulfillment of needs

Shared emotion and connection: members have shared and will share history, a common place, and time together.

The findings of the study indicate that all of the respondents have a sense of belonging to the community and feel safe in it. The respondents of the widows affected by the TPLF conflict are born in the area and have lived there for a long time, and they feel that they are part of the

community. The IDP conflict widows similarly have a sense of belonging. Even though they were born and lived most of their lives in Wollega after their families were sent there by the government's resettlement and village-building program in 1974, they drew on their ancestors' roots in the region. (See Resettlement and Villagization (Wikipedia contributors, 2023)). All the respondents have relatives in the community, and they trace their ancestors to that area, so this can give them a feeling of belongingness. The findings also indicate that all the widows have a personal relationship with the community; they have friends and participate in social activities, which strengthens their sense of belongingness. The finding indicates that the binge members of the community are rewarding cultural practice, are able to educate their children in their own language, and are welcomed by the community, especially IDP-conflict-widows; this shows the group matters to them. But on the contrary, the IDP-conflict-widows have a very low sense of community for their origin (in Wollega); they feel that they are not members of the community because of the difference in ethnicity; they feel that the difference in ethnicity makes them not feel like they belong to the community. Their low sense of belonging significantly reduces their chances of successfully returning and socially reintegrating IDPs into their communities of origin after the conflict (Aymerich, 2023). This can have an effect on their human security comparable to their previous loss.

4.4.1.8. Relationship with time

Accepting the past

The findings of this study indicate that the widows have difficulty accepting the past due to their grief and loss. The widows are facing sadness, sorrow, and grief due to the loss of their husbands in the armed conflict and violent attack. Because they lose their assets, income, and livelihood, they are facing extra stress in their lives. Most of the widows get stressed and anxious, which makes them have difficulty sleeping. Some studies show that having difficulty accepting the past leads to depression. According to Santor & Zuroff (1994), failure to accept one's past may be a contributing factor to depression. In their study, they found that people who reported failing to accept their pasts had more severe depressive symptoms than those who did accept the past (Santor & Zuroff, 1994). Some of the widows also develop trauma because they witness the violent killing of their husbands in front of the dwelling, and others because of the sexual attack committed on them. Accepting the past has a direct correlation with depression, so assisting

older individuals in understanding, resolving, and accepting the past may be especially helpful in reducing depression (Rylands & Rickwood, 2001).

Coping strategy to decrease grief, sadness, anxiety, and trauma

In this research, the findings indicate that the widows use different coping strategies to cope with the grief, sadness, trauma, and loneliness they face in order to accept the past. They understand that this can hurt them, cause a health problem, and make the future difficult for them, especially for their children. In this research finding, it is clearly discovered that these widows use positive and negative coping strategies. Positive coping strategies are coping strategies that don't harm the individual but help to reduce their grief, sadness, loneliness, and trauma; on the contrary, negative coping strategies can harm the individual further and lead to health problems.

In this research, the findings indicate that the widows' positive coping strategies are: Widows try to give everything to God; according to the finding that they go to church and pray, this can make them calm and reduce their grief, anxiety, and sadness. And to reduce their loneliness, they go to friends' houses, or their friends come to them and join cultural coffee ceremonies, or they talk and play with each other, and this can make them forget their loneliness. And most of the widows reported that they prefer to play with their children and make hope and believe that everything can be good in the future because of their children, and they consider them a gift from God to console them, so they try to forget the past and accept every suffering. This coping strategy is positive and can help them accept their past suffering. But on the contrary, they also adopt coping strategies that can hurt them, like crying at night when the children are sleeping or hiding themselves from the children while crying. This negative coping strategy will complicate their health and well-being in the future.

4.4.1.8. Positive grasp of the future

All the conflict widows show uncertainty about the future because there is a sign of another round of conflict in their area during the data collection time. As a result of citizen protests against the government's "practical activities" to disband the contentious regional state special forces and "reorganize" them into the regular regional and federal police as well as the national army, the security situation in the Amhara region is rapidly changing (Standard, 2023), and rumors and false information circulated that the program was only for the Amhara region and excluded the other regions (Insight, 2023). and this aggravated the situation, and there was a

fight near Woldia town and around Kobo town, which are a few kilometers away from Woldia town at the time of the data collection. These widows live in the area where there is an armed group, and there is also some degree of conflict with this armed group called “Fano” (a civil militia) with the Ethiopian defense force. Different media outlets and human rights organizations characterize Fano as either a militia or a protest organization (Wikipedia contributors, 2023b). But they have hope, mainly in their children, and believe that their future will be bright if they get support from the government or any other non government organization for their critical needs to become independent. Some of the widows need a shelter, and some of the others need a starting budget to resume or start a new small business to generate income and become independent. and they understand that they must leave the past behind and work to make the future bright in order to see their children grow and help themselves. This strong need of the conflict widows and IDP conflict widows shows that they have a strong will to accept the past and are conscious of their strength.

The effort made by government or any other NGOs to support conflict widows in their recovery and resilience in the post conflict period

introduction

To get a sense of the effort made in the post-conflict period for conflict widows recovery and resiliency, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's government's efforts are summarized in this section.

context

Beginning in 2018, following the change of government in Ethiopia, ethnic tensions arose for both internal and external reasons, and various actors in various areas of Ethiopia clashed. Most of the conflict has ethnic reasons. After 2020, more ethnic and political-based tensions escalated in the country in different areas by different actors, and then in November 2020, violent attacks on civilians and the defense force of Ethiopia occurred. The alleged OLA-shene armed force attacked the ethnic Amhara on November 1, 2020, killing many people and forcing the survivors

to leave their homes (Dejene, 2021). Authorities in the area confirmed the deaths of civilians in Guliso Woreda, Gawwa Qanqa kebele, claimed that the victims were massacred "in one place," attributed the attack to the rebel group "OLA-Shene," and Prime Minister Abiy sent his "condolences to the families of all victims of violence" and also expressed his "support for the people of Ethiopia." (Ethiopian Monitor, 2020).

Immediately after the violent attack by OLA-Shene on civilians in Gulliso woreda Gawa Qanqa kebele, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) attacked the Ethiopian National Defense Forces Base in the early hours of November 4, 2020 (Embassy of Ethiopia, London, 2020). In response to the attack, the federal government's prime minister, Abey Ahemed (Ph.D.), ordered a military offensive against the TPLF force on November 4, 2020 (BBC News, 2021). The Tigray People's Liberation Front, the region's ruling party, was the target of military operations launched by the Ethiopian government in Tigray (Tigray Conflict | Human Rights Watch, 2023). Prime Minister Abey Ahemed called the operation a "law enforcement military operation" and promised to end it soon. However, the conflict continued until June 28, 2021, when the Tigray force retook Mekele and Ethiopia's federal government declared a unilateral ceasefire (CNN, 2023).

After three months of ceasefire, conflict erupted again, and the Tigray force marched south, following the main road to Addis Ababa, and controlled many cities, including Woldia (CNN, 2023; Jazeera, 2022). The Oromo Liberation Army declared its intention to "overthrow this government militarily" and claimed to have formed a military alliance with the Tigray forces (Jazeera, 2021). Early in November 2021, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and TDF seized control of a number of towns along the road leading from Tigray Region southward to Addis Ababa, prompting the TPLF to declare that it was considering "marching on [the capital]" (Reuters, 2021). However, there is no clear data on how much they contributed to the armed conflict.

the assumed starting point of post conflict

After the government's great effort and counterattack, the TPLF force retreated to Tigray. Then the peace talks started, and the government of Ethiopia and the TPLF reached a cease-fire agreement (AfricaNews, 2022). The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement is a crucial step in the

fight to put an end to violence and lays a firm foundation for the protection of Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the immediate end of hostilities, the resume of unrestricted humanitarian access, the restoration of services, and the promotion of healing and reconciliation (Kodjo, 2022). So, it is considered the beginning of the post-conflict period in Ethiopia in this study because the researcher assumed that the TPLF was the main actor in the Ethiopian conflict and the most powerful actor because it has financial and political strength and was also the main and most powerful party when the EPRDF led Ethiopia.

So after the Pretoria “agreement for lasting peace through a permanent cessation of hostility between the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray Liberation Front (TPLF),” the researcher considered it a starting point for post-conflict reconstruction.

post conflict reconstruction efforts and special consideration of conflict widows

The Ministry of Finance of Ethiopia starts a project called “Response Recovery Resilience for Conflict Affected Communities in Ethiopia with funds obtained from the IDA-World Bank through grants and loans. The project will help to address communities' immediate needs, rehabilitate or recover infrastructure destroyed by conflict, and increase community resilience to the effects of conflict in a long-term way (World Bank Group, 2022).

The findings of this study through observation and key informant interviews indicate that the infrastructure destroyed by TPLF forces was reconstructed in some way to allow public services to begin. The researcher personally observed that schools have resumed, police stations are starting service, and hospitals are receiving patients and giving medical treatment. However, according to the key informant of the north Wollo Zone police leader, the material they get is not sufficient, and their files and properties were completely destroyed and looted. And the materials and finances they get from the government are not enough, so this makes them not fully start to give police service to the community. Additionally, the informant indicates that at the time there were illegal armed groups in the area, which further hindered the work to maintain peace and security. The finding shows that widows had access to healthcare at the time of data collection;

like any community in the city, they made use of a service that the government resumed after maintaining the destruction and looting from the conflict. and IDP conflict widows have a free health care service provided for them and their children because they are only IDPs, not considering their status as binge conflict widows.

The widows of the Amhara special forces begin to pursue their rights to blood money and pensions. The key informant of the North Wollo Zone police human resources chief confirmed that blood money and widows pensions for conflict widows have begun to pay, and many conflict widows are starting to benefit from their rights. And a key informant from women's and social affairs says that for conflict widows who were civilian wives who lost their husbands due to the arbitrary killing of TPLF combatants, they gave them 30,000 birr and other material aids, but the widows denied it. Furthermore, in order to better understand the assistance provided to war widows, the researcher went to the Woldia Meyers Bureau and spoke with the mayor's secretary head, but due to overburdening, he scheduled an appointment for another day, and getting information on the scheduled day was hampered due to civil conflict in the area. In the final days of my data collection in Woldia, there was an armed conflict between "Fano " and the Ethiopian defense force, and the people of Woldia city were closing the roads with stones to show their support for Fano and Amhara special forces. Because of the violence, public transportation was unavailable, and mobility was restricted. Because of the security situation, the researcher will return to Addis Ababa to gather additional information about the efforts made by the government or any other NGO to aid, particularly the conflict widows and their children, in their recovery and resiliency by phone call, but this effort also does not become satisfactorily fruitful.

In order to compare the data obtained from the widows and the key informant, this thematic area lacks authentic information. The government's or any NGOs efforts to support widows and orphans in their resilience and recovery are therefore not well established due to the aforementioned factors, and there may be other causes as well.

Chapter five: Conclusion and recommendation

5.1. Conclusion of the study

This chapter concludes the study by summarizing the main research findings in terms of the research objective and research questions, as well as their value and contribution. In addition, the limitations of the study are identified, and opportunities for further research are suggested. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of armed conflict on conflict widows living in Woldia City in order to highlight their vulnerability and to draw the attention of post-conflict reconstruction actors to pay special attention to them in post-conflict reconstruction programs.

The result of this study shows that conflict widows are negatively affected and their human security is compromised. Most of their coping strategies also affect them negatively, and the government's post-conflict efforts also do not take them into special consideration. The findings show that attacks through violence against women, killing of relatives and loved ones, crime in the form of destruction of assets and looting of property, and being forced to leave their home area have an impact on the physical security of conflict widows.

The impact of the conflict that affects their physical security has also affected their economic security. The majority of Ethiopians depend on their husbands' income. When their husbands are killed, the widows lose this income, and their small businesses are forced to close during the conflict and cannot be reopened due to a lack of funds. To cope with the loss of their economy, widows adopt a coping strategy that will further impact the human security of their children and themselves. The results show that some conflict widows persuade their daughters to drop out of school and marry. Conflict widows among IDPs have lost all sources of income, including farms and land. All conflict widows now suffer from food insecurity due to the impact of the conflict on the economy and security.

Widows also face food insecurity due to the loss of their husbands and the additional impact of armed conflict. Using cheap or low-quality food, reducing food consumption for themselves and their children, skipping meals, cutting certain foods from their diet, and relying on the help of

friends and family members were some of the coping mechanisms for this severe food insecurity. This type of coping strategy is unhealthy and can lead to malnutrition and associated health consequences, especially for children. Additionally, seeking help from friends affects the dignity of the conflict widows. The conflict and its aftermath have a detrimental effect on the health of conflict widows.

Their health is impacted due to grief related to the deaths of their husbands, the violence against women they experienced, the loss of their assets and income, displacement, and squalid housing conditions. They suffer from psychological and emotional stress due to grief and loss-related stress. And their children are also struggling with psychological problems. As a result of armed conflict, children experience immediate stress reactions, an increased risk of developing certain mental health disorders, suffer from separation from their parents, and worry about their own and their family's safety (Buergin et al., 2022). Because the conflict has weakened the health care system through looting and destruction, these widows state that the system is poorly organized and that they are unable to find a cure for their illnesses and those of their children. In particular, children of IDPs suffer from cardiovascular diseases and respond poorly to medication. IDP shelters are very stuffy and lack sanitation, leading to epidemics such as cholera. There are reports of cholera outbreaks in many parts of Ethiopia (OCHA, 2023). And now it will also contaminate the IDP camp and cause heavy casualties. Conflict widows develop psychological trauma through the memory of the violent killing of their husbands and the memory of sexual assault and other related impacts.

The results show that both conflict widows and IDP conflict widows have a strong sense of attachment to their current place of residence. They feel that they are at home. All conflict widows want to stay and live in their current place of residence for the next several years, no matter what the situation, and they feel safe in their current area of residence. This may also affect them in other ways; for IDPs in particular, there may not be adequate resources such as farmland or sustainable livelihoods in the area, so it is likely to be similarly painful as forced displacement for them if they don't want to relocate to other areas where there is a resource like farm land.

The past affects the widow's present, making it difficult for conflict widows to accept the past. These influences include grief, loss, psychological stress, psychological and physical trauma, and the mental health of their children. Conflict widows, therefore, use various coping strategies to deal with the effects of the past and minimize their psychological stress, grief, loss, and psychological trauma. The results suggest that most of their coping strategies will have a positive impact on their well-being, but some are poor and may further worsen their health. The widows chose to deal with their grief, loneliness, psychological trauma, and stress by engaging in regular binging and prayer, socializing with friends and neighbors, playing with children, and keeping themselves busy at work. But some conflict widows chose to cry at night or by hiding themselves, frequently chose to cry. Sometimes crying is healthy because it serves as a release for our stress and emotional pain (Licsw, 2021). But sometimes crying for long periods of time in different situations can have a health impact. Sometimes crying can indicate a problem, particularly if it occurs frequently and/or mysteriously, or if it starts to interfere with daily activities or becomes uncontrollable (Licsw, 2021).

Even though widows find it difficult to let go of the past, they are well aware of their strength and know that they must move past the past in order to raise their children, watch them grow, and help themselves. Their hope must be supported. If they receive assistance with their basic needs, such as establishing a sustainable source of income and acquiring a better place to live, they can live their future by accepting the past and having good dreams for the future.

This research contributes to the literature on widowhood by showing the combined effect of armed conflict and widowhood on the various components of human security, ranging from basic physiological and safety needs to psychosocial needs. And contribute to the widows by showing their multilayer vulnerability and insecurity for the post-conflict actors. And also, this study has great significance for the post-conflict reconstruction actors by indicating the most vulnerable and overlooked groups of conflict-affected communities for their consideration and use as a starting point for further study in order to address them in the post conflict reconstruction program.

5.2. RECOMMENDATION

This section provides recommendations that can provide insight for further research, post conflict reconstruction actors, and NGOs that work for the betterment of women, especially conflict widows, in order to support their critical needs and problems, empower them, and make them self sufficient.

1. To get a sense of the scope of the issue, find out how many Ethiopians are widows of conflict.
2. Recognize the value of empowerment, counseling, and psychosocial support
3. Determine the major issues with conflict widows, the effects of armed conflict, and the connections between these issues and other themes like child marriage, school dropouts, foster care, and juvenile delinquency.
4. Recognize the significance of offering legal assistance and legal education to enable conflict widows to exercise their inheritance rights.
5. In post-conflict reconstruction programs, consider conflict widows and their vital needs.
6. Empower conflict widows by providing them with education and skill development so they can become independent

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Annex 1

Section A. Demographic profile of war widows

1. Indicate your age category
 2. What is your level of education?
 3. What is your occupation?
 4. If you're employed, how long have you been working?
 5. Which type of marital status are you involved in?
 6. How long have you been married?
 7. When did your husband pass away?
 8. How long have you been a widow?
 8. Was your husband in the military, police, special police force, local militia, or Fano? How did you hear about the death of your husband ?
 9. Have you ever considered remarrying? Yes { } No { }
 - 10 if yes or no for question number 9 above please explain
 11. How many children do you have?
 12. Do you have children attending school?
 13. If yes to Question 12 above, in which level are they at school?
 14. Do you afford paying school fees?
 15. If No to the above question, how do you cope with the payment of the school fees?
 16. Are there any other family members who are living with you?
 17. If Yes to Question 16 above, what do they do for a living?
- Training and acquisition of skills**
18. Are you involved in any programs for skill development?
 19. If yes in the above question, who provided training or workshops? Specify
 20. What types of skills were provided?

Section B. Human security

Basic physiological and safety needs Domain of human security

21. Do you come across **personal security** challenges as a female head of house?

22. If yes to Question 21 above, tell me about the security challenge you ever face during your widowhood

Do you experience GBV attack before the conflict, during the conflict, after the conflict

In this community, is there a place where you and/or other women and girls feel unsafe or try to avoid it? (Day? Night?) What is it that makes this place unsafe?

From whom can you and/or other women and girls seek assistance in case of a security problem?

23. How do you overcome the challenges stated in the above question? 24. What can be done to overcome the security challenges facing you and other widows and womens/ girls? How does the family treat a woman or a girl who was the victim of rape or sexual assault? How do they support her?

24. As a woman, how do you protect yourself from violence? What does the community do to protect women? 25. What do women, especially you, usually do after you having experienced such violence? Do you seek help? Do they report the case to the police or any government authority

25. When a woman or girl is the victim of violence, where does she feel safe and comfortable going to receive medical treatment?

26. Are there other services or support (counseling, women's groups, legal aid, etc.) available for women and girls that are victims of violence?

27.. Do you come across **food security** challenges as a female head of the house?

28. If yes to Question 25 above, tell me about the food security challenge you face during your widowhood

29. How do you overcome the challenges of food insecurity stated in the above question?

30. What can be done to overcome the food security challenges facing widows? 31. Do you come across **economic security** challenges as a female head of house?

30. If yes to Question 29 above, tell me about the security challenge you face

31. How do you overcome the challenges stated in the above question? 1. [What strategy are you following to generate and increase your income after the war and after you lost your husband's support?](#)

32. What can be done to overcome economic security/ income challenges facing widows? 4.

Shulter

1. What kind of housing do you have?

2. Are you sharing your housing with others?

4. Does the family face a threat of eviction at any moment?

6. How much do you pay for the rent per month?

7. **How many rooms are there in the dwelling?**

8. **How many of these are bedrooms?**

9. **Do you think children have a safe place to play?**

10. How strong is your ability to get a better house in the future?

Basic psycho social need

1. Relationship with location: attachment to home

Mitigate dislocation, Sense of home and safety

Is this residence place your previous residence place?

How much Number of years You are living in this village

Does any extended family live in this village?

Did you have a plan to live in this area for the next 10 year/ why

- Did you have a plan to change your place of residence in the next 10 years? / why?
- Is this area and your place of residence a better place for you and your family, especially for your children?
- Do you feel safe in this village?
- How strong is your ability to stay in your village for the future?
- 2. Relationship with community**
 - 2.1. Maintain identity**
 - 2.1.1 How strong are your ties to the community?
 - 2.2. Functional support**
 - 2.1 How strong is the support from your neighbors?
 - 2.2 can get support from community when you are in need
 - 3.3 can your neighbors take you to the hospital if you are sick
 - 3.3 do you feel that you are facing isolation from your community members?
[What did you do in such a situation?](#)
 - How would you describe in general your relationship with others? his siblings, your friends, relatives, and community or interest-based associations that are related to you (after death of the spouse)
 - Over the years, how have you been treated in the community after you became a widow?
 - Is there a distinct reaction from the community toward you or anyone else who is widowed like you in terms of lending assistance or participating in social activities? If so, how did it affect your feelings or motivation?
- 3. Relationship with time**
 - 3.1 Acceptance of the past**
 - 3.1.1 How strong is your ability to accept the past?
 - 3.1.2 [How do you manage yourself while grieving?](#)
 - can you have fun in the moment**
 - Do you laugh at least once every day**
 - Positive sense of the future**
 - 2.1 How strong are your positive thoughts for the future?
 - can you picture a positive and happy future**
 - Do you have goals working toward**
 - Do you feel stronger because of what you have overcome**