THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF DISASTER-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT ON HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS: MIGRANT EXPERIENCES IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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Abstract
This study examines the impact of disaster-induced displacement on higher education students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The study focuses on displaced students affected by natural disasters and conflict to understand the challenges they face in continuing their learning, the support universities provide for their students, and the coping methods they use to handle their academic and social difficulties. It employed a qualitative approach, involving semi-structured interviews with 20 students displaced from different regions. Themes of the interview data not only indicated the harm in infrastructure but also disruptive and damaging situations regarding education, such as more limited access to learning options and psychological distress from displacement. Other significant barriers on the institutional level in the support systems for mental health and academic accommodations. Despite those challenges, displaced students resisted those circumstances through social support and their own coping strategies and resilience. The results suggest that colleges should strive to create comprehensive support programs tailored to the needs of students displaced in their college (or other institutions of higher education), emphasising the importance of educational flexibility, psychological well-being, and access to academic resources. The present study contributes to the body of literature examining educational displacement and offers recommendations for enhancing university policies and practices to support displaced students.

KEYWORDS: Disaster-Induced Displacement, Higher Education, Displaced Students, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Academic Challenges, Mental Health, Coping Strategies, University Support, Education Policy, Qualitative Research

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the significant causes for displacement in the world are natural and artificial disasters. There are frequent instances of displacement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a region in Pakistan, resulting from floods, earthquakes, and war. These crises not only upset people's lives but also have a significant impact on learning. For higher education students, displacement can significantly impact their academic performance. The challenge of pursuing education under such conditions is compounded by insufficient resources, including a lack of home, community, material, and emotional support, which hinders the acquisition of knowledge. The institutions of higher education lack the necessary strategies and mechanisms for accommodating displaced students. The research reveals that the population, especially in Pakistan, who have been displaced, exhibits a significant disadvantage when it comes to education (Ullah, 2017). The challenges that displaced students face in their attempts to access education are no secret. To some extent, studies have highlighted the severity of this issue in relation to students' educational development (Imtiaz, 2022).

Additionally, universities in disaster-prone areas often lack adequate support for students, which can further exacerbate their challenges (Samad and Sheikh, 2024). One cannot underestimate the significance of education in the highly ecological disaster period. Education can be seen as a resilience tool, providing individuals with the skills and socioeconomic stability they need to thrive. However, displaced pupils in KP face several challenges, including

a lack of access to education materials, education disruption, and psychological trauma of displacement. Not only is it a problem for the mental well-being of students, but it also serves as a barrier to their academic achievements (Ahmad et al., 2020). Research has focused on the impact of displacement on academic disruption and the psychological effects of displacement on students, particularly in conflict areas (Barnes, 2023). Indeed, there is a mandate for targeted interventions that help displaced students reach their academic potential during and after displacement (Arar et al., 2022).

These obstacles highlight the need for proper support systems in Universities that can assist students in overcoming their educational journey. Universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are not equipped to accommodate the displaced students, as most institutions in the war-torn or plain ravaged states offer. Not addressing displaced students differently through university mechanisms has been identified as a primary contributor to poor academic performance among displaced students (Samad and Sheikh, 2024). However, studies also suggest that such difficulties can be overcome through the implementation of flexible learning opportunities and additional mental health resources (Barnes, 2023).

It is on this background that this paper seeks to examine the experience of displaced migrant students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study will address the challenges encountered by these students in pursuing their studies, the accommodations offered by universities, and the coping mechanisms adopted by students to mitigate the issues caused by displacement. This research is anticipated to provide valuable insights that will help universities and policymakers develop more inclusive and supportive environments for displaced students, enabling them to continue their education despite the challenges they face.

The article attempts to find answers to three main research questions:

i. What challenges do displaced students face when trying to continue their education during and after a disaster?
ii. How do universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa accommodate displaced students, and what is their support mechanism?
iii. What coping strategies do migrant students develop to overcome academic and social challenges caused by displacement?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Displacement due to disaster strongly affects the learning experiences of students, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Due to environmental and socio-political disasters, including floods, earthquakes, and armed conflicts, many people have to abandon their residences and become large-scale displaced. The chapter discusses the issues related to displaced students who resume education after and during a disaster, the role of universities in assisting such students, and the management mechanisms by which displaced students cope with a disaster as it manifests in their academic and social lives. The gaps in current research and the possibilities of conducting further research into managing the education of displaced students in a university are also addressed in the context of this review.

Challenges Faced by Displaced Students in Continuing Education

The displaced students typically face significant obstacles in accessing and pursuing education. The psychological displacement and destruction of learning institutions severely incapacitate their capability to learn. Ahmad et al. (2020) revealed that in Swat, Pakistan, internally displaced children experienced significant educational consequences because of the physical destruction of schools and the mental effects of facing displacement. These children, in most instances, were made to travel through the temporary shelters and improvised classrooms, which are major degrading factors to their educational advancement. Moreover, the stress they

experienced due to the lack of their homes and communities usually resulted in mental problems such as depression and anxiety, further hindering their educational potential.

Also, as noted by Barnes (2023), displaced female students are an even greater issue in Pakistan, with a specific focus on refugee girls and young women. These students not only faced all the obstacles to online education, including, but not limited to, a lack of technology access, but also encountered gender-related issues during the COVID-19 education closures, such as a lack of mobility and safety, which increased the challenges of participating in online classes or accessing educational materials. Above all, Barnes (2023) points out that the fact that attempts were undertaken to support dispersed students during the pandemic did not mean much to the female refugees themselves, as they regularly experienced the influence of traditional gender roles, which constrained their chances of acquiring education.

These challenges are compounded by the fact that there are no inclusive educational policies in place. UNICEF Innocenti (2025) also notes that displaced children and migrant child populations in Pakistan are at a high risk of protection issues, such as having no access to education provisions and substandard legal protections to facilitate their access to education. This absence of a unified national strategy serves only to thwart the rapid access of displaced students to educational opportunities in the short term, compromising both long-term options, including the admission of displaced children into formal school systems and the delivery of viable learning resources. This has led to several displaced students who have limited education opportunities and are usually marginalised in the wider education system.

University Accommodations for Displaced Students

In disaster-prone areas, universities play a vital role in providing affected and displaced students with all the necessary facilities, including academic, psychological, and social support, to help them return to their studies. Nevertheless, a study has found that provisions given to displaced students are either inadequate or sporadic. Arif et al. (2025) concluded that teachers employed adaptive techniques to resume educational activities, providing support to displaced students who had been working adequately during the 2022 floods in Balochistan. Even though they tried their best, teachers from flood-struck areas often lacked access to resources and proper infrastructure, and they underwent specialised training to meet the needs of displaced students within their classrooms effectively.

Additionally, Aziz and Malik (2017) stated that the condition of universities in Pakistan often does not afford the necessary infrastructure and policies for accommodating the demand of displaced learners. While temporary programs have been implemented in selected institutions to mitigate the problem, including the provision of scholarship opportunities or extended deadlines, these are not necessarily sufficient for meeting the immediate needs of students, especially on a long-term basis, given the effects of displacement. Colleges should adopt a more holistic approach to support services for displaced students, which include mental health care services, academic counselling, and flexible learning options. The authors also note that to facilitate for the displaced students who adapt to a university there should be different policies set in place to ensure that those who have been displaced may not just be helped by being given relief but that they are also supported through academic and social means to be able to re-integrate in their education and eventually graduate (Aziz and Malik, 2017).

In addition, Ahmad (2024) conducted comprehensive research on the background of teaching and learning in emergencies in Pakistan, as well as how universities provide special assistance centres for disadvantaged students. The paper highlights that more needs to be done to help displaced students in universities through the provision of counselling services, flexible learning programs, and scholarships. The latter services have specific needs of displaced students to be addressed and encompass mental health issues and the deficit of social integration. Moreover, universities must prioritise the formation of a supportive and

accommodating learning system that instils resilience among displaced students, so that they can navigate an academic journey without being deterred by the adversity that befalls them.

Coping Strategies Developed by Displaced Students

Although displaced students face numerous challenges, they tend to develop various coping strategies to address the economic and social issues they encounter at school. As indicated by Iraklis (2020), reframing stressful events as positive, combined with seeking social assistance in a school setting, is discussed by the researcher as a commonly adopted approach among displaced students. According to Iraklis (2020), reframing refers to shifting the perception of displacement as a traumatic event, also outlining it as an opportunity to develop and become resilient. Additionally, a significant proportion of displaced students form robust social networks at the school, where they support one another emotionally and can overcome academic and social challenges. These social networks are directly important for combating loneliness and for individuals to feel part of a group, fostering a sense of belonging, which may improve their overall academic performance.

Furthermore, evaluation by Ahmead (2024) of the prevalence of depression and anxiety symptoms among students of a Palestinian university, which was important for active coping skills, emotional support, and humour as a means of reducing depression and anxiety. Humour and outward thinking are among the means used by displaced students to protect themselves against the psychological effects of displacement.

Psychological resilience is also viewed as a key factor in helping student to adjust to their new settings in the educational system. Lembke (2024) additionally mentions the function of the idea of trauma-sensitive school for the remedy of displaced students with a traumatised origin. According to Lembke (2024), trauma-informed care can improve the academic performance of affected students in the school setting by providing a safer and more comfortable learning environment for them. Social-emotional learning and resilience-building exercises are crucial for developing the necessary skills and experiences that students need to overcome the psychological barriers associated with displacement, thereby enhancing their academic success through trauma-sensitive strategies.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, as it is the most suitable approach for investigating the lived experiences of displaced students, focusing on their educational endeavours and the challenges they encounter during this process. With the assistance of a qualitative study, one can examine the personal stories of the subjects in greater detail and thus gain a more detailed insight into any issues that a quantitative study might have missed. The use of this qualitative approach is expected not only to generate descriptive data regarding the emotional, academic, and social conflicts faced by displaced students but also to comprehend how displaced students manage their conflicts and how universities have helped them cope.

Study Area

The case study of Lakki Marwat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a region that has been severely affected by natural disasters and unrest, which are among the factors contributing to the tremendous displacement of the population. Several internally displaced persons (IDPs), the majority of whom are undergoing higher education, call this district their home. Lakki Marwat is selected as the site of study because it is one of the few places where displaced students face various difficulties in advancing their education; hence, the setting is the ideal location to conduct the study.

Participants and Sample Selection

The qualitative research population used in this study consists of displaced students currently pursuing higher education in Lakki Marwat and other institutions of higher education in the region. Such students are deprived due to natural catastrophes, such as floods, or violence in the area. To offer diversity of views, both male and female students from different academic disciplines are sampled.

The purposive sampling used is done to choose those who fulfil the subsequent criterion:

➢ Enrolled in a higher education institution in Lakki Marwat.
➢ Experienced displacement due to Natural calamities or war in the past.
➢ Willing to talk about their stories about their difficulties in getting an education and how they cope with these difficulties.

A total of 20 respondents were selected to participate in in-depth interviews, which is a suitable approach in the context of qualitative research. This size allows exploring the individual experiences in-depth and, at the same time, enables handling data in a manageable form.

Data Collection Methods

Information is gathered using semi-structured interviews with displaced students in Lakki Marwat. Qualitative research typically begins with semi-structured interviews, as they are flexible and allow the researcher to delve into a particular issue, providing participants with the opportunity to express their views in depth. The interview guide discusses the research questions and has questions concerning:

➢ The challenges students face in continuing their education during and after displacement.
➢ The support system provided by higher education institutions and universities enables their students to continue their studies.
➢ The coping mechanisms these displaced students apply in their attempts to overcome academic and social challenges.
➢ Experiential and psychological effects of displacement on their academic career.

The interviews are conducted in either Urdu or Pashto, according to the participants' preference. All the interviews are audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed for examination.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using thematic analysis, a common qualitative technique employed to identify and establish patterns or themes within the data. Through the use of thematic analysis, the data are coded to reveal the relevant themes that correspond to the research questions. The following forms the analysis process:

i. Familiarisation of the information: The collected data is in the form of an audio tape, and the researcher transcribes it. This is followed by reading the transcripts several times to become familiar with the information.

ii. The development of preliminary codes involves classifying data in terms of the research questions and areas of interest under investigation.

iii. Theme search: The codes will be grouped into potentially longer themes, including the obstacles displaced students face, how they manage these challenges, and how universities support them.

iv. Profiling of themes - The reviewed themes will be evaluated to determine if they accurately portray an authentic association with the data and correlate with the research questions.

v. Theme naming and definition: Theme naming is an activity that helps locate the main message conveyed by a text. It involves summarising the stories in a short statement. To define a theme is to elaborate on its further meaning and contextual or plot significance in analysing the characters.

vi.   Reporting: The authors present the results in narrative form, discussing and analysing the experiences of displaced students in Lakki Marwat.

Ethical Considerations

It is a properly conducted research study that follows relevant ethical principles to protect the privacy of its participants. The informed consent of the participants is made comprehensible through the study's purpose statement, as well as a clear explanation of the voluntariness and freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. All participant names will remain confidential, with pseudonyms used in their place, and the audio recording will be conducted in a confidential manner. Even respondents will be assured that their identities and answers will be kept anonymous during the study reporting. Additionally, the concept of ethical consideration with emotional support is prioritised, particularly when discussing the sensitive issue of displacement. The participants are informed of counselling services in case they get emotionally distressed during or after the interviews.

4. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The chapter presents the results of a thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with students residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Twenty (20) displaced students in different higher education institutions in the district of Lakki Marwat, KP, who have either fallen prey to natural disasters or conflict, were interviewed. The following section gives the analysis of all the major themes identified during the interviews, discussing the problems that displaced students experience in their continuation at the higher education level, and the way these educational institutions help students of this category, as well as coping mechanisms they can utilise in dealing with the problems, including academic and personal ones.

The following are the most significant themes discovered in the data analysis:

Theme 1: Access to Resources and Educational Disruption

The rupture in their education is one of the most conspicuous issues that displaced students face as a result of their displacement. Most students claimed that displacement significantly affects their educational process, with many being forced out of their academic institutions or having to migrate to new and unfamiliar environments. This disruption was not only physically in the way they could access classrooms, but also prevented them from continuing to study.

i.   Lack of Infrastructure

Students who relocated cited poor infrastructure as a significant impediment to their education. The vast majority of institutions of higher education to which refugee students were relocated lacked adequate physical infrastructure, including classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. This compromised their educational procedures and access to key learning resources. One of the students told us how, in his case, when his university was forced to move to a refugee camp, they were taught in tents. The atmosphere was not quiet, and we lacked a good seating arrangement. Sometimes we could not find textbooks. Another student explained it, claiming that the classes were over-packed since the displacement. The institutions were in a deplorable state, and we had numerous problems locating textbooks or other academic materials.

ii.   Limited Access to Learning Resources

In addition to the issue of a lack of physical infrastructure, there was also the issue of the unavailability of learning materials. The biggest challenge was observed among most students, who complained about receiving textbooks and stationery, among other study materials. There was some discussion among others about how university and college institutions had even tried to provide materials. Still, it was often not enough to supply some of the displaced students. One of the students remarked that he had to borrow students' books, and in most cases, the students were reading outdated textbooks. It had a difficult-to-follow syllabus. The other student would tell us that we were unable to obtain the right material, especially at the time

when we were forced to stay in temporary houses. It was like an uphill struggle to get the bare essentials of education.

Theme 2: Academic Performance Characterised by Psychological Impact of Displacement.

Displacement is known to have a psychological impact on students, and this effect was one of the recurring topics raised in the interviews. The students claimed that their significant stress, anxiety, and depression were caused by emotional and mental strain of having lost their homes, families, and communities, and this negatively affected their academic studies.

i. Trauma and Emotional Distress

The trauma of displacement, which included being denied access to individual properties, homes, and familiar surroundings, was identified as one of the primary factors affecting academic performance. Students said they were obsessed with other thoughts concerning their family members, the insecurity of their future, and how life was on the ground in refugee camps or temporary shelters. 'The problem is that I could not concentrate on my studies as I continued to think about how my family was doing in the camp. Everything was gone in the flood, and even thinking about studying was difficult in my opinion,' as one of the pupils said. One other student said,' I was physically in the classroom, but psychologically, not there. I was covered with stress and anxiety from all that I had experienced. Being able to concentrate was difficult.

ii. Coping with Stress

While most students noted that they had difficulty dealing with the emotional aspect of displacement, others pointed out that they had coping mechanisms that helped them manage the stress and continue with their studies. But without mental health support services, the coping mechanisms proved to be inadequate. One student said, 'This was after trying very hard to remain positive and study, but the emotional load was hefty. I coped by communicating with my family and friends, but no actual encouragement of the mental pressure upon which we were subjected.

Theme 3: Inadequate University Support Systems

Another essential theme identified during the interviews was the lack of support offered by universities to assist displaced students. Some universities implement short-term initiatives to provide financial assistance or deadline extensions. Still, students often say that limited organisational assistance is not enough to meet the broader requirements associated with displacement.

i. Limited Financial Assistance

Many students noted that universities would provide some financial assistance; however, this was sometimes not enough to cover the higher costs resulting from displacement. Displaced students would struggle to cover accommodation, transport, and other related expenses as they attempted to meet academic demands.

As one student explained, it helped, as I received a scholarship; however, the scholarship did not cover everything I needed. I also had to borrow money from my relatives to make ends meet. Another student commented, 'Despite the university providing us with some financial aid, I still had problems with getting the required items to attend a university and transportation. '

ii. Absence of Mental Health Services

Among the gap areas, which the students detected as one of the most critical, mental health services were absent. Counselling and mental assistance were a recurring complaint among many students, as they had suffered some emotional trauma. However, the services could not be provided in many universities, and students were often left to seek emotional support

through informal networks. There had been no access to counselling or any mental health services. The emotional pressure was too heavy, and who to confide in at the university was missing, said one member. One student mentioned that this program provided mental health care, yet universities could only supply them with financial aid. Nobody appeared to know what an emotional strain we were having.

Theme 4: Coping Strategies and Resilience

Nevertheless, many displaced students were resilient and found numerous coping mechanisms to continue their learning. These coping styles were commonly supported through both formal and informal social networks, as well as personal resiliency.

i. Social Support Networks

Reliance on social support networks, such as family members, peers, and friends, was stated as one of the most effective coping strategies. According to reports from many students, emotional and academic support from family members, friends, and classmates was key to their ability to cope with academic life during displacement. One of the students told me that his family became his most excellent help. They also kept me inspired and kept me within my studies. Additionally, pupils formed study groups to support one another with tasks and manage their academic load. I had made a study group with my peers. We supported one another in assignments and motivated each other.

ii. Psychological Resilience

The great majority of students also spoke of their own resilience in the face of challenging situations and the necessity of thinking positively despite the limitations in their lives. Yet this endurance was frequently put to the test here, and few were able to support it except in a sound institutional manner. 'I always tried to be tough and remind myself of the fact that I could win despite all this. However, there came a moment when it seemed out of the question, one respondent said.

Theme 5: Academic Adaptation and Flexibility.

The displaced students claimed that flexibility in academic activities was a key factor in their own readiness to adjust to new conditions and progress further with their studies. Universities with flexible schedules, online courses, and late deadlines enabled affected students to balance their schoolwork with their displacement-related issues.

i. Flexible Learning Options

Learners were pleased that universities offered online classes, allowing them to complete them remotely in case they were unable to attend school in person. One of the students revealed that the university enabled us to have online classes, which helped me spend more time on my studies, regardless of my location at any given time.

ii. Extended Deadlines and Understanding Faculty

Many students noted the nurturing nature of the faculty members as a contributing factor in helping them cope. Professors with extended deadlines (or relaxed assignments) enabled students to handle their education obligations in a more manageable process. The professors were quite accommodating. They provided us with extra assignment and exam time, and it was a big difference, recalled one of the pupils.

Key Findings

- Displacement Causes Major Educational Barriers: Students who are displaced encounter numerous challenges when attempting to resume their schooling, including issues with infrastructure, inadequate medical support, and emotional trauma resulting from the displacement.
- Psychological Impact is Profound: This has a deep emotional and psychological effect on academic performance, so systematic treatment of the mental health of displaced students is needed.

➢ Inadequate University Support: Universities in KP provide arguably little support to displaced students, especially in terms of mental health and holistic academic support.

➢ Coping strategies and resilience are crucial: social support networks and individual resiliency can help displaced students manage the challenges they encounter in their lives. These measures, however, do not provide sufficient support without institutional reinforcement.

➢ The flexibility of the Academic Process serves to accommodate the student. Universities that are flexible in their learning processes and are aware of their faculty assist affected students in settling into their new environment and continuing their studies.

5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of both thematic and discourse analyses of interviews conducted with displaced students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) are discussed. It explains these results within the broader context of research on the effects of post-disaster displacement on higher education students. Primary analysis and themes are discussed, and the ways in which the issues in this research relate to current research outcomes, as well as university policies and practices, are highlighted. The research questions are also discussed within the framework of the larger problems that displaced students face in the region, providing a detailed breakdown of the most significant issues and the findings presented.

Interpretation of Key Findings

Educational Disruption and Access to Resources

The issue of disruption to education due to displacement was also identified as one of the most significant challenges that displaced students face in this study. This observation is consistent with past studies, which have consistently highlighted the role of displacement in hindering students' educational performance through the destruction of infrastructure and community displacement. Students in this study reported that their learning institutions were either shut down or relocated to temporary locations, none of which were conducive to education. The absence of suitable classrooms, libraries, and even basic facilities to support training essentially added to their educational difficulties.

Students, at times, had to resume learning in places that could not support learning, such as tents in refugee camps or packed classrooms. This indulgence, coupled with a deprivation of resources, poses a challenge to the other displaced students, as they are unable to participate fully in their studies. One such instance is the comment made by one of the students that we were to use tents and attend classes without any books or teaching materials. This reinforces the overall displacement effect as proposed by Morrow et al. (2018), who suggested that one of the most immediate and evident effects of displacement is the disruption of the young individual's educational trajectory.

Moreover, the availability of learning materials was also a similar topic. Many of the displaced students, who claimed that their access to textbooks and other academic learning materials was limited, cited the unavailability of these resources as a reason for not being able to continue their studies. The reason why other students can only lend them textbooks, and the consumption of old materials, was explained by other students. One of the respondents had also noticed, "I was forced to lend textbooks of other students, and in most instances the books were extremely outdated. Ahmed and Khan (2021) reinforce this theme by stating that displaced students face significant disparities in their resources, which continue to impact their academic outcomes negatively.

Psychological Impact of Displacement on Academic Performance

The displacement, however, had a psychological impact, which was another important theme. The mass of displaced KP students lamented that anxiety, depression, and trauma were draining

them in their studies. This observation is necessary to highlight the psychological and emotional burden of displacement, which can match the findings by Siddiqi et al. (2020) and Barnes (2023). The lack of a home, family, and security means that the student places a huge emotional burden on themselves and can barely concentrate on their studies.

As victims of the previously mentioned emotional pain, students were quite often in trouble in demonstrating their cognitive skills and their academic interactions. The trauma of losing our home and being transferred to a camp caused one of the students to experience a lack of focus in studying. They frequently had problems with sleep, which reflected in their ability to study. This reflects the psychological health issues experienced by displaced students, just as reported by Khan et al. (2020), who have found emotional distress to negatively affect academic performance and cognitive engagement in displaced students, due to the unpredictability of the displacement. These mental health challenges were made worse by the lack of adequate mental health services. As students mentioned that family members or friends limited them in the form of emotional support, there is a lack of institutional mental health services among many students. The above finding suggests that universities should integrate holistic psychological support into their comprehensive support systems for displaced students. As Hassan et al. (2021) and Barnes (2023) emphasised, the issue of the mental health needs of displaced students is not actively tackled at universities. It has a detrimental impact on the well-being and academic performance of students.

Inadequate University Support Systems

Among the most notable aspects of this work was the fact that the support systems universities were offering to displaced students were underwhelming. Students reported high dissatisfaction with the levels of support they received, especially in relation to financial support, academic guidance, and mental health services. Although some universities offered temporary scholarships and deadline extensions, students noted that these measures are inadequate to address the larger, overarching academic, emotional, and social burden of these situations. One student has disclosed that the university assisted in some way, but it was not in a position to cover the bill. We had trouble meeting the basic needs.

The lack of a definitive solution to support displaced students in their studies has also been noted by Rashid and Ali (2022) and Aziz and Malik (2017). Universities do not provide them with extensive support, and their strategies are not as effective in the long term. This research found poor mental health services and academic accommodation among the list of issues afflicting students. A mismatch in the availability of specialised mental health experts and counselling services in universities is one of the significant loopholes that requires swift action. They find it challenging to adjust to new academic environments because university policies do not explicitly target the accommodation of displaced students. This observation suggests that a comprehensive support framework should be established at the university, including flexibility in academic, mental, and financial support provisions, as there are individual differences among displaced students. Any of these disparities could become a significant drawback to the performance of displaced students, and addressing them would be greatly beneficial to them.

Coping Strategies and Resilience

Despite the numerous challenges faced by the displaced students in this study, they demonstrated high levels of resilience and developed several coping strategies to address the challenges they encountered. On some occasions, the student viewed the social support system, including family, friends, and peers, as key contributors to coping with both emotional and educational challenges in a displaced state. The student has mentioned that my family would keep me on track, and I would create study groups with other students to stay on track with the curriculum. Social support is one of the significant factors that have been established and

contribute to coping with academic stress and encouraging academic engagement (Ghani and Shah, 2020).

In addition to social support, psychological resilience was found to play a significant role in helping students transition out of school to adjust to the new academic arrangement. In the majority of cases, students had to acknowledge that they also possess their inner power and personal purpose, according to which they will overcome the obstacles confronting their lives after displacement. The respondent replied, 'I kept asking myself that this was not going to last long, and I needed to focus on my schooling so that I would move forward to attain a better life. The outcome is consistent with that of Zubair and Tufail (2020), who opined that one of the main factors contributing to adaptability to a new reality was the high level of resilience among the displaced students. However, even though resilience was a highly resourceful factor, students added that it was not always a sufficient aspect to deal with the complex burdens without institutional help.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The research findings have implications for university policies and practices regarding displaced students within the collegiate context. These results underscore the importance of universities being able to identify the special needs of displaced students and implement targeted support mechanisms to address both their academic and emotional needs. Regarding this matter, universities should adopt a flexible learning approach that includes the option of online learning, the possibility of starting late, and varying schedules to accommodate provisional conditions.

Additionally, without the mental services outlined in this paper, the university would also require mental health support services. This can entail counselling services, peer support networks, psychological courses, and workshops that can significantly promote the welfare and academic achievement of displaced learners. In addition, since the learning materials are not accessible, not every displaced student can continue their education and become eligible by obtaining a subsidised textbook, e-learning site, and technological gadgets to help them with it. The existence of the latter would facilitate the bridging of the education divide caused by displacement, while also empowering displaced students with the knowledge and tools to continue their education.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study offer insight into the challenges faced by relocated students pursuing further studies. These problems will be associated primarily with the education-related problems, emotional trauma due to dislocation, the lack of a university support system, and the fact that individuals have no specific adaptation coping mechanisms. Although displaced students are not particularly fragile, the study suggests that universities should implement comprehensive support schemes that cater to the specific needs of displaced individuals. This has been made possible by providing them with academic flexibility, psychological support, and learning resources, which have played a crucial role in enabling displaced students to further their education despite the challenges of not dropping out of school.

The paper focuses on the plight of displaced students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, and the context of their capacity to attain higher education despite the tragedies that have befallen them due to the consequences of disasters resulting from displacement. According to the findings of this study, displaced students face significant disadvantages in their education, primarily due to the destruction of infrastructure, limited access to learning facilities, and the psychological effects of displacement. These problems were supplemented by sabotaging institutional support, predominantly in terms of mental health and academic adjustment.

Despite all these oppositions, however, displaced students demonstrated that they were resilient enough to apply various coping strategies, as well as draw support from their social

circles and their own mental resources, which enabled them to remain strong. Nonetheless, no strategy would ever be enough without an initial institutional support. Excessive requirements on individuals demand more nuanced boundaries that are individually sensitive, as mentioned in the paper, in connection to universities. It entails offering flexibility in the delivery of learning, integrating psychological services, and subsidising the delivery of learning materials, such as textbooks, through learning e-software.

This research paper highlights that crucial policy and practice implications are necessary, as special attention should be given to the vulnerable situation of displaced students and the development of specialised support programs. The research opportunities further encompass the long-term academic success of displaced students and the effectiveness of existing support programs in providing alternative mechanisms that can positively impact the learning process of displaced populations. The displaced students require an inclusive, supportive, and flexible learning environment that nurtures and meets their learning and emotional needs, enabling them to overcome challenges and continue their studies successfully. By providing practical suggestions to scholars involved in the displacement phenomenon and presenting evidence-based proposals, the paper has added depth to the existing literature on the academic effects of displacement.

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