

Everyday Effects of Displacement and Conflict on Mothers: A Survey of Myanmar and Manipur Women FDPs in Mizoram

Feb 9, 2026

Blog post by Dr. Sweta Sen, Dr. Sneha Krishnan, Mary Songate, Lalchhanhima, Vanlafela, C. Larinsangi, ZD Lalrinfel, F. Zorinsangi and Jonathan Lalhriatpuia

Background

Mizoram, a small border state in Northeast India, is at the epicentre of a massive humanitarian crisis. The state shares its borders with [Manipur](#) and Myanmar, both of which are presently witnessing renewed violence, emanating from year-long civil and ethnic conflicts. The spillover effect is a significant influx of forcibly displaced population (FDPs), fleeing from war, persecution, and violence, taking shelter in the fifth smallest state of India. According to the latest estimates, [31,214 Myanmar nationals are currently living in Mizoram](#); meanwhile, since the onset of the ethnic conflict in 2023, over 5,500 FDPs from Manipur have also crossed into Mizoram.

Significance of the survey

While the effects of conflict-induced migration on civilians have been well documented, the implications of the phenomenon for young mothers are seldom discussed. Amid fleeing conflict and settling into a host community, the challenges they face are multifaceted and often cross the boundaries of physical, economic, and social security. Given this lacuna in research and scant attention to this issue, researchers and practitioners in O. P. Jindal Global University, the CodNerc research team in Mizoram and two independent researchers located in Indo-Myanmar border towns of Zokhawthar and Champhai conducted a household questionnaire survey with the aim of documenting the more nuanced impact of conflict-induced displacement on the everyday lives of women - thus, shedding new light on gendered consequences of protracted displacement.

Everyday shadows of war on women and young mothers

In the last 15 years, there has been a sustained effort to document the macro-effects of civil conflict-related violence; however, granular, micro-level data on how women FDPs continue with their everyday activities during transit and after settlement in host countries are limited. In other words, there is not much written on what life looks like for pregnant women and women with children fleeing war - what their needs are versus what is provided to them. To this end, we surveyed **197 women, including 88 pregnant women** between June-August 2024 to understand the everyday effects of displacement on women. The results highlight critical hardships faced by women in the FDP, ranging from severe gaps in access to healthcare and basic needs to maternal healthcare.

Key findings on unique problems faced by women FDPs

The majority of the women surveyed (45%) originated from Chin State, with Matupi Township being the most frequent place of origin for refugees. A significant number of women also came from Sagaing region, especially Myaung township and Kalembo district. We noticed that the majority of the women (79%) were the primary caregivers of their families. Some reported single-handedly taking care of family members with physical and mental disability and chronic illnesses. They required special and targeted resources, which the women lamented were difficult to obtain, resulting in an added burden on them.

In terms of health access, only 35% of pregnant women and women with children less than 5 years old reported having access to antenatal care. When asked about the barriers they face, 58% mentioned the high cost of treatment. Disturbingly, several women also reported facing discrimination at the hands of healthcare workers. The young mothers whom we interviewed reported no support for spot feeding. Spot feeding is a [government-sponsored, nutritional program](#) that offers balanced, nutritional meals to mothers and children.

Logistical reasons and lack of funds further impacted their decision to visit health care centers. While most respondents (70%) use public transport to access health services, several face logistical constraints, including significant travel distances, with over half of the respondents travelling 2-10 kilometers to a healthcare centre. In addition, many respondents reported spending between INR 500 and INR 1000 on transportation alone, indicating a significant financial burden. Others experience long waiting times (46%) or discrimination at medical facilities, while others feel that high treatment prices (58%) and transportation costs (37%) significantly delay care. These challenges worsen health outcomes because they delay getting medical attention.

The informal safety net is failing

The situation in Mizoram is dire. At present, a localised, volunteer-driven mechanism, comprising church-affiliated and youth organisations, is at the forefront of providing material aid and support to the FDPs. However, in the absence of centralized and sustained assistance, they are overburdened, severely underfunded, and failing to deal with the ever-increasing pressure of FDPs.

Ultimately, the findings reveal a rather bleak picture, i.e. protracted displacement has added a significant burden on women. In the absence of the social and community security nets they once relied on at home, their struggles have multiplied. Furthermore, their everyday struggles regarding **carework and health remain largely invisible** - too often relegated to a footnote in broader discussions of human security and refugee rights.



Church and Makeshift Community Center for Myanmar Refugees. Sihhmui Camp. Mizoram. Photo taken by CodNerc Team

The views expressed in this article belong to the author/s and do not necessarily reflect those of the [Refugee Law Initiative](#). We welcome comments and contributions to this blog - please comment below and see [here](#) for contribution guidelines.