Key Highlights:

In order to have a better understanding of the protection issues related to food assistance, a survey was conducted focusing on female beneficiaries as part of WFP’s relief food distribution in Bannu, the main area of displacement for NWA IDPs. A total of 75 females were interviewed - 53 at food distribution points and 22 in their homes. Key findings include:

- Almost all (99%) respondents mentioned that food provided by WFP is used for domestic consumption and is not sold.
- Based on food consumption scores, 56 percent of families were found to have acceptable food consumption. 43 and 3 percent of the families showed borderline and poor food consumption; respectively. Food was being shared among extended family members as well, which is likely to have affected the food consumption level.
- 13 percent of female beneficiaries have used the established Grievance Desk mechanism to record their concerns.
More than a million people have been displaced from different agencies in FATA as a result of the fragile security situation in the region. The majority of the displaced have been living in Peshawar and adjoining areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Most recently, about half a million persons have been displaced from North Waziristan as a result of ongoing security operations, and this most recently displaced population have been residing in Bannu, Peshawar and D.I. Khan. WFP has been providing food assistance to the displaced. Out of some 54,000 registered NWA displaced families assisted by WFP in September, approximately 3,100 were female headed families. This study was undertaken in order to have a better understanding on the impact of current food distribution modalities, particularly the impact on the female beneficiary population. The study was conducted by WFP in collaboration with the Protection Cluster.

Objectives:
⇒ To find out protection concerns related to female beneficiaries accessing WFP food distribution points in Bannu and potential protection risks associated with WFP programming.
⇒ To document suggestions for addressing protection concerns.

Methodology:
A field assessment team composed of six female surveyors conducted in-depth interviews with WFP beneficiaries and household members from 17-19 September, 2014. The team collected substantial qualitative information on the impact of WFP’s activities on women’s roles and responsibilities at the household level, access to distribution points, in particular access to WFP distribution points in Bannu where relief food distribution is ongoing; safety and security at distribution points; control over and use of resources (food and non-food) provided by humanitarian partners; mobility and well being; prevalence of gender-based discrimination in accessing food; and physical and emotional abuse.

The survey was conducted at three food distribution hubs and in homes of female beneficiaries receiving WFP food assistance in Bannu. A total of 53 females were interviewed at distribution points and 22 females were interviewed in their homes.

**Figure 1: Number of interviews conducted**

![Figure 1: Number of interviews conducted](image)

**Figure 2: Map of Bannu showing WFP food distribution points and locations covered by the survey**

![Figure 2: Map of Bannu showing WFP food distribution points and locations covered by the survey](image)
homes in the hosting areas in Bannu (Figures 1, 2). Although the sample size was not large, it was sufficient to provide indicative results for an understanding of the situation.

Findings:

The average family size is noted to be 6.0 and average household size, including extended family members sharing the same food, is 13.

Access to Distribution Points:

- 17 percent (17%) of the surveyed female beneficiaries were found to be receiving food package through a first blood relative receiving on their behalf, rather than collecting on their own.
- Female beneficiaries were taking a maximum average time of 80 minutes to reach the Government Commerce College Township (Bannu-3) from their places of residence.
- On average, it would take 2 hours and 39 minutes for the beneficiaries to return to their place of residence with food after leaving their homes (Table 1); this includes traveling to the distribution points (DP), waiting time for receiving food, loading food onto public transport and return journey. Female beneficiaries’ maximum time in queues was at the Government Commerce College Township (Bannu-3) at more than 1 hour.
- IDPs have to travel considerable distances and pay significant amounts for travel to reach the distribution points. On average, beneficiaries were paying PKR 300 for transportation to reach distribution points. The cost was lowest to reach Gauriwala (Bannu-5) at an average cost of PKR 40; the cost was highest to reach the Government Commerce College Township (Bannu – 3) at PKR 386.

- Initially after receiving food packages, the study showed that beneficiaries were spending significant amounts on wheel barrows to transport their food rations from inside the distribution point to the outside gate; the cost was found to range from PKR 42 to PKR 93 (Figure 3).
- The average amount paid for transportation to get food and other assistance materials from the distribution points to IDPs’ homes ranged from PKR 130 to Gauriwala DP, to PKR 750 to the Government Commerce College Township DP (Figure 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Average time for a female IDP beneficiary to access food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to reach the DP from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in queues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to load food onto public transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time to return home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Safety and security at distribution points:

Three quarters of the female beneficiaries interviewed mentioned that they feel safe coming to the DPs. For those who reported not feeling safe, the following reasons were cited: (i) travel to distribution point is not safe (ii) inconvenient for elderly, disabled, and pregnant and lactating women (iii) some IDP families live very far and high transportation costs.

In-depth discussions were held with female beneficiaries on how the distribution process can be improved further in order to provide assistance in a safer, more dignified manner. Suggestions (Figure 5) included having an option of receiving cash (36% of respondents), organizing food distribution at the community level (31%), separate days for distribution to females (19%), and separate support/grievance desks for females (14%). Issues reported by the respondents regarding access to the distribution points are summarized below:
73 percent of the female beneficiaries are aware of the distribution times and locations.

Discussion on the cultural context revealed that female beneficiaries are confined in purdah and are generally shunned from any decision-making roles. Females from female headed households travel alone to receive their food rations which remains a significant cultural challenge. Also as a result of cultural mores, voicing opinions and seeking assistance in general, remains a challenge for female IDPs from NWA.

Overall, 17 percent of the surveyed female beneficiaries indicated that they send their male relatives to collect food on their behalf. This proportion was higher among females surveyed in hosting locations, where six out of 22 females interviewed (27%) said that they send their relatives to collect food.

Overall, 12 percent of the respondents reported that they do not receive an adequate share of the food package at home.

5 percent of the respondents reported illegal collection of money, e.g. security personnel sitting at the main gate of the DPs demanding payment during the first month of distribution/registration.

One respondent mentioned that she felt discriminated against during the distribution process.

**Grievance desk (GD) redressal mechanism:**

13 percent of the beneficiaries have used the GD mechanism to record their complaints pertaining to registration issues, food quality and quantity, distribution processes related to female beneficiaries, and high amounts of transport cost to get food.

More than 80 percent of the female beneficiaries were not aware of how to record their grievances or call WFP’s online beneficiaries feedback mechanism to ask a question or make a complaint.

During in-depth discussions it was suggested by female beneficiaries to improve the efficiency of the redressal mechanism.

### Table 2: Barriers in accessing to distribution point by female beneficiaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not aware if females can access the DP</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community elders do not allow</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members do not allow</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another male member could collect the food on our behalf</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/ Pardah issues</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff at distribution point is not good</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army/ media</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Use of food assistance:**

- Almost all respondents (99%) mentioned that they are getting and using WFP food items in their daily routine.
- None of the female beneficiaries reported selling food items.
- On the question of who makes decisions in the family on the use/allocation of food assistance provided by WFP, half of the respondents reported that it is the men who make this decision. 25 percent of respondents reported that it is the women who make this decision, while another 25 percent reported that both men and women are involved in this decision making. Men make the decision in 50 percent of the families.
- Two-thirds (65%) of the female respondents mentioned they know about the use of Wheat Soya Blend (WSB).

Table 3 shows the average number of days different food commodities from the WFP food package were used by families.

### Table 3: Use of WFP Food Package (Average number of days in a month)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat flour</td>
<td>21 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable Ghee</td>
<td>12 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Soya Blend</td>
<td>18 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow split peas</td>
<td>21 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Food consumption and coping practices:**

The food consumption score (FCS) is one of the most commonly used indicators to capture household food security, illustrating the adequacy of overall food consumption patterns. The FCS measures food diversity (the types of food consumed), food frequency (the number of days each group is consumed), and the relative nutritional importance of each food group. Based
on a one-week recall by the respondents on the food consumed within the household, and using standard thresholds, households are classified into one of the three groups, namely, “acceptable” food consumption, “borderline” food consumption, and “poor” food consumption. From the analysis of the food consumption data from the household survey (Figure 6), overall, 41.6 percent of the households were found to have “acceptable” food consumption, while 6.6 percent fell in the “poor” consumption, while the majority (51.8%) were shown to have “borderline” levels of consumption.

**Figure 6: Food Consumption Score (FCS)**

![Food Consumption Score](image)

One fourth of the respondents have engaged in negative coping strategies to manage their daily food needs. Among those, the most common ones (Figure 7) include skipping meals (63%), relying on less preferred foods (58%), and restricting consumption by adults to ensure their children eat properly (42%). Other negative coping strategies, though seen with somewhat less frequency include seeking alternative/additional jobs (37%), limiting portion size at meals (32%), removing children from school (16%), skipping meals for an entire day (11%) and selling domestic assets (5%).

**Figure 7: Negative coping strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sell domestic assets</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skip meals for entire day</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove children from school</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit portion size at meals</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek alternative or additional jobs</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict consumption by adults</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rely on less preferred/ less expensive food</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skip meals</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best practices by IP staff:

WFP, with its cooperating partners, has adopted a number of measures to strengthen gender mainstreaming across all levels of its NWA response. Efforts are focused on creating an enabling environment for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in food and nutrition security. These measures include the provision of female-exclusive entrances and waiting areas for female beneficiaries and also the presence of female staff at distribution points, all of which were clearly noted by female beneficiaries during the course of this assessment.

**Figure 8: Overall satisfaction of female beneficiaries**

![Overall satisfaction](image)

Overall satisfaction:

Females were asked about their overall satisfaction with WFP’s assistance and 69 percent responded that they were satisfied overall, while 19 percent were extremely satisfied. Some 11 percent were somewhat dissatisfied and 1 percent (one respondent) was very dissatisfied (Figure 8).

Limitations of the assessment:

The survey aimed to target 100 families but it was very challenging to reach IDP families in the hosting areas. Some of the contact numbers were unresponsive, some IDP families did not allow the survey team to visit, and some were living in the Frontier Region (FR) area of Bannu, which is difficult to access. Thus it was only possible to survey 75 percent of beneficiaries in total. However, these findings do provide an important indication and shed a critical light on the situation.
Recommendations:

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings from this survey:

- Provision of food directly to the community level for females with specific vulnerabilities (such as pregnant and lactating, disabled, or chronic diseases).
- Increased community mobilization for facilitating better access for females at distribution points, and encourage females to make use/benefit from the Grievance Desks and WFP’s online Beneficiary Feedback Mechanism.
- Gender awareness training for relevant staff members as well as security and other related personnel.
- In-depth study on the impact of WFP activities on gender dynamics at the household and community level.
- Initiating activities focussed on providing female beneficiaries additional cash through skills or trainings.