Challenges of Food Distribution Process for Internally Displaced Persons in Non-governmental Organizations: An Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

This ethnographic discourse highlights the problems and challenges of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) at the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as explores the food distribution procedure. At the same time, the study also exposes the intolerance of international and national NGO employees and workers because the rights of IDPs are not protected during the food distribution process. The real effort of the international agencies is to manage and rehabilitate the situation of ceasefire from conflict circumstance to the relief settlement. The study used an ethnographic inquiry method in district Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, depending upon two key consultants and one focus group interview as well as one focus group discussion with a total of twenty (n=20) participants. The interview guide was used for the data collection. The data were analyzed through NVivo 12 Plus software and also manually analyzed with inductive thematic analysis approach with open coding, noting repeated themes, keywords, and critical events interpreted into different categories. The study concludes that the IDPs were not satisfied with the aid/food distribution procedures of NGOs. It was recommended that the government should evaluate the role of NGOs with the help of district social welfare officers and conduct descriptive research regarding the food distribution process.

Keywords: Foods Distribution Procedure; National and International Agencies; Ethnographic Study; IDPs.

1. Introduction

The efforts of international NGOs have resolved conflicts, handled emergency situations, managed hunger, and provided food and shelter to the IDPs. These NGOs assisted displaced persons in severe critical circumstances of earthquakes. ceasefires emergency, war. and (Karampini, 2023: Sriskandarajah, 2016). The situation of conflicts was resolved and settled by international NGOs. The study found that international donors provide a broad economic development throughout the critical level of situation

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(Bamoshmoosh, 2023; Boonpunth & Saheem, 2022). At that particular time, food aid was provided to international donors to help IDPs. Due to international donors hard work the process of peace sustained among global communities (Richmond et al., 2023). IDPs challenges and problems during conflict have rapidly become a highly critical phenomenon around the world. It is solved with the cooperation and support of international donors, even though they take part directly in inter-regional and inter-conflict negotiations, providing food and aid to the affected people. Similarly, many international agencies are involved in managing displaced people and rehabilitating them during the ceasefire, from conflict circumstances to relief settlement (Nyabera, 2023; Russo & Zambelli, 2023). The World Food Program (WFP, 2006) distributed food during specific times. The first problem was the timing coordination of employees with stakeholders during the food distribution. For instance, the WFP needed to be awarded with the timing of food distribution. Secondly, there was a shortfall of food, drinking water, pulses, oil, shelter, and wheat. These challenges sometimes directly affect IDPs and WFP employees.

2. Study Purpose and Justification

This study is designed to explore the prospects and challenges of IDPs during food distribution by the NGOs. The significant role of NGOs is to resolve internal and external conflicts and provide food to the affected people in different countries. The purpose of the study is to see whether these NGOs truly facilitate the people in Pakistan while they are motivated. On the other hand, the study will guide the NGOs that how to distribute food and its timing procedure for IDPs. As a result, the IDPs will be aware of the food distribution procedure of NGOs and resolve misconceptions related to them.

3. Problem Statement

The problem is more difficult to specify due to the satisfaction level of IDPs with the food distribution procedure of NGOs. For example, Bamidele and Pikirayi (2023) found that governments and NGOs need to satisfy their stakeholders in the context of food and aid distribution. The study of Khai (2023) explained that the NGOs do not take personal benefit from the food aid and also try to provide their services to the beneficiaries in the global world. Handling IDPs is a problem and a long-standing challenge for the community. As the people do not trust the government and NGOs due to dishonesty, lawlessness, and unfairness, it could be a big hurdle for them to work with IDPs. The study tried to resolve the difficulty of food distribution by exploring the narrative of IDPs in the context of governments and NGOs.

4. Research Design

The study collected data through qualitative research inquiry, and the method was ethnography. The study used a subjective theoretical framework with an emic perspective. Mason (2005) refers that emic perspective develop insider viewpoint regarding any phenomenon or situation. The emic philosophy is

always focused on the specific culture and project where it is working. The study nominated research participants with the help of key consultants. Data was gathered with the help of an interview guide from participants. Every participant was consulted with focus group interview (FGI) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The population of the study was district Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The total sample size of the research was twenty-two (n=22) participants (two key consultants, one FGDs with seven IDPs participants, one FGI with seven IDPs participants and six interview with NGOs employee). The study participants were between 30 and 60 years old, and only two key consultants were educated, and their age was under thirty. The religion of the IDPs was Sunni Islam, and they were involved in different occupation.

The participants were recruited using snowball and convenience sampling methods for the data collection. The key consultant was taken from IDPs, who resided near the non-governmental organization. The interviews were recorded in Mandarin (mother tongue) because it allowed the interviewees to express their in-depth thoughts completely. A comfortable room was arranged for the FGIs and FGDs, and no one interfered during the interview session.

All of the FGI and FGDs were conducted with IDP participants from January 2023 to November 2023. These interviews were recorded on mobile phones and then transcribed in the English language; some of the accurate verbatims were quoted in the Pashto language and also translated into English language. Both; FGI and FGDs, were collected through an interview guide, which consisted of unstructured questions. The data was analyzed through NVivo 12 Plus Software and inductive thematic analysis approach was applied. Themes, categories, open codes were noted and then frequency and percentage of the codes were read and separately noted. All the FGI and FGDs contents were translated into open coding, relevant meanings of the themes, keywords, and key events were interpreted into different categories. This particular innovative research process was designed to explore the challenges of food distribution procedures among NGOs.

Several qualitative methodological authors concluded that open code comes directly from the interview data, and these codes are then used wordfor-word and regularly to know individuals' in-depth information (Berg, 2004; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The members of IDPs narrated about the food related satisfaction, food distribution procedure, food distribution timing, NGOs food quantity, needs of IDPs, mismanagement, misbehave of NGOs employee, harsh language, human rights violation, moral ethics, and bribery. Understanding IDPs' food related issues, prospectus, challenges, and distribution process were the main deductive codes of the study.

The pseudonyms were used for the participants in this study. The data of the study was too complex, and it was transcribed in the form of FGDs and FGI. The FGDs and FGI were conducted to correct the record and write pseudonyms for the participants during the interview. Based on the research ethics, interviewees generally referred to IDPs as "respondents" in the study. For example, the researchers have also given pseudonyms to the FGDs participants, such as "Statement1" to "Statement7" in the study. Similarly, all of the FGI participants were labeled like "Statement1" to "Statement7". Lastly, interview participants were labeled with "Statement1" to "Statement6" in the study.

5. Results and Key Findings

The systematic consideration of data transcription was done based on the renegotiation and solution perspectives of IDPs and NGOs personnel regarding food distribution procedure and challenges. There were four big themes (such as, problem identification, perceptions, problem focus, recommended changes and problem solution). Furthermore, several categories, and codes were embedded (for example, language and communication barriers, violation of rights, harsh language, discrimination, and ethical challenges). The researchers primarily focused on the solution perspective of the problem with the emic perspective of IDPs, that how non-governmental organization deals with their beneficiaries during food distribution, and what was the procedure of distribution (RASHAN). Based on these findings, the study suggests that the IDPs take food or aid and how it creates problem. The details of the main categories and codes solution are depicted in the Figure 1.

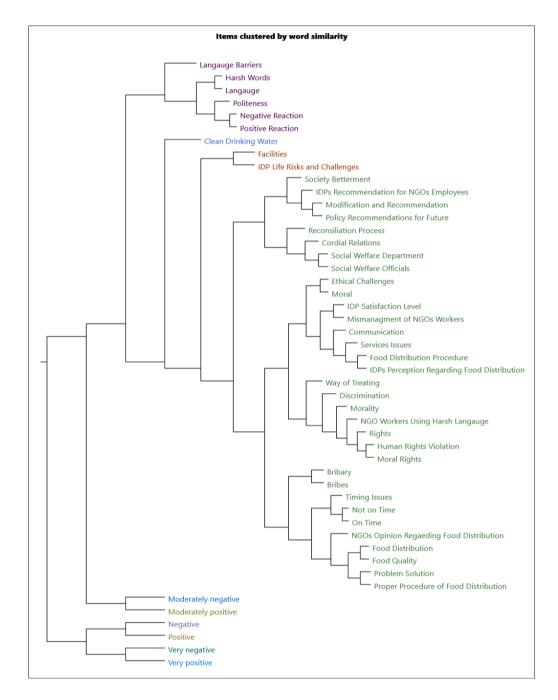
What are internally displaced persons' perceptions about the nongovernment organization food/aid distribution process?

To understand how IDPs perceive food distribution procedures in nongovernment organizations as an issue and all the specific codes as well as its percentage are portrayed in the Figure 2.

Statment1: I learned harsh language from the NGO workers while taking aid, "I told him that we should not use such type of language with us because we are selected by the governments for taking aid. And your organization will give us aid. It is our moral right." And he said get out of the organization, "then I came out silently from that place," and said, "kha (OK)."

Statement5: How would we consider that NGOs are treating other IDPs well? (Focus Group Discussions)

The one indicative complaint across all the groups of IDPs was the food distribution procedure. All of the participants strongly objected to the food distribution procedure, people taking bribes during the distribution of foods, unethical behavior, communication problems, rights violations, harsh language, metric employees, clean drinking water planning, low employee satisfaction, discrimination, and ethical issues. Further, the participants also informed that the non-governmental organization personnel use abusive language during the food distribution process, and sometimes IDPs do not understand the language of employees/workers. People give bribes while taking food from the workers, and some IDPs spend whole nights for their turn to bring food. The security guards of the NGOs also misbehaved. The workers of NGOs use harsh language and more frustrating situations for IDPs. In addition, there are many incidents of violations of human rights.





Several participants commented that there is a level of discrimination in the food distribution process in the NGOs. As a result, it is evident that "RASHAN" is taken by approaching very quickly, and several participants turn shifted to the next day. The NGO personnel should connect with the social welfare department; the social welfare department registers all the IDPs through registration and then provides RASHAN. The IDPs were unsatisfied with the organization because their management was not cooperative and supportive. The goals of the NGOs are to satisfy the IDPs instead. Clean drinking water is a big problem; the organization should provide water to the IDPs.

"I think it is worse that NGO workers used harsh language towards us, and we were not treated as human beings. Further I answer from that I am not satisfied with the NGOs food distribution process."

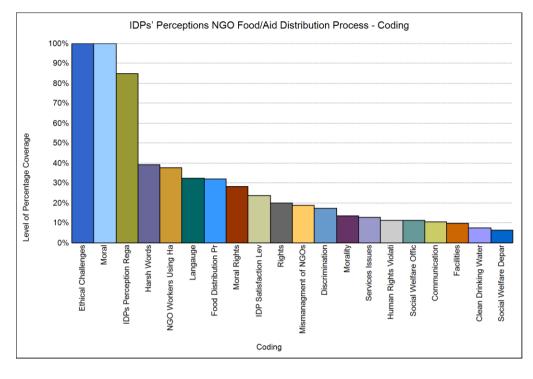
"In previous NGOs, social welfare officers were present; they counseled all the IDPs."

"I never ever had seen such a type of discrimination and harsh language in my life. These personnel always hurt us, so our belief about NGOs was negative. Whenever I queue up then, all the aid is given to us in 5 minutes, but nowadays, we have passed the whole day and night, and the participants have shifted to another day. Therefore, that is why I am not satisfied with the food distribution process of this NGO."

The IDPs believe that new NGO workers offer morning and evening shifts for the distribution of aid, but these NGOs are limited to the morning; the frustration of the IDPs is increasing due to the lack of services (food distribution procedure) and facilities (water, shelter during rainy days, chairs for disabled person, reserve seats for old displaced person). The participants simply agreed that services should be given to IDPs within a fixed time.

Other negative factors are ethical challenges, but trainers should teach communication to the NGO workers about the code of ethics, aid distribution process, and elderly IDPs' responsibility. Politeness should be the first priority of NGO workers and employees.

"I am bored taking aid from the organization, but I am poor and need help to afford my family's food-related expenditures. There should be a good and easy procedure to take. I have passed these challenging circumstances for a few weeks and am still coming from the Kurram agency."





Problem Identification from the Viewpoint of NGOs and IDPs (Focus Group Discussions)

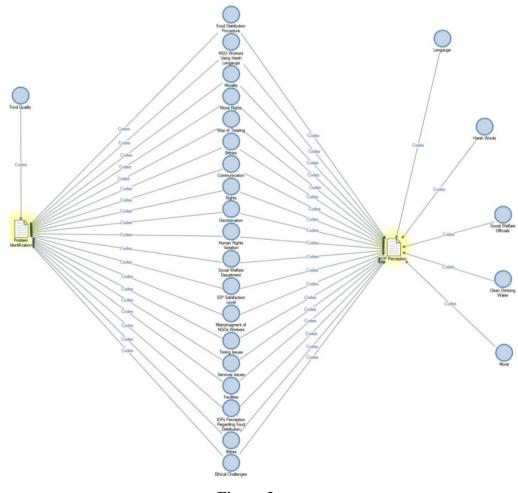
As referred to antecedently, Statement1 self-characterized that there was mismanagement among the organization's employees. Similarly, Statement2 opposed and said that the aid distribution process was acceptable for IDPs. The food quality was good, and NGOs changed the food distribution process for the IDPs. The participants of the study suggested that the organization's responsibility is to recruit professional employees for the food distribution process, skilled laborers, polite communication, non-violation of rights of IDPs, provide clean drinking water and shelter for night passing (some IDPs pass the whole night taking food and aid. The study findings suggest three themes: such as, (1) no IDP rights violations during the food/aid distribution process, (2) providing basic facilities to IPDs, and (3) NGOs recruiting professional employees. Furthermore, Figure 3 has shown the comparison between problem identification and IDP perception regarding food/aid distribution process.

The one indicative complaint across all the group members of IDPs was the procedure of food distribution. The participants told that the food distribution procedure, bribes from IDPs, timing, unethical behavior of NGOs workers and violation of rights have disheartened IDPs. On the other hand, NGO workers behaved like uneducated and unskilled workers. Moreover, there was no clean drinking water, no satisfaction regarding food. Lastly, the NGOs workers were using harsh language, gender discrimination, and unethical behavior with IDPS. As conclusion, problem identification coding was portrayed in Figure 4 with proper details and percentage. The participant real verbatim is produces below:

Statment1: I have experienced harsh language from the NGOs worker during taking aid and food, I told him that do not use such type of language with us, because we are selected by the governments for taking aid and your organization will give us food/aid. It is our duty to follow moral ethics during communication. And NGOs employee said get out from the organization, "then I came out silently from that place, and I said, OK.

Statment5: Replied that I was present in that particular time. I was silent and told to IDP member that such type of situation is going during food taking time".

Statment4: So, it's clear that food items are quality wise not good, and the aid distribution procedure was not satisfactory.





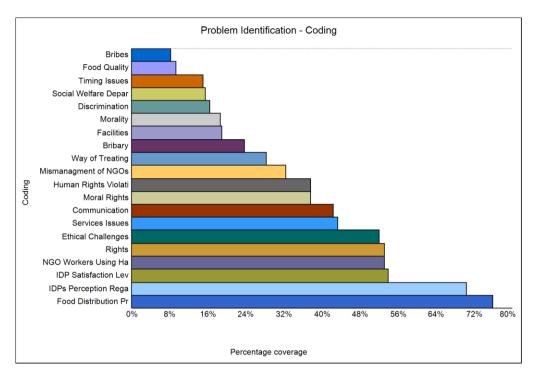


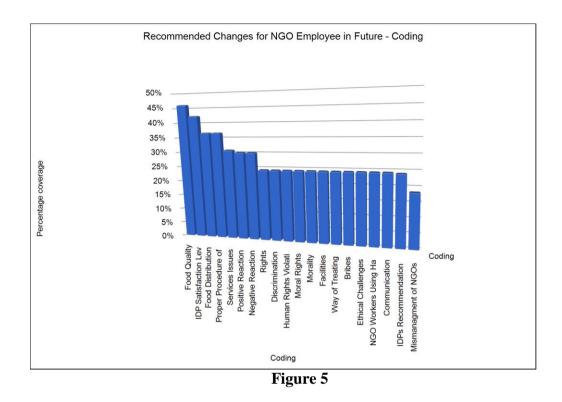
Figure 4

6. Recommended Changes for NGO Employee in Future

It is clear from the responses and discussions that the internally displaced persons pointed out that there should be proper procedures for the food distribution. In brief, the IDP's reaction was very adverse regarding NGO personnel and employees. Recommended changes fall into a few major categories: customer service, facility, communications, and discrimination in the turn of the food distribution process, use of harsh language during the distribution of aid, and NGOs improving the food quality. Furthermore, IDPs stated that different propaganda was established about the NGOs. Therefore, it is apparent from the above discussion that professionals, security guards, workers, employees, and personnel of the NGOs changed their procedure regarding food distribution procedure. All the NGOs in the world bring development to the lives of individuals and distribute good quality food with proper standard procedures and methods among IDPs.

It is to be noted that food/aid quantities were enough per month among different families of IDPs. Participants disclosed that the amount of food should increase because it is not enough for the family members. Stament4 nominated that we want a satisfactory quantity of food from the NGOs. The NGO personnel should give us better food quality and enough quantity. Interestingly, "MASHARAN" (IDP conflict resolution members are called MASHARAN) were working to resolve the conflict among IDPs and NGO personnel. In conclusion, the study recommended that NGO employees should minimize service and facility issues in the future (see Figure 5).

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7. Interview with NGOs Employees for Cross Validation

The ethnographic inquiry shares how NGO employees deal with IDPs when they provide aid and food to beneficiaries (IDPs). The narrative description was taken from the NGO employees inside the organization.

Statment1: How do you give food or aid to the IDPs?

Statment2: What are your attitudes during distribution of aid and food (RASHAN). Is it polite or not, explain in detail?

Statment3: What do you know about human rights violation? Do you know your duty as a NGOs employee?

Statment4: The IDPs described that NGOs employee are not behaving like human beings. Is it right or wrong? Answered: Wrong, not at all! "No doubt and you can ask all about my behavior with IDPs, and their answer will be the same, just like we commented.

Statment5: What is the timing of the aid and food distribution? Answer: The IDPs narrated that NGO workers said that they called us to shut up and that we're not human, but we are animals. We are giving you food; no one can do it!

Statment6: How do you communicate with IDPs? Is it polite or harsh language? One of the IDPs stated that an NGO employee

told me I am not using good communication, and it is my way of tone. Are you teaching me a good form of communication?

The NGO participants were interviewed, and the discussion started with the topic of food distribution procedures and processes. NGOs are good organizations, and their employees behave well, as well as security guards. One of the respondents also shared information about the IDPs' behavior. Every day, social welfare officers come to see the food distribution process of NGOs. Social welfare officers checked the quality of food every day. The role of NGOs is to contribute toward society's betterment, and we cannot violate the rights of IDPs. Participants replied that communication barriers between employees and IDPs are there because most IDPs are uneducated. The team of the NGOs is well educated, and they know the systematic way of food distribution, as well as handling food-related distribution procedures and quality.

Similarly, the participant replied that polite behavior is the core quality. The timing of the food and aid distribution is fixed, and 800 IDPs should be given food on time. Furthermore, the NGO employees started food distribution from 8:30 PM up to 3:30 AM. The head of the NGOs stated that 7:00 to 8:00 IDPs are the target of NGOs per day (see Figure 6). The accurate verbatim of the participants.

Statment4: As an employee of NGOs, I try to control gender discrimination during the food distribution process. The IDPs are increasing day by day, and it is hard to maintain the "RASHAN" distribution process.

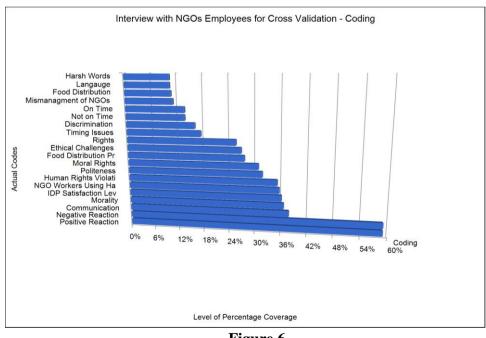


Figure 6

8. NGOs Employees and IDPs Opinion Regarding Problem Solution

The focus group interview focused on problem solutions from the perspective of NGO employees and IDPs. The organization and its personnel will incorporate the recommendations of the IDPs and change the food distribution procedure and food quality. Similarly, NGOs would attract and maintain the IDPs satisfaction through high facilities and services. Although few participants were satisfied with the present food or aid distribution process, their attitudes were positive regarding IDPs. Similarly, the process of negation could entirely change the food distribution process and quality of food for IDPs. The NGO workers will be trained and forbidden to use harsh language. As a result, the employee would affirm that NGO workers and employees would behave well with IDPs.

The participants suggested that the organization and its personnel draw attention to food distribution procedures and maintain the quality of food. IDPs should be facilitated with a high level of satisfaction. However, two participants were unsatisfied with the food distribution process because the NGO worker's attitude was not polite. As a result, three participants were relatively easy to aid in the distribution process and food quality. The majority of the participants concluded that the workers are still using harsh language. Therefore, the nature of the NGO workers' and employees' behavior could have been more satisfactory.

The participants replied that workers' language was a problem for the ethnic groups IDPs, such as Khyber, Kurram, and Orakzai agencies. In conclusion, NGOs should hire employees who speak the same language mentioned above. The key consultant said that queue-up is better for everyone and there should be one IDP from the Khyber, Kurram, and Orakzai agencies, and he can communicate with organizational personnel. Similarly, a key consultant stated that NGO workers should learn Khyber, Kurram, and Orakzai agency languages for smooth communication.

The key consultant prescribed that the beneficiaries (IDPs) could get food aid on time if NGOs started food distribution process early in the morning. Key Consultant2 concurs: Many NGOs have done work on IDPs and succeeded in their mission because their quality of aid and distribution procedure was reliable and valid. For instance, some International NGOs deal with IDPs more politely; using good communication, a high level of cooperation, punctuality in duties, and working with sincerity, but these NGOs are not performing their duties properly. Furthermore, participants suggest that NGO employees and IDPs should negotiate the aid distribution procedure with each other and find out the best solution for both beneficiaries. International societies support individuals with a solidarity viewpoint. NGO workers should change their behavior and attitude towards the IDPs. It can improve the performance of the NGOs and could be helpful for their subordinates. Thus, NGO employees and beneficiaries can work to enhance the IDP, and the problem can be resolved. According to the old IDP, the livelihood of the IDP is at risk, and NGOs should work on top priority to manage these crises, such

as providing adequate food and housing, a reliable food distribution process, and local goods and services. These are some critical problems that should be solved by the NGOs, and policymakers should collaborate with social welfare organization officials to solve the problem for IDPs.

Few participants decided that NGO workers should get together with IDPs and solve the problem of the food distribution process. For example, NGO employees should go out with IDPs, share their problems, and decide on solutions. It is recommended that NGO workers be polite in their communication with IDPs and increase aid distribution timing. As a result, the NGO workers can solve the current issues and provide food to the IDPs on time. Furthermore, the NGO worker makes efficient policies for food distribution, which is visible to every IDP. The actual words of the respondent...

"It's just having a good time that we make good relations and bilateral experiences. If we do not share our problems and issues with one another, then we will not journey on that one train or bus. I think we can reach the solution this way and counter these problems with proper reconciliation and get together".

Reestablishing cordial relations between NGO employees and IDPs can resolve the mismanagement during food distribution. Instead, the interference of social welfare officers can easily make good policies for the food distribution process and determine the ongoing issue. It is clear from the previous discussion that a proper method for aid distribution in NGOs is needed, and it has created a problem for both beneficiaries. The involvement of the social welfare officers developed a highly cordial relationship between NGO employees and IDPs. Similarly, social welfare officers trained NGO employees and modified their behavior, attitude, and communication towards the IDPs. Social welfare officers are sure that the food distribution project was run smoothly, and that quality food was distributed among the IDP. In conclusion, the social welfare officers satisfied IDPs with the aid/food distribution procedure and resolved the issue between NGO workers and IDPs. The coding of the IDPs and NGOs opinions are mentioned in Figure 7.

9. Discussion

Throughout the world, NGOs solve the problems of IDPs which is the broad aim of bringing peace and stability to the particular affected society. These NGOs are UNHCR, UN, UNICEF, WHO, and USAID (Missoni & Alesani, 2023; Ramirez, 2023). The primary purpose is to promote human rights and resolve their problems in real life. If these NGOs could not fulfill the needs of the IDPs or vulnerable people in society, then their lives would be in danger (Hujale, 2023; Staub et al., 2023). For example, Osdoby (2007) finds that successful NGOs are those that effectively utilize available resources among the affected people with proper systematic procedures. Similarly, Richmond et al. (2023) specify that NGOs should address all the serious issues related to the food distribution process. As a result, the personnel should use strategic planning for the distribution process and involve IDPs in the food distribution decision-making process.

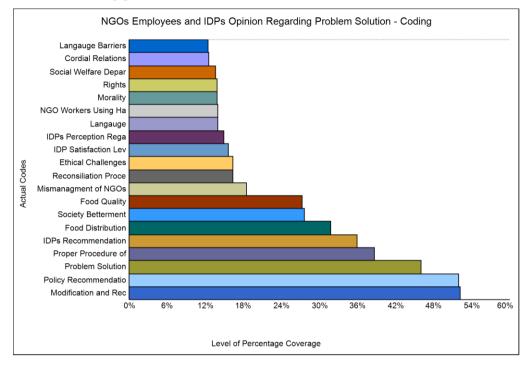


Figure 7

The present study finds that the IDPs are not satisfied with the food distribution methodology, and NGOs provide quality food. Likewise, Khai (2023) study proposed that beneficiary involvement in decision-making is the holistic approach to solving the problems and challenges of IDP. In general, NGO employees always try to address the problem of vulnerable IDPs during emergencies (Boye & Uba, 2022; Russo & Zambelli, 2023). Specifically, IDP problems and issues should be minimized during the food distribution process. For example, the issue of the IDP's house, social needs, food, and healthcare are the primary duties of global societies (Bamoshmoosh, 2023; Ekoh et al., 2022). As a result, the current study suggests to improve the management system regarding the food distribution process and also promote the relationship between beneficiaries (IDPs) and employees (NGOs).

10. Conclusion

The research study focuses on the food distribution procedures from the emic perspective of IDPs, such as the food and aid distribution process, the quality of food, employee behavior, management, and the timing of food distribution, services, and facilities. The study suggests a quick solution from the perspectives of both NGO employees and IDPS. The study was limited to studying IDPs and their food distribution procedure or process which is very difficult to answer. The NGOs should provide aid (RASHAN) to IDPs within a specific time and use polite language with them. IDPs faced problems and hurdles regarding employee behavior, per family quantity of foods, quality of foods, and discrimination during food taking. The attitude of the security guards is vicious with the IDPs (e.g., scolding, angry rebuke, reprimand, and

foods, and discrimination during food taking. The attitude of the security guards is vicious with the IDPs (e.g., scolding, angry rebuke, reprimand, and harsh language), and communication barriers should be removed between security guards and IDPs. The study recommends that social welfare officers and the heads of the NGOs should plan an awareness strategy for the employees who use polite language, receiving protocols, and adopt ethical manners when communicating with the IDPs. Lastly, the NGOs should hire skilled employees and laborers, educate personnel, and provide pure and clean drinking water and proper shelter during rainy and summer season. The duties of the employees should be clear and transparent and make strategic plans to overcome mismanagement during food distribution among IDPs.

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