

## **ABSTRACT**

The emergence of Complex Humanitarian Emergencies (CHEs) has fundamentally changed the understanding of contemporary armed conflicts. CHEs are the intersection of massive political, social, economic, health, and security problems that are linked to large-scale violent conflict and cause humanitarian crises. They tend to crop up in places where the state institutions have not developed or have been worn down or have become overwhelmed by the strength, extent, and magnitude of these problems. Moreover, most violence is mostly directed against civilians. The 'complexity' refers to the multidimensional responses provided by the international community, including actors both, global and local, public and private. There is an urgent need of addressing the concept legally in order to establish a legal policy that can govern emergency response and can reduce its harming effects.

CHEs defy the existing dichotomy between International Armed Conflicts and Non-International Armed Conflicts, thus challenging the application of international humanitarian law. This thesis has thus attempted to locate the sources of response mechanisms to CHEs and determine the protection accorded to its victims. It concludes that the existing framework of international humanitarian law does not formally include complex humanitarian emergencies, and hence there is no mechanism available to deal with it. However international humanitarian law accords and affords protection of civilian victims of war and armed conflict. Since armed conflicts are the primary source of disruption in CHEs, its victims are entitled to get the protection of IHL as part of the civilian population. However, the existing framework needs to evolve and develop in the light of the new challenges presented by CHEs so that the existing gaps and lacunas can be filled up.