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Human Security Dilemma: An analysis from the perspective of Armed Conflict

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Abstract

The concept of Human Security is a multifaceted Concept. The non-traditional dimension of security which basically focussed on humanitarian notions of security confronted with lots of contestation with the concept of state security and provided the bases for the development of the concept like human security. But the very idea of human security has been contested in an ethnically defined plural society. Armed conflict has direct impact in the whole discourse of human security. After the end of cold war the possibilities of Armed violence has been proliferating in different regions of the world in diverse socio-political context. Different incidence of armed violence created a culture of total violence which undermines the very notion of human security.

Key Words: *Human Security dilemma, ethnic contestation, Armed conflict.*

Introduction: The traditional notion of security perceives on national security which according to them automatically ensure people's security. As a result there always exist the process of synchronization between state security and human security from traditional dimension of security perspective. Of late such perception of security has been contested as because the meaning of secure state is completely different from the idea of secure people. Infact in some cases, the state which is regarded as security provider; used to be the source of threat and insecurity. Therefore, the concept of security has undergone a paradigmatic shift which led to the emergence of various terms like – 'comprehensive security', 'co-operative security', 'human security', 'common security' etc (Dutta, 2009).

The concept of human security was introduced by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is a very broad and comprehensive concept aiming at human growth, development and security. Human Security is an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities and its objective is to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long term human fulfilment (Wikipedia). The human security framework is a valuable tool and moral goal which can realise human rights and human dignity from illusionary to reality.

India's north-east has been heavily affected by armed conflict. The state of Assam has also witnessed different conflict situations. Underdevelopment, poor governance urge to protect own cultural identity and a deep sense of deprivation among the people are the root cause of conflict in the state. These conflicts have created a culture of violence in the state and democratic norms have been violating by both state and non-state actor. In order to tackle various conflicting situations the state has adopted various counter-detect method and the existence of a number of oppressive laws has further aggravated the situation. The conflict resolution mechanism adopted by the state has caused greater insecurity for the common people and security dilemmas arises.

Conceptual tool of Human Security: Analysing points on Security, Melly C. Anthony has summarised- "In its broadest form, Human Security takes the concept of Security beyond the traditional defence and military orientation to include the threats and security concerns of individuals and communities, for they have become the new Security referents other than the state." (Melly, 2004). Human Security school recognizes the 'state' as the ultimate security provider. In this context, Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh and Anuradha M. Chenoy have argued, "State is the ultimate organizational institution at the national and international level, and remains the dominant security referent even within the human security framework. It remains the most legitimate actor for providing traditional security to its people, in the traditional Hobbesean Social Contract." (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007).

Dr Mahbub- Ul Haq first drew global attention to the concept of human security in the United Nations Development Programme's 1994 Human Development Report and sought to influence the UN's 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen (Wikipedia). The report urged that the concept of security must change in two ways (Mahanta, 2010).

-> From an exclusive stress on territorial security to a much greater stress on People's Security.

-> From security through armaments to security through sustainable human development.

The UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report's definition of human security argues that the scope of global security should be expanded to include threats in seven areas. These are – Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, Personal Security, Community Security and Political Security. Since then, human security has been receiving more attention from the key global development institutions, such as the World Bank.

In analysing security discourse the notion of Human Security is based on two mutually compatible notions – "Freedom from fear" and "Freedom from want" . The former notion focuses on reducing human costs of violent conflict and the latter stresses on the ability of individuals and societies to be free from a broad range of non-military threats such as poverty, diseases and environmental degradation.

The paradigms of human security dilemma gather attention in the writings of Dwight D. Eisenhower. He basically focussed upon human insecurity in conflict prone areas due to armed violence. For Eisenhower,

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.

In different occasions, human security has been placed differently. In some cases, it can be presented as a strategy of the governments to address basic human needs and as an understanding conceptual framework for providing social security to people belonging to marginal section. Human Security is thus a significant concept and make it as a crucial instrument of a just world.

Some of the political and economic analyst criticise the western societies for enforcing this new paradigms i.e human security upon the non-western basically third world countries. Like liberalism, according to the critiques, human security is also a values which to impose upon non-western societies by so-called imperialist focus due to individualistic ethos of liberal democracy.

To protect people from threats to their lives, livelihoods and dignity, both Japan and Canada have played key roles in promoting human security in the international community. There are lot of goals projected by Commission on Human Security to be achieved by all member and non-member state of United Nations Organization

1. To promote public understanding, engagement and support of human security and its underlying imperatives.
2. To develop the concept of human security as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation; and
3. To propose a concrete programme of action to address critical and pervasive threats to human security.

Commission on Human Security offers two general strategies for human security realisation: protection and empowerment. The Report of the Commission on Human Security outline a number of policy initiatives---

- a. Protecting people in violent conflict.
- b. Protecting people from the proliferation of arms.
- c. Supporting the security of people on the move.
- d. Establishing human security transition funds for post-conflict situations.
- e. Encouraging fair trade and markets to benefit the extreme poor.
- f. Working to provide minimum living standards everywhere.
- g. According higher priority to ensuring universal access to basic health care.
- h. Developing an efficient and equitable global system for patent rights
- i. Empowering all people with universal basic education.

j. Clarifying the need for a global human identity while respecting the freedom of individuals to have diverse identities and affiliations.

Seven forms of human security which signified by Mahbub-Ul- Haq basically focussed upon some specific parameter.

(1) Economic Security: It symbolised threats from poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, lack of income etc.

(2) Food Security: It focussed upon threats from hunger, famines and lack of physical and economic access to basic food.

(3) Health Security: It throw light on threats due to inadequate healthcare, diseases, other health hazards.

(4) Environmental Security: It highlighted on threats from environmental degradation, natural disasters, pollution and resource depletion.

(5) Personal Security: It include threats due to crime and violence.

(6) Community Security: This security paradigm include in its domain about the threats from discrimination and abuse of various groups, armed conflict and also threats to the integrity of cultural diversity.

(7) Political Security: Here, threats come due to political or state repression, human rights violations, including torture etc.

Human Security provides helpful impetus for understanding international relations and security in an individualistic manner extracting from state's domain. The concept of human security incorporates a wide range of actors as potential providers of security within the new institutional arrangements

Contested Issues of Human Security in an Armed Conflict Situation: Mapping of Human Security in Northeast India invites multidimensional approaches strategies due to the complex nature of conflict and insecurity in the region (Mahanta, 2010). In Northeast India, insurgent movement has created a culture of violence (Dasgupta, 2004). The straight forward conflict between the insurgent groups and the state armed forces have affected the way of life of ordinary people. The nature of conflict in this region is multi- dimensional. Conflict and instability are driven by failures in governance, health issues and environmental degradation (Mobte, 2004). Further, globalization and technological changes have increased interdependence and magnify security-related impacts of development challenges around the world.

The people residing in a conflict-prone area have to face multiple troubles which increase their vulnerability. Retaliatory killings of family members of surrendered insurgents have also been observed in certain conflict situation (Dasgupta, 2004). Numbers of heinous killing between different insurgent groups have also drawn civilians into its crossfire. As Anindita Dasgupta rightly observed that in most cases, it has been the easy availability of sophisticated small arms and light weapons that has made the existing conflict more lethal and long drawn.

When there is conflict, there has to be incompatibility of interest between at least two contesting groups and the conflict continues as long as causes generating such incompatibility remain unresolved. When arms are in use, such conflict turns violent with consequent instability attended with death, injury to human life and displacement of people in large number. The Upsala University database gives a definition of Armed Conflict and it says, "An Armed Conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the Government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year." But unlike the definition, there may be armed conflict between two non-state parties due to several reasons. But nevertheless, since there is a state structure in all regions of the world, even such conflict becomes a concern of the government of the state.

Human Development Report 2005 said that since 1990, more than 3 million people died in armed conflict. While in the 16th century, conflict-related deaths were 0.32 percent of the world population, it was 1.05 percent in the 17th century, 0.92 percent in the 19th century and jumped to 4.35 percent in the 20th century, which amounts to 3 times more than the previous century. These data shows that we have been living in a very violent world.

A conceptual framework of Human Security allows a more rigorous appraisal of the relationships between the availability of small arms, misuse and their effect on civilians (Dasgupta, 2004). Introduced as a new paradigm into the mainstream of the security and development discourses by UNDP's Human Development Report 1994, 'human security' sought to encompass "first safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities" (UNDP 1994)

One of the major threats that the people have to face in armed conflict situation is threat of sexual violence. Both men and women are sexually assaulted in conflict situation; more particularly women have to face sexual violence very often. In a situation where the problem of violence is related to the question of ethnicity and identity, greater attempts are made to control the mobility and sexuality of women. Women are expected to become the custodian and promoter of honour and culture and tradition of the community. Because of it, in violent conflict situation, the opposite side try to harm the community's strength and honour by targeting women sexually.

A research study conducted by North East Network(NEN) found out that many women in the relief camps in the violence affected areas of Assam have gone through devastating experiences. Women have to live in fear of sexual abuse both from state armed groups and state security force. Similar kinds of insidious physical and psychological harm also inflicted on children i.e upon the girl child during the time of intra-state conflict by both the government soldiers and rebel troops.

Since the human society is diverse and the interests are divergent, conflict is bound to occur, but yet it may be possible to reduce its destructive propensity if there is world consensus on peaceful resolution of all conflicts and eventually if states willingly sacrifice a

part of their sovereignty to a world body like the UN to intervene. But unfortunately it has no immediate prospect in the present power- syndrome. In the geo- politics of today's world, even characteristically internal conflicts of a state have not remained within the state and many outside elements have played parts causing complications in resolving such conflicts. The Human Development Report 2005 of the UNDP links violent conflicts to low human development and provides figures which are reliable. It says that 9 out of the 10 lowest human development index (HDI) countries have experienced conflict at some point since 1990.

Developmental imbalance may be primarily behind the North-east insurgency. These armed conflicts have assumed political proportion over the identity issue but the causes are not only economic but also social. In micro level Assam's security scenario, we can see that Assamese nationalistic aspirations do not coverage with the ethno- nationalistic aspirations of Assam's smaller tribes. Each ethnic population is an identity group searching for socio-political recognition in the background of their constricted economic space. With the sub-nationalist centrifugal tendencies disturbing the Pan- Indian nationalist fabric, many armed groups appear to have used the climate in an opportunistic way to build up a terror industry.

Conclusion: All the proponents of human security agree that its primary goal is the protection of individuals. Since, it is used to indicate a comprehensive security concerns, therefore, human security include food security, health security, economic security, environmental security, gender security etc. Human Security also assumes significance so far as the economic and human resource development is concerned. Infect, concern for human security demands for establishing parity between growth and development. As human security stresses on all the necessary components for human skill development, therefore focus on human security can greatly contribute towards human resource development.

But ironically, the people are helpless so far as their fight for security is concerned. Because, threat for life of human being come in both ways – internally and externally. Armed conflict has put a question mark in the whole issue of human security. So the need of the hour is to find out the conflict resolution mechanism. Civil society can play a useful role in peace process. Realisation of peace results in absence of conflict. Armed conflict can be resolved and have been resolved. Srilanka has presented a model of action. Conflict cannot be resolved by means of a Zero Sum game; it has to be a win-win game. As Anindita Dasgupta express her viewpoint that Exclusiveness has to make way for inclusiveness; otherness needs to merge into togetherness.

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