

# CHANGING DYNAMICS OF SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA

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 Analysis

The concept of security has undergone a drastic change in the past few decades. The traditional, military/state-centric approach of security has been replaced by non-conventional approaches. The world in post-cold war era has witnessed a shift in viewing security issues. Environment, human security and societal issues have occupied the main place in policy-making corridors of world states.

South Asia is also facing the same challenges in terms of its security. Non-traditional issues like environmental degradation, food scarcity, resource crisis, humanitarian issues, water crisis etc. are just some of the issues that have emerged in the region. The security policies of the states in the region are increasingly founded on these issues. The contention between India and Pakistan and between India and Bangladesh are based on humanitarian crisis and water disputes. The ongoing conflict of Kashmir, the crisis of

the Indus basin, Ganga and Teesta River are the major reasons for the conflicting situations among India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

IDPs, resource sharing of these states, food and environment issues, natural disasters and epidemics are also responsible for threatening the security of the South Asian region. Proper attention towards these non-conventional security points and strategic policymaking might just save the region from further tensions.

Human security is at the core of non-traditional security concept. Many scholars have written at length on this issue and world organizations have produced policies to deal with the issue of human security. In the mid-nineties the United Nations managed to define this new dimension of security.

The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Report-1994

defined human security as including “*safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression and; protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily lives, whether in homes, Jobs or communities*” (UNDP, 1994)

This definition changed the very concept of security. Ordinary people and their concerns began to be taken into consideration. The HDR-1994 gave out seven components of human security paradigm including economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.

The long-standing dispute of Kashmir has put human security in this area in a microscope. The conflict between India and Pakistan is a continuous threat to human security. The protection and preservation of individuals within the region has become a challenge for the groups and organizations working to ensure human security. The violations to personal freedom and basic human rights have become a norm in India and Pakistani administered Kashmir. Extra judicial killings and forced disappearances are major human security-related problems in the region. India in its administered Kashmir is violating all the basic principles of UN Human Rights Charter. Recently the UN published a report on India’s human rights violations in Kashmir. The report published on 14 June 2018 said, “*There is an urgent need to address past and ongoing human rights violations and abuses and deliver justice for all people in Kashmir, who for seven decades have suffered a conflict that has claimed or ruined numerous lives*”. [UN OHCHR, Jun 2018]

Similarly the formation of domestic war crimes tribunal in Bangladesh setup in 2009 to investigate and prosecute suspects for the genocide committed in 1971 has resulted in growing basic human rights violations, abuses and unjustified hangings in Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi Prime Minister Haseena Wajid and her ruling party is using state missionary against their political rivals, Jamaat-e-Islami

Bangladesh and Bangladeshi Nationalist Party (BNP). World-renowned rights groups and organizations have questioned the credibility of the Bangladeshi war crimes tribunal, which has put a question mark to this whole process of investigation and prosecution.

The issue of the displaced Afghani population, who are settled as refugees in Pakistan due to Russian invasion, is a matter of concern in the South Asian region. When Russia invaded Afghanistan millions of Afghan people fled to Pakistan and Iran. Presently there are around 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. On the one hand Afghan refugees blame coerced return while on the other hand many Pakistan’s officials and politicians believed there was proof that Afghan refugees are involved in terrorist activities. The weakening economic condition of Pakistan is another reason that the country wants Afghans to return to their country. They feel it impossible for the Pakistani economy to bear the expenses of surplus refugees.

Previously Pakistan’s *Express Tribune* published a report on the Afghan refugee crisis. The report, quoting analysts and some intellectuals, stated that issuing passports to Afghans born in Pakistan posed “threats to Pakistan’s national security.” The report further stated that, “some of them fall trap of terrorist elements” or they may “get involved into anti-Pakistan activities.” This is just one of the major human security issues faced by the refugees there.

The Rohingya refugee crisis, still in the same region, is seen as the worst humanitarian disaster of our time. More than 1.3 million refugees were subject to violent attacks in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. Most of the Rohingya people fled to

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Bangladesh and set up camps in Cox's Bazar. The camps are overcrowded and small children are malnourished. Those two problems are nothing compared to the other problems that the refugees are facing in both registered and unregistered camps in Bangladesh. Each and every aspect of human security is violated there, from economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security up to political security. We can simply read the news to agree.

Human security in South Asia is a burning issue that needs to be urgently addressed. Unfortunately countries in the region are still

more concerned about the traditional military dimension of security. Defense budgets of South Asian countries are directly and direly affecting human development in the region. People in the region, particularly in the countries affected by the conflicts and need humanitarian aid need to be addressed with the new paradigm of human security. The unresolved issues in the region are the major impediment in the human development and human security of South Asia. And while people in other regions might think that this does not concern them, slowly but surely the humanitarian crisis in this region will drag the world into an even bigger chaos.