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Non-Traditional Security Challenges: A Threat to Regional Integration and Sovereignty of South Asian States

Abstract

South Asia is home to almost a quarter of global population. The prevailing security concept among South Asian states is decades old which only focuses on external threats. In this article it is argued that non-traditional security challenges are more lethal than conventional security issues. The sovereignty of South Asian states is hostage to these challenges and the shifting dynamic of security in the region has been analysed empirically. Non-traditional security challenges are divided into three categories i.e., ecological problems, demographic challenges and transnational crimes and each challenge was discussed in terms of state's sovereignty and human security.

Keywords: South Asia, non-traditional security challenges, sovereignty, ecological problems, demographic challenges, transnational crimes.

Introduction

Security has become the most contentious term after the end of Cold War. Extensive work has put through to redefine the altered contours of global security in the prism of pre-existing theories of realism and liberalism. In this way, critical theorists and Copenhagen school has made significant contribution to delimitate the extended concept of security (N. K. Singh & Nunes, 2016). Traditionally, the security of states was solely dependent upon the external threats and it privileged the hard and military power means to combat the security threats to territorial integrity emanating from external sources. However, the prevailing concept of traditional security failed to answer the security threats which were rearing their heads within the states and mostly were socioeconomic in nature. The inadequacy of traditional concept of security to encompass the non-territorial security threats has led to competing and conflicting paradigm shift in the theoretical basis of international relations.

After the end of Cold War, spectrum of security threats had broadened, and non-traditional security threats were also included in the vast domain of security. The contemporary view of national security is not just confined to security of territory. Rather, it is now extended to the non-territorial security which poses extreme existential threat to the security of individuals and ultimately the states. Non-traditional security challenges are non-military and transnational in nature and scope. These challenges directly concern with endurance of the populace. Non-traditional security threats challenge the socio-political and socioeconomic integrity of a state. In contemporary view of security, states have to tackle both traditional threats of security and the non-traditional ones such as environmental degradation, demographic changes and transnational organised crimes.

The national security of South Asian states is most vulnerable to non-traditional security challenges. The regional and national security situation of South Asian states is very complex and perplexed (B. Singh, 2015). The non-traditional security challenges have severely affected the sustainable development, economic growth and

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political stability in South Asia. The transcendental nature of non-traditional security threats makes the regional security more vulnerable than earlier and pose serious existential threat to sovereign status of its states. In this paper, the non-traditional security challenges to South Asian states have analysed empirically and concluded that these challenges when coupled with traditional threats pose a severe existential challenge to sovereignty of South Asian states.

Security landscape of South Asia

South Asia is the region which holds two indigenous nuclear rivals while other two nuclear powers i.e., China and Russia are contagious to this region. Security architecture of South Asian region mainly depends on Indo-Pak rivalry, Indo-China competition and issues of nuclear proliferation and arms race. This security landscape still persists in South Asia despite the fact that end of Cold War had imparted dramatic changes in the security architecture of many regions (R. Q. Ahmed, Arif, & Khan, 2015). The only regional organisation in South Asian namely South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has proven ineffective in mitigating interstate conflicts and expanding the sphere of regional cooperation. Therefore, South Asia is one of least integrated and most conflict prone region in the world (Ghosh, 2016). India and Pakistan, the two major stakeholders in South Asia, has developed enough nuclear arsenals to deter each other. Kashmir issue is the chief nuclear flashpoint and the threats of nuclear escalation are always hovering over the region. There are two reason behind the prevailing state centric security model of South Asia (Yousaf, 2017). The very first reason is that South Asian nations are following the security framework devised by the colonial empire for its own security interests. The second reason is the centuries old internal divisions which was transmitted from precolonial to colonial and then by the legacies of partition. However, it is beyond the shadow of doubt that external influences or foreign involvement in the region has a decisive role in determining the security trajectory of the region.

Therefore, the governments of South Asian states solely focus on traditional security and brush off the nonconventional human security issues which are equally eroding the sovereign status of South Asian nations. Ismail (2017) argued that in South Asia, substantial shares of civilian sector budget is allocated for military and conventional defence expenses. Traditionally, the focus of the states' security is to protect its territory and institutions from external threats. However, historical evidences showed that those states which invested too much of their resources on militarisation at the cost of human misery and ignored the intrastate grievances and conflicts suffered from severe chaotic situations that often led to states' collapse. The notable examples from post-World War II era include disintegration of Yugoslavia, the USSR and above all Pakistan. Soherwordi (2005) stated that there was a wide gap between the military to social expenditures ratio in Iraq (8:1) and Somalia (5:1), hence these states has failed in protecting their national sovereignty. These evidences support the continuing debate among international security studies researchers that non-traditional security threats are equally detrimental to national security. However, the security scenario of South Asia is slightly different from other regions. The security of South Asia is preoccupied with traditional military threats from external sources as well as the non-traditional security threats which have prevailed the region at alarming level. Moreover, South Asia is the fastest growing economic region in the world and this trend is expected to proceed (N. Ahmed, 2018). Nevertheless, former regions that previously went through the fast development processes had failed in accommodating the consequences of these development which resulted in the form of environmental and sociological strains. Similarly, South Asia will have to face more non-traditional security challenges at extreme level.

Non-traditional security challenges

Non-traditional security challenges are numerous and different researcher tried to organise them in different groups. However, the most critical non-traditional threats include three basic categories i.e., ecological problems, demographic challenges and transnational crimes.

Ecological problems

Pollution, climate change, natural hazards and scarcity of water and food fall under the scope of ecological problems.

1. Pollution

Every South Asian state is facing indoor and outdoor pollution in water and air due to imprudent and extensive usage of biomass and synthetic products. The exposure of underground with industrial effluent has endangered the lives of millions of peoples which are drinking contaminated water. Groundwater in South Asia is at a very lowest position both qualitatively and quantitatively. There are severe threats of ground water depletion because South Asia is one of most extensive exploiter of ground water resources across the globe. The potable groundwater resources are contaminated by natural and synthetic contaminants such as arsenic, iron and fluorides etc. Bangladesh is

suffering from the biggest mass poisoning of the human population in the known history of mankind due to drinking arsenic contaminated water (Mukherjee, 2018).

The quality of air is also densely polluted by several lethal gases. In 2012, South Asia accounted for 6.8 percent of world carbon dioxide emission in which India's share was 6.2 percent (International Energy Agency, 2014). South Asian nations are not exploring their wind and hydrological potential to generate electricity instead they are continuing the practices of coal powers plants which are major contributor to air pollution in the form of smog and carbon black. Pakistan has recently revived its coal power industry under the auspices of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (Qasim, 2016). India had implanted several coal power plants at its northern border with Pakistan having capacity of 9000 megawatt which are accused by Pakistan's official as cause of heatwaves in Pakistan. however, India itself facing the deadliest air pollution (Jamali, 2016). According to the Health Effects Institute (2017), there were 4.2 million premature deaths in 2015 across the globe due to air pollution (more concisely due to Fine particulate matter-PM_{2.5}) and India alone reported for the 25.7 percent deaths. Global population-weighted annual average (PM_{2.5}) concentrations had increased by 11.2 percent from 1990 to 2015 in the world. In this regard, India and Bangladesh have faced the steepest increase in the level of air pollution. The recent report by Health Effect Institute (2018) has stated that in 2016 the highest concentration of PM_{2.5} found in North Africa, West Africa, Middle East and South Asia. These regions don't even fulfil the criteria of World Health Organisation (WHO) for least-stringent air quality. These trends depict the lack of any infrastructure to mitigate the nonconventional challenges in South Asia.

2. *Climate change*

Climate change is the biggest threat to national security of South Asian state and it is linked with other non-traditional security threats. Deforestation, global warming, incidence of draughts, changing pattern of monsoon, rise of sea level and floods, are some prominent examples of climate changes in South Asia. The sovereignty of South Asian states is going to more fragile due to fast global warming and extreme climatic change.

Forests provides buffer against hydrometeorological hazards such as landslides, tsunamis, global warming and glacier melting. South Asia constitute only 2 percent of world forest and it is suffering from rapid deforestation at the rate of 1.1 percent annually. Negative environmental reverberations in region are taking place and approximately 88 percent of forest has vanished from the region (The World Bank, 2012).

Increasing temperature due to global warming will likely to compel the denizens of densely populated areas of Indus and Ganges basin to migrate. The pattern of monsoon in India is continuously changing due to global warming. It is determined that with every 1°C rises in temperature due to greenhouse gases is creating 4-12 percent changes in daily monsoon precipitation of India (Sinha, 2013). The severe weather changes in south Asia is causing the drastic destruction of energy resources, food production and water reservoirs. If these changes would not be mitigated than severe consequences could be produced in the form of migration tendencies, political unrest, internal conflicts and eventually states' collapse.

The Wet bulb temperature has introduced by climatologist which gave the concept of human survivability threshold. Wet bulb temperature of 35°C is considered to be the extreme limit of human survivability. The Wet bulb temperature will surpass the extreme limit of human survivability by the end of 21st century and approximately 4 percent of South Asian population will be persecuted to live under wet bulb temperature of more than 35°C. While 75 percent of the its population will confront dangerous level of wet bulb temperature exceeding 31°C (Im, Pal, & Eltahir, 2017).

Pakistan and Afghanistan are located in those regions which are more susceptible to temperature rise in future. Heat wave of June 2015 killed more than 1200 people in Karachi (Mandhro, 2015). It was reported that at the beginning of 22nd century, there will be 6°C rises in temperature of Asian mainland. However, the areas under the high-altitude regions such as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and north-western China will face 8°C rises in temperature rather than 6°C (Asian Development Bank, 2017).

South Asian countries are apparently stable, but their security is totally brittle and fragile. In case of Bhutan and Nepal, the development of whole country is extremely vulnerable to climate change because the whole country is severely contingent on climate influenced sectors of agriculture, forestry, tourism and hydropower potential. Continuously increasing global temperature is inducing melting of Tibetan glaciers which in turn producing supra glacial lakes. It is estimated that about 18 percent of Tibetan glaciers has vanished since the decade of 1950 while the annual rate of Himalayan glacier retreating is 247 square kilometres (Dorje, 2015). The upsurge of glacial lakes has often resulted in disastrous floods which have not only threatened the lives of these Himalayan countries, but the downstream population of lower riparian Indian states also have to face negative consequences of such catastrophic events. Bhutan and Nepal have approximately 2,674 (Mahanta, Mahagaonkar, & Choudhury, 2018) and 1,466 (Lamsal, Sawagaki, Watanabe, & Byers, 2016) glacial lakes respectively which are mostly located in high-altitude areas.

There is a possibility of total or partial loss of territory of South Asian states due to rising sea levels. Existence of Sri Lanka and Maldives and the low-level coastal swaths of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan such as Chennai, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Dhaka, and Karachi are under severe existential threat due to sea encroachment (Werrell & Femia, 2016).

3. *Natural Disasters*

There are varieties of natural disasters in South Asia due to its peculiar geographic and climatic features. These include avalanches, landslides, glacial lakes upsurge and earthquake in northern areas which are mostly landlocked. However, droughts and floods are most common in Indus-Ganga plains while cyclones and tsunamis are most common form of natural disasters in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives. The mega form of these disasters had impacted the two or more countries at a time such as Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), earthquake in Kashmir (2005), Koshi flooding (2008), Indo-Pak flood (2010), and the recurrent cyclones in coastal areas of India and Bangladesh (Kafle, 2017). There were total of 481 natural disasters events in South Asia during 2005-2015 with 135,000 mortalities (Seidler et al., 2018). Floods are most prevalent variety of natural hazards in South Asian which severally affects every regional state except Maldives annually. South Asia accounts for 64 percent of total populations of the world which exposed to floods every year (Kafle, 2017). There were 55 extreme and 372 large flood events in South Asia from 1985 to 2013 (Kale, 2014). Pakistan has endured 21 major floods from 1950 to 2011 which killed 8,887 people by damaging 109,822 villages. Pakistan faced an economic loss of US\$19 billion between 2005-2014 out of which US\$10.5 billion were alone lost in 2010 flood. The flood of 2010 killed 1600 people by deluging 38,600 square Km of area (Asian Development Bank, 2013).

Sea encroachment and cyclones are the most common natural disaster in the region after floods. Largest swath of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh along with Maldives and Sri Lanka are subject to substantial existence risk due to sea encroachment, tropical cyclones, tidal waves and pollution in coastal areas. However, Bangladesh is the unique country whose existence is most vulnerable to these threats (The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2011). The frequency of tropical cyclones in Bay of Bengal is five time higher than Arabian Sea (Sahoo & Bhaskaran, 2015). The strongest cyclones recorded in South Asia were Bhola cyclone 1970, 1991 cyclone and cyclone Sidr 2007 which killed thousands of people. Bangladesh had been hit by 154 tropical cyclones events since 1877 to 1995 and up to now five severe cyclones have hit it. Typically, a severe cyclonic event impinges on the Bangladesh every three years. Topographically, two third land Bangladesh is just 5 meter above the sea level which makes the lives and assets in low-lying districts more susceptible to inundation by cyclone stimulated upsurges (Dasgupta et al., 2014).

Other notable natural disasters in South Asia includes earthquakes, droughts and landslides. South Asia is seismically active region whose northern, north-eastern parts along with Andaman and Nicobar Islands are at high risk of earthquake. Earthquakes in South Asia occur infrequently. The Himalayan belt, Bay of Bengal and Indian peninsula are the sensitive trouble spot of earthquake in South Asia (The World Bank, 2012). South Asia shared 64 percent of fatalities across the globe in 2015 out of which only 60 percent was alone accounted for disastrous earthquake event in Nepal (Bhatt et al., 2016).

Nepal has faced a monolithic earthquake on 25 April 2015 which was followed by a massive aftershock which killed about 9000 people and affected 28 million lives in Nepal (Regmi, 2016). The poor status of Nepal sovereignty and economic autonomy revealed in this earthquake disaster when India unofficially imposed trade embargo due to bunch of fistful protestors at Indo-Nepal border. The protest was by economically marginalised Nepali group which was protesting against recently declared constitution. According to UNICEF report, three million children under the age of five were at high risk of death owing to food and medicine deficit in Nepal (Plesch, 2015).

Even though South Asian economy has grown highly in last and ongoing decade, but this region has no capability to protect its physical assets from natural hazards. In South Asia, most of the capital stocks are not durable to natural hazards and are therefore susceptible to loss in any disaster event. The loss of these assets will have severe consequences for the region. This will worsen the existing situation of endemic problems in the region such as poverty and indebtedness. High sensitivity to natural hazards is undermining the economic development in the region. Significant economic growth achieved in last two decades can easily be erased by a single strong natural disaster in vulnerable vicinities. In the aftermath of disasters, government hesitates to invest in long term economic programmes in the disaster vicinities. The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami is the evident example of such expunction of economic growth in Maldives. In the tsunami, out of 199 populated islands, 53 were severely damaged while 20 islands were completely ruined by affecting more than one third of its population with the loss of over 4.8 billion US dollars. In the wake of tsunami socioeconomic development in Maldives was set back no less than two decades (The World Bank, 2012).

4. *Water Security*

Water security has gained central importance in global politics. Rapid population increase, urbanisation and industrialisation has squeezed the available water resources in South Asia. The major Himalayan network of transboundary rivers serves about one-fourth part of the world dwindling in fertile landform of South Asia from being worthless for cultivation (M. N. Khan, 2016). Unfortunately, the region which was known for its ecological congruence and well managed water system is now facing desperate ecological imbalance and unappeasable water panorama. The dearth of water is a greater challenge to low riparian states of South Asia. Swifter population growth and climate change has plummeted the annual water availability by about 70 percent since 1950 (Ranjan, 2015). There is an intense controversy over sharing of water among the co-riparian South Asian states. Moreover, intrastate hydro-politics has ingrained every state. Water scarcity is likely to impact the rapid economic growth in South Asia. Pakistan is severely affected by climate change. Average rainfall in 60 percent region of Pakistan is less than 250 mm per year which make it worst water-stressed and arid country in the world (Rasul, Mahmood, Sadiq, & Khan, 2012). The per capita water availability in Pakistan is now reduced to 908 cubic meters of annual water availability as compared to 5,260 cubic meters in 1950 (“Per Capita,” 2017). Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources warns the nation that they are going to face absolute water shortage by 2025 (Wasif, 2016). The per capita water availability in India was 1986 cubic meters in 1998, 1731 cubic meters in 2005 and by 2050 it will be reduced to 1140 cubic meters. Water scarcity is further aggravating the cereal production in South Asia as irrigated agricultural land is responsible for 70 percent of cereals produced in South Asia (Rasul, 2014).

5. Food Security

An assessment report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014) has determined that climate change and global warming will likely to affect the food production in Asia, but South Asia is at the edge of food insecurity. Crop (especially wheat and rice) production is severely affecting by extreme temperature and changing pattern of rainfall. It is expected that wheat production will decrease by 50 percent and population will increase 40 percent by 2050 (Baral, 2018). Sovereignty of Nepal became dubious when Nepal witnessed a state of famine due to wretchedest monsoon coupled with economic blockade by India during 2015-16. In these years Nepal has seen the lowest production of its main crop ‘rice paddy’ and became the state with highest food prices in South Asian region (Baral, 2018). Another landlocked nation is Bhutan which also desperately depends upon India for its vital food needs. Bhutan spends 77 million US dollars to import food which is only possible by India. Despite reliance of its 64.4 percent population on agriculture, Bhutan food dependency on India is still a big problem (H. Singh, 2016). Henceforward, if south Asia will face drought or abrupt changes in rainfall than India will not be able to fulfil the vital needs of food of both Nepal and Bhutan.

Even though Bangladesh is the fourth largest producer of world rice, but the requirement of rice still surpasses the inland output. Bangladesh imported 600000 tonnes of rice to harness the domestic rice shortage due to natural disasters like floods, droughts, soil and water brininess, cyclones and sea intrusion (Paul, 2017).

In 2010 almost, half of the population of Pakistan was going through food insecurity as said by world food programme. Food insecurity was further increased after apocalyptic flood of 2010. Population of Pakistan spend around 50-70 percent of their financial gain on food. Rising food prices, water scarcity, floods and storage incapability are some risk factors for food insecurity in Pakistan (Kugelman, 2010). Pakistan governments imports wheat due to storage incapability despite producing enough wheat (24 million tons) to meet its consumption demand (23.4 million tons) of wheat during 2013-2014 (Usman, 2013). India has been compelled itself to import food items although it was remained an exporter of food to its small neighbours. India is increasing its food imports especially corn and lentils due to consecutive draughts lack of investment in field of agriculture and inability to meet the food demand of increasing population. This shows that nearly all south Asian states have to face food insecurity and need foreign imports, but inflation of agriculture products due to climate change induced sluggish crop production is further worsening the insecurity of food. Every south Asian state neither has the capability to endure the food products inflation in global market and nor there will be enough food in global market to be imported to food insecure nations. These circumstances are actuating civil unrest in south Asia and producing direct threat to their individual sovereignty (Baral, 2018).

Population of South Asia has tripled from the late 1950 decade (588 million) to 2010 (1621 million) which resulted in sharp decline in per capita agricultural land availability (Rasul, 2014). The per capita availability of arable land has fallen from 0.11 to 0.05 hectare in Bangladesh, 0.15 to 0.08 hectare in Nepal, 0.23 to 0.13 hectare in India and 0.24 to 0.12 hectare in Pakistan between the short period of 1980-2010 (Madras School of Economics, 2012). It is estimated that the population of South Asia will surpass the 2.2 billion by 2025 and the cereal demand will go up to 476 million tonnes which was 241 million tonnes in 2000 (Rasul, 2014).

Demographic challenges

Population explosion, urbanisation, internal displacement and refugee crisis covers the scope of demographic challenges.

1. *Population explosion and urbanisation*

Population growth is the major problem which South Asia is facing. Nowadays population has exceeded to more than 1 billion in 65 cities of South Asia out of which 5 cities are populated with more than 10 million while Delhi and Karachi have more than 20 million population. In this way south Asia contributes to the world most megacities region. About 1.5 billion of region's population is dwelling in fertile but flood prone valleys of river Indus, Brahmaputra and Ganges. Almost half of the population of Bangladesh and all population of Maldives resides around the coastal areas which are sensitive to frequent cyclones and floods. Most of the south Asian population also lodges in Himalayan belt which is famous for landslides, earthquakes and inordinate rainfall (The World Bank, 2012).

South Asia has remained a region with low urban population but the ongoing migration to urban areas is estimated to increase from 449 million in 2007 to 913 million and 1.32 billion in 2025 and 2050 respectively. While most of the cities in south Asia are unplanned, turbulent and hazards prone. For example, in Dhaka, the fastest growing city in Asia and homeland of 34 percent of Bangladesh's population, around 40 percent of its residents are slum denizens. While in India half of the Delhi population, more than 60 percent of Mumbai population and overall 93 million people in India are living in slums. More than 25 percent population of Nepal and 36 percent population of Pakistan is living in urban areas. Secondary cities in south Asia are growing more rapidly than major cities. Expansion of urban areas without planning are complicating the disaster risk management in future. Five megacities of south Asia namely Karachi, Dhaka, Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata contribute to the region's 25 percent GDP (The World Bank, 2012). However, increasing quantity of slum dwellers in megacities is making them disaster hotspots. The massive unplanned growth of urban areas is creating challenges in terms of potable water, sewage, transportation and electricity facilities. This growth is often driven by migration either internally due to social marginalization or internationally and the migrated peoples mostly settles around valleys, sheer mountain slopes sensitive to land sliding, floodplains and adjacent to pestilent industrial areas. Moreover, middle class of urban areas are living in building which are ill planned and constructed in less resilient manner. The mostly buildings in south Asian cities are vulnerable to events of earthquake.

2. *Internal displacement and refugee crisis*

Forced migration, internally displaced persons (IDP's), and the refugee crisis is another demographic challenge which destabilising security architecture of South Asia. The root causes of migration in South Asia are poverty and internal conflicts. Repatriation of the refugees and IDP's is the major problem to be addressed by the South Asian nations. South Asia is sheltering the world largest number of refugees. This has created number of problems for countries that are either generating or hosting refugees (Pandey, 2016). These problems include economic burden, political, diplomatic and legal complexities, environmental problems, psychological and sociological impacts, rise in poverty, drug abuse, unemployment, crime rate, ethnic and religious strife thus ultimately challenging the security of the regional states.

The most severe refugee crisis occurred due to civil war in Sri Lanka and decades long war against communism and terrorism in Afghanistan territory by America. These wars affected India and Pakistan the most in terms of security, terrorism and suicide bombings. In 2001, approximately 144,000 Sri Lankan were taking shelter in India due to ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka (Pandey, 2016). The Pakistan involvement in American led war in Afghanistan has resulted in extremism, terrorism and insecurity on its own territory. Pakistan launched several operations against terrorist outfits residing across the north-western border of Pakistan. These operations have brought down dreadful casualties and displacement while thousands were missing in hunch of supporting terrorism. Refugee crisis of 2009 was worst in nature in which nearly 3 million were displaced only from Swat district due to military operations in Federally and Provincially Administered Areas (M. A. Khan & Shah, 2011).

At the end of 2008, Pakistan was hosting more than 1.8 million refugees which were mostly from Afghanistan and this figure was highest than any country in the world (Pandey, 2016). Nowadays Afghan refugees has scattered in Pakistan where they are striving for getting nationality. However, the intolerant and extremist refugee youth is joining terrorist outfits and waging suicide and terrorist attacks in Pakistan territory.

The war against terrorism and communism has considerably affected the internal dynamic of Pakistan's demography and domestic security because Pakistan shares a most porous and longer border with Afghanistan. Afghan refugee influx has immensely impacted the Pakistan especially KPK, Baluchistan and quasi-autonomous tribal areas adjacent to Afghan border. After the collapse of Taliban regime and American invasion Pakistan tried to repatriate the refugees but cannot accomplish full repatriation. According to report, 3.8 million refugees have returned Afghanistan since 2002, but still there are more than 3 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. While there are also lot of unregistered Afghan refugees and enumeration is yet to be calculated (Institute of

Strategic Studies, 2017). As a result, Pakistan has become the most vulnerable and exposed country to illegal transborder movements which include drugs, arms and human smuggling.

India is hosting 3,45,000 refugees which includes approximately 1,44,000 from Sri Lanka, 52,000 from Myanmar, 110,000 from Tibet, 15,000 from Bhutan, 12,000 from Afghanistan and 5,000 to 20,000 from Bangladesh (Pandey, 2016). Nepal and Bhutan host number of Tibetan refugee and Bangladesh have to deal with largest number of refugees and IDP's in South Asia. The annual IDP's issues due to natural disasters, repatriation of Chakma people and Rohingya refugees are some irritant refugee challenges which Bangladesh is facing.

Transnational crimes

Drug trade, smuggling, terrorism, and piracy threats are included in transnational crime which are committed by nonstate actors.

1. Nonstate actors and armed conflicts in South Asia

Failure of states to overcome non-traditional security challenges in turn produce another security threat termed as nonstate actors. Grudges against state spark off nonstate actors to took benefit of states' insecurity and they occupy the less governed areas. After acquiring leverage and power in these regions they organise criminal activities and try to produce soft corner about them in society by involving themselves in social activities and reforms. Increased social activities of nonstate actors are evident in natural disaster events. During the flood of 2010, Taliban were succeeded in fetching affections of flood victims when state failed to give proper attention to victims (Fair, 2011). Dormant secessionist element in Tarai belt activated during 2017 flood of Nepal and played a vanguard role in disaster relief operation by scolding the government for its inactivation. These nonstate actors are involved in terrorist activities, communal and ethnic strife which are endemic to South Asia. Most of the terrorist and armed activities have increased swiftly after the tragic incidence of 9/11.

Nonstate actors are responsible for armed conflict and separatist movements in South Asia. India is majorly suffering from armed conflict and terrorist activities due to its multiethnicity and poor governance. There are two major sources of armed conflicts in India (Chowdhury, 2016). First are the separatist movements in most states of northern India like Tripura, Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland while the second is left wing radical groups i.e. Naxalite-Maoist extremist which are provoking other communal armed conflicts. These extremists are targeting local citizens, military and government personnel as well infrastructural facilities of India such as oil pipelines, consignment trains and administrative buildings. Naxalite has adversely affected the 40 percent of Indian region and 35 percent of Indian population (Morrison, 2012). Although Indian government has confronted the left-wing extremism with great diligence, but the threatening dimension of these groups is that they have sophisticated weapons and nexus with other fundamentalist and separatist elements in the region.

After the emergence of Bangladesh, it was assumed that it will be proved the only state in south Asia without internal conflicts due to its ethnic and communal homogeneity. However, Bangladesh has become the seedbed of internal division based on national identity like Islamism and secularism and ethnic based conflicts. Bangladesh security situation is also deteriorated by ongoing left-wing violence and separatist movements in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The armed conflict in this region was started when government tried to settle poverty stricken homeless Bengalis at large scale in this region. The native population of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Jummas, resisted the influx of poverty-stricken Bengalis (Yasmin, 2014). Likewise, Pakistan has also confronted armed conflicts in Federally, Provincially Administered Areas and Baluchistan. Sri Lanka civil war was the worst case of armed conflict in South Asia. Maoist insurgency has impacted the economic growth in Nepal. However, Afghanistan is the perineal source of armed conflict and insurgencies.

2. Terrorism

South Asia is facing developmental challenges such as corruption, poverty, unemployment, marginalization of some minorities and small provinces in socioeconomic aspects which incites the menaces of separatism, extremism, and ethnic nationalism. South Asia is most affected by terrorism in the world and each country has certain kinds of insurgency and terrorism with varying intensity (Akhmat, Zaman, Shukui, & Sajjad, 2014).

Hindrance in economic growth is adverse impact of terrorism. It obtruded substantial economic costs on the nations of South Asia. The direct cost includes demolition of economic infrastructure and cessation of economic activities resulting from the terrorism events which wiped out the factories, estates and crops. It is the menaces of terrorism which dwindled down the significance of South Asian states for foreign investment thus causing economic distortion. South Asian nations especially Pakistan and Afghanistan are affected by this terrorism induced phenomenon. Afghanistan is facing scarcity of industrial development due to decade long embroilment in conflicts and terrorism. Even Pakistan has faced premature industrialization when its economic hub Karachi was burning with sectarian killing and terrorist attacks (Nazeer & Rasiah, 2016). The direct cost of terrorism in Pakistan was estimated Rs. 150 billion and the indirect cost Rs. 230 billion since 2002-03 to 2007-08 (International Growth Centre, 2010).

The capital loss faced by South Asia due to terrorism is the spoilage of indispensable peace process dialogues especially between India and Pakistan. The success of peace dialogues lies in bilateral trust, but the terrorism is the major cause of mistrust among South Asian nations. Indo-Pak relations are swinging thenceforth they got independence in 1947. Both states are enthusiastic to maintain friendly bilateral relations, but such willingness are spoiled by terrorist activities. Terrorism has held the South Asia as hostage. It has erased any kind of development in bilateral relation and interconnection of South Asian people. Terrorist often detonated at the time of peace talks. As for example, when the tragic incidence of Mumbai occurred in 2008, then Shah Mehmood Qureshi, the foreign minister of Pakistan, was visiting India to resolve the issues like Kashmir, Chenab river dispute, trade barriers (Chowdhury & Islam, 2017).

3. *Smuggling and drug trade*

South Asia is lumped between the two largest psychotropic drugs producing regions in the world i.e., Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent. Porous nature of borders and corrupt surveillance mechanism have exacerbated the drug trafficking through South Asia. The sea lanes of Bay of Bengal and Arabian sea are ideal waterways for the drug trafficking. Nonstate actors of South Asia are actively engaged in narcotics trade to earn money for buying arms (Saddar, 2016).

Drug trafficking has plagued the South Asia. Afghanistan is the epicentre of drug trafficking throughout the world and the most important drugs are heroin and opiates. Southern route is most common for Afghan drug traffickers. Drug smuggler are either using Iranian or mostly Pakistani seashores to import illicit products in Gulf States, East Africa and subsequently to Europe. Pakistan Maritime Security Agency has taken into custody over 16,000 Kg of heroin in 2015 (Azmi, 2017). Poor border management and lack of state control alongside Afghanistan border turned the ungoverned areas into the heart of terrorism, narcotrafficking and other social evils. These remote areas include Durand line Pashtun tribal area of Afghanistan and Federally Administrated Area of Pakistan, Ferghana Valley, Afghan-Tajik border area of Badakhshan, and most important the Sistan-Balochistan area which is the biggest hub of Opiates trade and located at the junction of Pak-Afghan-Iran border (Idrees, 2016).

Results and Conclusion

South Asia has plausible economic growth, preponderant natural resources, energetic manpower, fertile landmass and extended maritime space which provide vital access to its five nations with international trade network. Despite these golden opportunities and potentials, non-traditional security threats have befallen as the major handicap to augment progress and stability in the region. The results from the empirical data showed that South Asia has severely plagued with non-traditional security threats and every state is at the brink of sovereignty erosion. The purpose of conventional security was to preserve the sovereign structure of a country and ensures the safety of the populace from external threats. However, non-traditional security challenges are also responsible for killing, injuring and displacing of substantial number of people in South Asia. These challenges are more life threatening than conventional threats thus representing a more crucial source of insecurity in South Asia.

It is evident from given empirical data that non-traditional security challenges are responsible for eroding the South Asian states' sovereignty. Air and water pollution have been causing severe health problems and massive poisoning of the population. The changing pattern of rainfall, glacier retreating, and alarming deforestation is threatening the lives in South Asia. Moreover, natural disaster events in South Asia are most common which are killing thousands of people annually. In South Asia, more than half million population has been killed in natural disasters since 1985. South Asian people are starving for access to safe potable water. South Asia is poverty striking region where many people do not afford increased food prices. Moreover, it is tragedy in South Asian context that the several non-traditional security issues are going to be politicised. Different stakeholders undermine any cooperation which settle down the grieving conflict over sharing of natural resources. This depicts the overlapping of traditional security challenges with non-traditional. The examples include unilateral diversion of international rivers, state sponsored terrorism and spy wars and economic blockade and trade embargo of Nepal.

Demographic changes are the most destabilising agents in South Asia. In South Asia population explosion and urbanisation have limiting the undifferentiated access to natural resources. The most people in South Asia are residing across the disaster-prone areas. The existence of some megacities in South Asia is under threat due to natural disasters. The South Asian states are unable to meet the basic needs of its huge and fast-growing population. The inability of South Asian states to address the non-traditional security challenges has resulted in menaces of terrorism and separatism. Therefore, internal displacement and refugee crisis has prevailed the region. In this way, security situation of South Asia is just like Syrian crisis where severe climate change and drought due to multidecade winter rainfall diminution had created record population displacement and civil war.

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