

Human Security in South Asia: Characterizing Traditional and Non-traditional Security Threats

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Abstract

An idea of 'Human security', as a people-centred issue, is concerned not only with the comprehensive protection of individuals from multifaceted and diverse political, economic, and social challenges but also includes the daily and personal dilemmas that pose a threat to their dignity, development and self-fulfilment. Along with its external scopes, therefore, an inward configuration of this idea is potentially significant for considering the security issues in densely populated regions like South Asia. Mostly, South Asian region comprises of low-middle and low-income countries that have less percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) contribution at the global level. Due to regional powers' inclination towards maintaining traditional state-centric security paradigm, less attention is being given to human development and empowerment, whereas the mass share of the budget is reserved for ensuring impregnable defence mechanism. Consequently, an internal crisis such as hunger, poverty, economic disparity, the influx of refugees and internally displaced persons, extremist outfits, rampant corruption, lack of education and scientific innovation, sanitation and healthcare problems which are experienced by the vast majority of South Asian population are not addressed by their respective governments. Therefore, this paper attempts to draw the attention of the concerned states' to the existence of this large scale discrepancy between human development and the long-held traditional perceptions of security dynamics by proposing to keep the people alive by ensuring their physical safety or giving them a high level of living standards. This study strongly recommends the regional states to realize that non-traditional security threats like food security, environment protection, water storage, health facilities, education and justice for all are more relevant to address by investing heavily in human development and promoting well-being of the people rather than ensuring to safeguard humans from the soldiers of the enemy.

Keywords: South Asia, traditional and non-traditional security, human development, discrepancy, Food Security, Environment protection

Introduction

The geographical location of South Asia is significant because it is very rich in natural and agriculture resources yet the region is facing mutli-dimensional trational and non-traditional security challenges. South Asia consists of eight countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Afghanistan. The South Asia is fifth populous regions in the world with an area of 5.22 million square kilometres. Even though this region has rich economic potential but its people do not

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have access to even basic necessities of life. The region, on the one hand, accounts for a large share of world income while on the other hand, its people are mostly living below the poverty line compared to other regions (Deyshappriya, 2018). These countries do not share impressive portion in the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the world which is only 3%, and this deficit makes it susceptible to the local population (World Bank, 2014). South Asia has been able to attain higher economic growth, but its people are unable to utilize the dividends of growth. The problems have been highlighted by the World Bank (2014), that although South Asia has shown the perpetual economic growth but ineffective to decrease the poverty. As it contains 40% of the poor people and this percentage is highest among in any region of the world, and people are surviving on less than \$1.25 per day. In the result of this insecurity, 200 million people in South Asia have been facing economic security because of the insufficiency of basic facility. Whereas, the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) defines economic security as *“the ability of individuals, households or communities to cover their essential needs sustainably and with dignity. This can vary according to an individual's physical needs, the environment and prevailing cultural standards. Food, basic shelter, clothing and hygiene qualify as essential needs, as does related expenditure; the essential assets needed to earn a living, and the costs associated with health care and education also qualify”* (ICRC, 2015) .

The employment conditions in South Asia are not very feasible. According to the report, 64% workers are earning less than \$2 per day and this income is minimal to support the whole family. Conversely, in South Asia region GDP has increased to 21.4 % from 1980 to 2010 but it does not elevate the living standard of people, as human development index has not increased in the same proportion. The lower income and employment opportunity are responsible for the emergence of various problems like child labour. The industrialist is willing to hire cheap labour and similarly modern-day slavery is also common in South Asia. India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are counted among the populous countries of South Asia and famous for the modern day slavery (Yousaf, Human In(Security) in South Asia, 2018).

The increasing population is causing economic securities in South Asia as India and Pakistan contributing 22% and 2.5% to the population of the world, respectively. Hence, it increases the demand for natural resources like water and food. In Pakistan water usage after partition was 5,000 cubic meter per person and 1,000 cubic meters per person in 2018 (Wahla, 2018). Nonetheless, it is ranged on 23th in the most water-stressed countries around the world (World Resource Institute, 2018). While, about 40% of the poor people of the world out which 33% live in India and 35 % undernourished are facing poverty and hunger (World Bank, 2008). It is difficult for the third world countries to provide and access to the essential food item to their people. The primary reasons behind this uncertainty are an increase in population, deficiency of appropriate economic policies, and unequal distribution of wealth and climate change. The variation in weather causes a high risk of damage to the

Human Security in South Asia: Characterizing Traditional and Non-traditional Security Threats

agriculture sector of the South Asian region. Climate change has been proved to be a serious threat than terrorism. Human security is also another peril for climate change by eradicating access to the quality of the natural resource, which is indispensable for sustainable livelihood (Joan, 2007). South Asia is consistent in economic growth but affected by poverty and human deprivation. Because of inclined of this region towards the state centred security, it required a considerable amount of investment on the defence and leaving other sectors to deprive (Yusuf, 2017).

Theories of International Relations and Concept of Security

The post-cold war world has faced various challenges in theoretical terms. Over the years, traditional meaning of security has been questioned. The conventional meaning of the security is basically state-centric, which means that the boundary of a state should be protected against any hostile activity. The emerging sense of security is to protect people of the country from disease, poverty, hunger, climate and natural disasters apart from protecting people internally and externally from any force or threat (Yusuf, 2017). In 1994, UNDP had included environmental, economic, personal, community health, political and food security as threat for discussion (Tsai, 2009).

However, in international relation, theories are defined distinctively. Realism holds more importance, and its new version is also called Neorealism which explains that there is no transformation in the world after the event of the cold war. But the structure of international states is anarchic and still has competition among them. The neorealist and realist never wanted to come out of the concept of conventional; state-centric security as they are in favour of the definition of security that discusses the protection of the nation from external aggression. On the contrary, neoliberals are agreed with neorealism on different points, i.e. consider themselves as rational actors, the state is the central actor in the world according to them and the international system is anarchic. Whereas, neoliberals have a different approach toward security definition as they do not discuss it directly but explain that security can be sustained through the strengthening the institution, democratization, international law and political integration. Marxism also explains the definition of security as it can be determined by the formation of global capitalism (Lasan, 2018).

After the cold war, constructivist started gaining popularity; it mainly discusses the issues related to security, identity and material issue of the world. It never considers security as the objective reality. Constructivist believes that it is being constructed and reconstructed through the intersubjective approach of human understanding. As there focus are swiping from material to the ideas. The concept of security for constructivist is broad. According to Alexander Wendt, anarchy is actually what state make of it, and the same can be related to the security (Sorensen, 2013). The concept of the Copenhagen school of thought is also very important; there, the concept was built on the work of Barry Buzan. He said that security should include social, economic,

military and environmental security. It extends the idea of security other than the military aspect (Lasan, 2018). This school of thoughts also discusses the ideas of securitization. It elaborated the idea of security as the procedure of social construction of threat that comprised of securitizing actors which showed that particular threat is prevailing and needs to be tackled, this situation will be showed to the audience, and if they accept it, then actors will have rights to take action act the issue. This is how the issue is securitized. This is basically an interesting way of explaining security (Sulovic, 2010). Critical theory has also described the concept of security in which the primary focus is on how the relation and institutions are transformed and how they can be changed. It swings the focus from the state to the individual. This theory explains the idea of freedom and liberty of an individual (Lasan). There is another significant lens to view security .i.e. through critical theory. Their focus is on how the institutions and relations evolved and how they can be altered. This theory shifts the focus from state to the individual. It envisions the freedom and liberty of the individuals (Lasan, 2018).

Human Security

The beginning of the concept of the human security transformed and emerged at the span of the disintegration of Soviet Union after the cold war, eliminating the politics of bipolar that dominated the relations among the states but generated the realization of new kind of threats and struggles which contained various unresolved problems. Whereas, globalization has changed the international regimes by adjusting the steady flow of capital and movement of technology by reducing the national barriers and increase the implication of trade in the world. In this situation, the traditional security concept has evolved with new, i.e. human security and this change required new methods and implications that would handle the problems related to the questions of old age of development and security. So, an amalgamation of the idea of human security in this formation of policies is the profound contribution (Wisner, 2007).

Human security was defined in the United Nations Human Development Report 1994 as “*safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in pattern of daily life*”. However, later, the other factors like health, economic and environment also added to the concept of human security. It not only comprises of well-being, safety and freedom but also contains climate change, health and terrorism (Acharya, 2002). Regardless of, the escalation of global change in the paradigm of security and as South Asian countries has persistently relied on the definition of conventional security rather than human-centric security. This region has gained continuously increase in economic growth but unable to enhance the living standard of the people and still with the pervasive inequalities is consider as one of the deprived regions. Particularly in South Asia problem is not related to a lack of resources to increase the welfare of the people, but it is more connected to the preference and inequality of the government. In order to distribute the bulk of resources, this is considered vital for the state centred security instead of

Human Security in South Asia: Characterizing Traditional and Non-traditional Security Threats

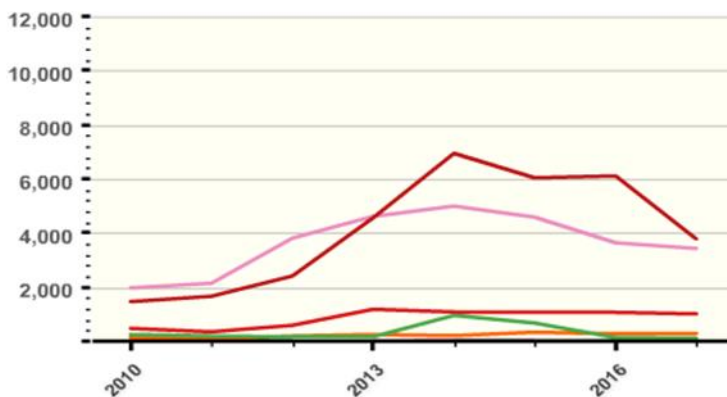
the social development to consume the human resources efficiently. The human security threat transcends to the geographical boundaries and government has to contribute their effort to improve the everyday lives of the people. Whereas, regional integration (for example, SAARC) unable to work properly and reinforce good results without political and government collaboration. It's solely the onus of the government to provide facilities for the human development and investment on the human security in focus to provide fundamental needs to the people and save their human dignity (Navid, 2017).

Terrorism and Security

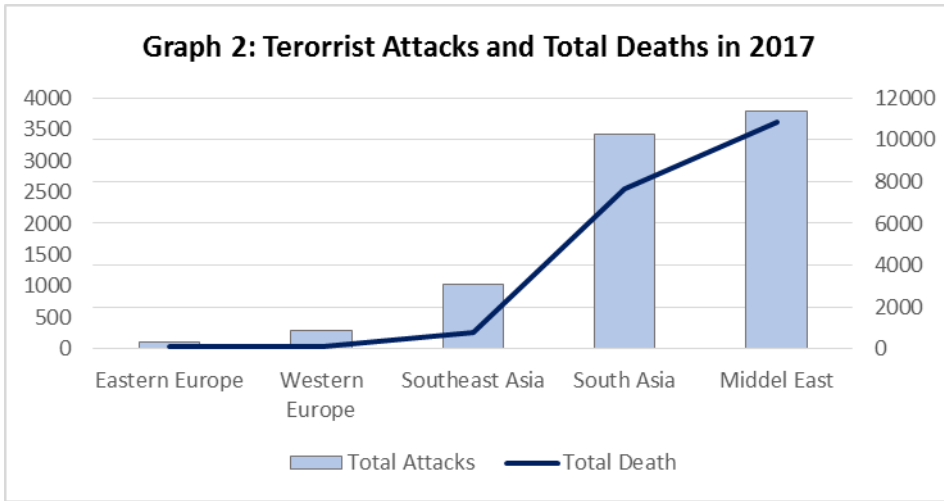
Terrorism is the most incessant and unrelenting issue that is ever experienced by mankind. At international fora, the term 'terrorism' is being cited so frequently ever since the aftermath of September 11, 2001. By combining the key attributes of the explanation delineates of terrorism as *"the premeditated use or threat of use of extra-normal violence or brutality by sub-national groups to obtain a political, religious, or ideological objective through intimidation of a large audience, usually not directly involved with the decision making"* (Enders & Sandler, 2000). The South Asian region currently confronting the main security threat due to growing extremism and terrorist activities. The politics in the violence and extremist activities in South Asia can be related to the inconsistencies arising because of faulty national policies.

Figure 1

Incident of Killing because of Terrorism 2010-2017



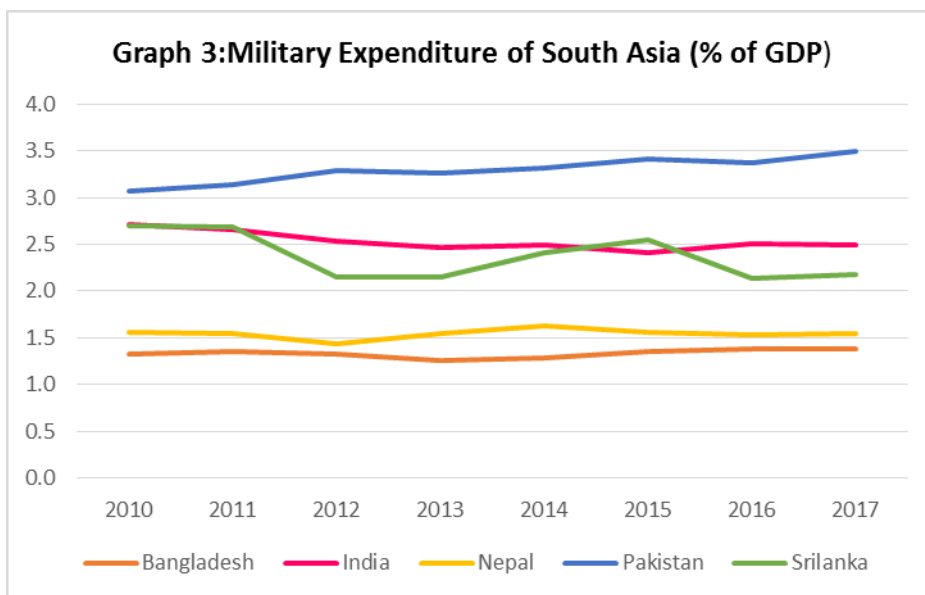
In 2017 10,900 terrorist attacks took place around the world which was responsible for the killing of 26,400 people. Reduced in a number of a terrorist attack (17,000) and death rates as compared to 2014. However, as shown in graph 2, the highest rate of terrorist attacks and the death rate was in the Middle East, then South Asia. Conversely, the lowest events of terrorist attacks and death rates occurred in East Europe and Western Europe.



Source: Global Terrorism Report (2017)

Hence, the incidence of killing and death rate expansion leads to increase the burden on the government to increase the defence expenditure especially in Pakistan whose expenditure reached to 10 billion dollars in 2017 (World Development Indicator, 2017). As represented in graph 3, military expenditure in South Asia, which shows the increasing trend in Pakistan and India as compared to Sri Lanka, which depicts the decreasing trend. This growth decreases the economic growth, which in turn increases economic insecurity because of the increase in poverty and unemployment (Korkmaz, 2015).

Human Security in South Asia: Characterizing Traditional and Non-traditional Security Threats



Source: World Development Indicator (2010-2017)

Terrorism is basically creating political instability in the whole region. South Asian countries, if willing to handle the problems they have to remake their policies of the self-justification and reconsider the grievances of the people. Human security and socio-economic problems have to be addressed by the government. Without the formulation of a comprehensive approach, the issues like terrorism cannot be tackled at the society, state and regional level, the peril of radicalism unable to eradicate.

Climate change

Climate change is influencing South Asia environmental security because of tropical cyclones, monsoons and El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO). Nonetheless, the temperature is also rising in South Asia due to climate change measure as $0.1^{\circ}\text{C} - 0.3^{\circ}\text{C}$ in 2010 and will rise to 0.4°C in 2070 (Whetton, 1994). The variation in rainfall will also affect climate change. It is reported that in 2010, rainfall range is 0% - 10% and in 2070 will be 5%-50% (Whetton, 1994). These factors will increase the rate of droughts, floods and typhoons which are already ongoing concerns of various Asian countries whose economy and human security is already damaged by the climate variability. Traditional security indicates to protect the independent states of the world against vicious attack, either from other states or from fear based on persecutor or progressive meetings inside their outskirts. It shows a picture of weapons, troopers, rockets, bombs tanks, with nations, either entirely or in partnership—as equals, or in a sponsor customer relationship—designed perpetually for military confrontation.

Plainly, this general part of security leaves small space for the worries of common individuals, who care for security (Khan, 2001).

Environmental security has been defined as a cluster of issues which contains the role that the natural resources and environment; peace and security, including environmental drivers and causes of conflict, the impact of environmental conflict, recovery of the environment, and post-conflict peacebuilding. The scope related to insecurity and security is by no means confined to conflict of violence or its absence but contains the roots of long-lasting livelihoods, health, and well-being (Ratner, 2017). Ecological security is the sense of security of human against catastrophic events, for example, earthquakes and surges. What's more, it includes scarcity of assets in kind of consumption of water resources and loss of prolific land by the disintegration. Ecological security broadly covers all portions of human security that are considered as a part of the state security. This infers it is gradually comprehensive and non-customary in nature. Be that it is difficult to draw a distinctive qualification among natural and human security around the world dimension (Akram, 2017). The environmental problems in South Asia are more related to the regional and local system like a forest, water, cropland and marine resources on which livelihood of most of the people depended.

Table 1

Environmental Indicators

Countries	Natural Resource Depletion of GNI 2010-2014)	Forest Area (% Total land 2015)	Renewable Water Resources (% of total 2005-2014)	Co₂ Emission (Per capita 2013)
Bangladesh	2.6	11.0	1.1	0.4
India	2.9	41	33.9	1.6
Nepal	5.8	25.4	0.5	0.2
Srilanka	11.6	33	24.5	0.8
Maldives	0.1	3.3	15.7	2.7
Pakistan	2.7	1.9	74.4	0.8

Source: (United Nations Development Program, 2016)

In ranking the shared concerns of the environment of South Asia are as follows:

Human Security in South Asia: Characterizing Traditional and Non-traditional Security Threats

Land Degradation

Soil erosion and degradation of land in the region are mainly because of the rapid increase in deforestation, land use practice, drainage practices and poor irrigation, insufficient soil conversion, overgrazing and steep slope. Whereas erosion of water is so high in Himalayas and India, it is approximately 13 million hectares. On the hand dry belt it moved to the Thar Desert in India and Pakistan and calculated that 59 million of the land is damaged by wind erosion. Notably, in India, it is calculated that 45 million tons of production in agriculture is smashed due to soil erosion. Bangladesh and the northern region of India also affected by the acidification and soil salinity. Likewise, salinity also reduced the crop yield to 30% due to salinity.

Expansion in agricultural. Industrialization and increase in dependence on products of the forest to meet the demand for energy, which in turn caused the deforestation in large scale in most of the region (as mentioned in Table 1). To increase the productivity of agriculture, farmers encroaching the forest and other environmental areas. The deforestation has caused the loss in biodiversity in terrestrial and coastal ecosystem both. Other factors responsible for the biodiversity are: inappropriate usage of agro-chemical, trade in forest products and uncontrolled tourism. However, damage in the coastal habitats comprised of the extensive loss in mangrove forests, mainly because of shrimp ponds and cultivation of paddy with the bad effect on the commercial fisheries that depend on the mangroves which provide nurseries for the fish breeding.

Water Crises

Water scarcity is one of the huge problems. The water crises are mostly happening in developing countries due to the degradation of the environment and poor management of the resources. As a result, there resistant to the resources that mostly create conflicts on the national and international level. Whereas, poor management, scarcity in the resource of water and increasing population causes the increasing demand for the building of a new reservoir of water. And Pakistan is considered as a 23rd country of the world in the water stress ranking (Wahla, 2018).

Groundwater reduction has emerged as a major issue in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is predictable that in India, 70%-80% of the agricultural production relied on groundwater irrigation. The aquifers in the southern region, i.e. Mehsana and Coimbatore, have been depleted permanently as a result of inadequate re-charging. In other states like Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab and Gujarat the have the over misuse of groundwater lies between 100%-260% relative to the critical level of 85%. With agricultural production estimation for approximately 29% of India's GDP, which shows that a large proportion of GDP of India could actually be predicted to depend on the groundwater. In addition, groundwater measured for about 80 % of the

domestic supply of water in the rural areas and almost 50% is for the supply of urban and industrial area (Vasudeva, n.d).

Similarly, in Bangladesh, a decrease in the water resources in the northern and central parts of the country has caused severe water deficiencies. Decrease in water quality because of untreated sewage and effluents of industries is an increasing concern in the South Asian region. The entire sewage treatment capacity in India is only 10% of today's wastewater generation and drain into the river systems. In India, approximately 10,286 million litres of sewage is released into the Damodar river daily. Likewise, the total pollution depended on Yamuna River has been evaluated at 1,286 million litres daily.

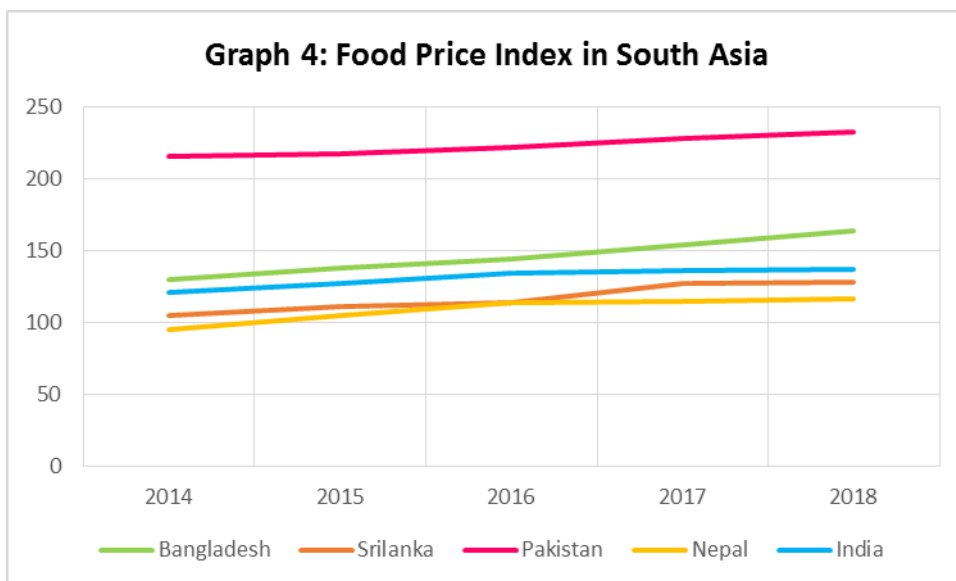
Correspondingly in Bangladesh and Pakistan, water pollution from the raw sewage, agricultural run-off and industrial wastes have presumed great importance. In Pakistan, it is measured that chemical pollution of the Ravi river causes a great loss in the income from the fishery. In Bangladesh, contamination of arsenic in the groundwater has been associated with the severe use of fertilizers and affect the health of about 1 million people. As evident from the above discussion, the factors causing to the deterioration in the quality of water are mostly common to the South Asian countries and interconnected river system as well, there has a vast potential for collaboration to implement the remedial and regulatory system (Vasudeva, n.d).

Food Security

In 1970, the concept of food security emerged as the top food crisis in the world. In the World Food Conference 1974, the idea of food security define which include the surety of stable and save supple and even price of fundamental food in domestic as well as global level. It contains four main things that are: availability of food, accessibility of food, the constancy of food and nutritious and biological aspect of food. The definition of food security has surpassed various evolution process and then in 1996 is defined as: "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Iqbal & Amjad, 2009).

Food prices have raised 10% during the span between June and July 2012, including a 25% rise in staples like wheat reported in Food Price Watch. The increase in food price is also mentioned in graph 4. The crises have affected the nutrition and food security in South Asia. There are some other determinants which are not only responsible for the increase in prices but also affects the income of the people such as trade curbs, oil prices, bad weather and bio-fuel diversion (The World Bank, 2012)

Human Security in South Asia: Characterizing Traditional and Non-traditional Security Threats



Source: (FAOSTAT, 2019).

The major reason for the food insecurity is landlessness and poverty. The labours do not have adequate means to buy or yield food properly. That led to low productivity of crop as compared to developing countries. The subsector of agriculture, i.e. livestock, is also inept to meet the demand of animal source food because of their low efficiency. The livestock sector is contributing 56% of value addition to agriculture GDP (GoP, 2016). That way, the government should heed importance to this sector. Another factor is the constant or obstinate to the economic crisis that is responsible for elevating poverty and decreasing income levels, which lead to having an impact on food security. The rise in fuel and food prices is one of the key reasons besides the inflationary stress in South Asian (Iqbal & Amjad, 2009). José Cuesta, the Senior Economist at the World Bank, said, "we see that the effects on poverty can reach up to 20% and the impact on the performance of children in school, their development and growth are not only transitory but can last a lifetime" (Uddin & Haque, 2014). The other South Asia report, Food Price Increases in South Asia: National Responses and Regional Dimensions found that families whom formerly were not living at far above the poverty line were now possible to have dropped into poverty as the result of increased food prices. Researches in the last few years in Afghanistan and in another places have elaborated that upsurges in the price of food have caused in a shift in the consumption from nutrient contained foods, such as meat, vegetables, and other proteins to the nutrient-poor foods, such as rice and wheat (The World Bank, 2012) .

Conclusion

The economic security factors in South Asia are related to human security, environmental security food security and terrorism. The factors have a direct and indirect impact on economic security. These issues can be resolved with constant efforts by the government and people of the South Asian region. Mostly, issues are interconnected, and to resolve this problem, the government of all countries should work together to achieve the common goal. The comprehensive idea of human security has the ability to comprehend all aspects recommended by academia, leaders, groups, and institutions. The similar principle can also be applied to poverty, healthcare, and primary education. All these factors are interconnected, for instance, the environment of any area is easily threatened by the poverty of that region, and it can impact the health. Similarly, poor health may threaten economic development and lack of basic education might threaten health. These processes lead to major threat to the entire regions.

The change of security from a state to its humans has implications. The change in emphasis from rights of its citizens opens the state for critical security. The relations of state and society determines the state capacity. It has an impact on national security and global governance. There is a need to have a proper understanding of global economic processes. Having this knowledge, there must be an informed debate on global development policy. By doing so, one can work for re-establishment of the development policy in the cause of attending to the human security needs to all the global citizens. In today's world, many people are dying of hunger and/or disease. In the United Nations Security Council, security issues has been transformed from military to the eradication of HIV/AIDS in the world. This recommends to incorporate non-traditional matters such as health, environment and food. South Asia is dealing with a complex security environment since the beginning of the 21st century. A possible solution is to move away from nationalism to move towards economic, technological and cultural cooperation.

Human Security in South Asia: Characterizing Traditional and Non-traditional Security Threats

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