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CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN SECURITY AND ITS CHALLENGES: A CASE STUDY OF KASHMIR VALLEY

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Abstract:-Since the end of bi-polar world order, the concept of security underwent a change from the traditional to individual centric notions of security. The individuals became the referent object of security and attained a position of prominence among the security related concerns. The nature of threats also changed from external aggression to intra-state conflicts. Such threats range from civil wars to environmental degradation, from economic deprivation to human right violation and so on. It is within this context that the notion of human security evolved and became a top priority concern at the global level. The Human Security concerns are more apparent in the regions with violent conflicts (conflict zones) or in the state of disturbing or chaotic environments and the Valley of Kashmir is no exception. Since the state of human security prevailing in the valley is far from commendable, it is necessary to look into alternative dimensions by throwing light on some of the vital perspectives. The study provides an ample ground to consider these from human security dimensions. In this perspective, the paper would provide the conceptual understanding of the human security conception. Also, it will attempt to capture the various human security challenges faced by the valley of Kashmir.

Keywords: Human Security, Kashmir, Threats, Human Rights, State.

INTRODUCTION

The post- cold war period has witnessed immense changes in the concept of security. There had been a paradigm shift from conventional i.e, state centric to non-conventional notions of security. The entire globe was confronted with several set of challenges. Many issues like environmental degradation, inequality in income distribution,terrorismetchave now confronted across globe in our age that was either hitherto missing or less visible in the security debate. Apart from these issues, the nature of wars have also changed from inter-state to intra-state levels. Thus, the conventional understanding of security seems to be incapable of addressing many of these issues. Hence, it is in the backdrop of such sweeping changes that the notion of human security is to be understood (Rather and Jose 2014).

Although, the notion of Human Security came into picture after the end of bi-polar world order and achieved a priority of top concern at global level. The concept of Human Security aims to protect an individual from threats not only in terms of external aggression but also to provide safety from threats and disruptions emerging in due course of their daily lives and to assure their survival and development (UNDP 1994). Thus, the main concern of Human Security approach is the overall human development vis-à-vis fulfilment of the basic necessities of human beings. The Human Security concerns are more apparent in the regions with violent conflicts (conflict zones) or in the state of disturbing or chaotic environments. In this perspective, the valley of Kashmir offers an ample ground to examine the challenges of Human Security.

The valley of Kashmir witnessed the uncertainty in terms of social, political and economic factors since its merger with India in 1947 and most particularly from 1989 with the inception of militancy. It also remained a contentious issue betweentwo nuclear powers i.e, India and Pakistan and a reason of escalating tension between them. With the due course of time, it evolved as an international dispute. Although, both countries suffered heavy

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economic and human losses but the worst sufferers were the people of the valley. The violent environment prevailing in the valley since early 1990's added further inadequacies and nuances to the local people in the valley. In this context, the present study attempts to examine the Human Security challenges in the valley of Kashmir.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HUMAN SECURITY

The historical roots of the Human security conception dates back before the actual use of the term. After the end of Second World War, the president of US-Franklin Roosevelt addressed in 1941 that 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' are the two major ingredients to maintain the international order. In the same year, the Atlantic Charter came into existence focussing on the four freedoms including freedom from fear and want, prohibition of the use of force, freedom of the seas and disarmament of aggressor nations. Thus, the year marked a revolutionary move towards granting some fundamental freedoms to individuals at the global level. Also, in the year 1945, a Conference took place at San Francisco in which the two freedoms i.e. freedom from fear and freedom from want were recognized at the founding of the United Nations (UN) (Shinoda 2004). The conference further highlighted the importance of individual as a center of attention in security related issues.

Although, the genesis of the concept of Human Security can be sketched if not traced back in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1970's, a series of volumes have been issued by the Club of Rome on "world problematic" focussing on the web of problems troubling men of all nations like poverty, insecurity of employment, environmental degradation, economic disruptions and alienation of youth (Bajpai 2000). These problems arise out of complex global system and influence the individual's life and thus need a proper attention to overcome these insecurity dilemmas. Also in 1980s, the north south report published by the independent commission on International Development chaired by Willy Brandt urged the need of primacy to the human being. The report further commended the necessity to overcome mass misery, world hunger and alarming disparities between the living condition of rich and poor (The independent commission on international development issues, North South, A programme for survival: 1980). Further in 1991, the Stockholm incentive on global security and governance ushered the need for common global responsibility to focus on the threats such as under development, environmental degradation, excessive population growth and movement, and the lack of progress towards democracy (Government of Sweden: 1991). These commissions and reports may be viewed as the precursors to Human Security thinking.

However, the conception of human security came into existence with the United Nations Development Report of 1994. The report primarily focusses upon seven components- economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. But, in 1995, many countries like Canada, Japan and Norway have adopted the conception of human security in their foreign policies.Further, in 1999, the secretary general of UN- Kofi Annan adopted the human security agenda by intending the involvement of UN in order to implement the agenda as a global concern (Arie 2000). Moreover, in 2001, the commission on Human Security chaired by Amartya Sen and the Sadako Ogata was established to explore as well as to recommend policy implication for the concept of human security (Jolly and Ray 2006). Thus, the above mentioned reports and commissions can be viewed as the originators of the human security conception as well as its existence into contemporary politics.

The Concept of Human Security: An Overview

The term "Human Security" evolved in 1994 with the publication of United Nations Development Report (UNDR) and is broadly associated with the security of people- their physical safety, their economic and social well-being, respect for their dignity and worth as human beings, and the protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The UNDR also pointed out few aspects of Human Security domains such as economic, political, environment, community, food and health security. The broadening of Human Security concept led to paradigm shift in thinking about security/threat in modern time. Human Security embraces not only the threat of life in the course of war and conflict but also the political liberty, economic opportunities as well (UNDP 1994).

The notion of Human Security thus appeared as an emerging paradigm to address the current as well as projected global vulnerabilities and thereby challenging the conventional perception of national security. The proponents of the concept argue that human being is the referent object of security concerns implying that the individual prevails over the nations or state's importance in security matters (Kis 2010). The objective of Human Security 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. Human Security takes its shape from the human being: the vital core that is to be protected (Alkire 2003).

The concept of Human Security is broadly based on two notions: freedom from fear and freedom from want. The former view propounded by Canada stresses on the safety of people from both violent and non-violent threats, freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety and even theirs rights (Chennoyand Tajbakhsh 2007). The later view articulated by Japan focuses on the security designed to protect people from threats to their livelihood and dignity such as poverty, diseases and environmental degradation. These two countries have proclaimed it the guiding principle of their respective foreign policies (Ibid).

Broadly, there are three schools of thought regarding the meaning and implications of the concept of Human Security. The first approach to Human Security called a rights-based approach focuses on legal rights and rule of law. It viewed that the main threat to Human Security lies in the denial of fundamental human rights including the right of national self-determination and the absence of rule of law. The second approach called safety of people approach (sometimes described as freedom from fear) is centred on the protection of people from violent threats i.e. war and also in viewing economic despair, social injustice and political instability. The third approach termed as sustainable human development approach (also referred as freedom from want) is associated with the United Nation's Development Report of 1994. The approach views Human Security in terms of economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security (Hampson 2002). Thus, looking at the above mentioned approaches, it becomes apparent that the focus of attention and concern of Human Security is the individual, rather that the state.

Human Security is mainly viewed to confront with threats at international level. Although some regional approaches to Human Security were launched by a series of nations like UNESCO studies for Arab states (2005), East Asia (2004) and Central Asia (2006) (Acharya, A et al. 2011). From the Indian perspective, two Human Security projects were development with the aim to provide specific tools that enable policy makers to address Human Security challenges, one was in 2007- 2008 in India's northeast region regarding conflict and development. The other was in 2008-09 in Orissa on the growing naxalite insurgency. Both studies have been undertaken in the context of development and conflict relation, given the fact both areas are conflicted ridden (Ibid). Therefore, these studies provide an ample ground to look into the conflict prone region namely the Kashmir valley from the perspectives of human security.

ORIGIN OF KASHMIR CONFLICT

After the partition of British India in 1947, one of the major regions namely Kashmir valley has been conflict prone area within national boundary as well as at the international level. This conflict is marked as one of the most complex situation wherein on the one hand two nuclear powers i.e, India and Pakistan are involved, while, on the other hand, the people of the valley of Kashmir developed alienation against the Indian federal rule (Schofield 2000). However, conventionally, Kashmir has been largely viewed from bringing peace through military intervention. But over the last six decades of independence, India suggests that development or underdevelopment of Kashmir persist or even intensify.

Throughout the Indian rule, the valley of Kashmir has witnessed militarization, economic deprivation, subjugation and indiscriminate violence including the denial of democratic processes, massive human rights violations, the manipulation of elections as well as jailing of political leaders (Behera 2000, Bose 2003). Also, the patterns of continuous exclusion and marginalization have entrenched the people of the valley a collective feelings of alienation from the Indian government. As a result, Kashmiris have been using the language of self- determination as a way of expressing their collective will in accordance to decide their own political future. However, it is not enough to locate the problems of valley in one dimensional way but demands multiple directions. For instance like of economics opportunity, persistent poverty, unemployment, industrial backwardness and so on has some way or the other way kept the valley in trap of underdevelopment.

Human Security Challenges in Kashmir Valley

On the path of securing human life, there are numerous challenges of which Human Security conception is identified and attempted to give adequate diagnosis. The central concern of human life has been absence of violence that otherwise imposes severe restriction. In this way, the emergence of militancy in late 1980s and early 1990s, led to massive human rights violations in the valley of Kashmir. Due to this violent conflict, thousands of civilians have died in regular clashes between separatist militants and security forces. The Srinagar based International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian Administered Kashmir (IPTK) and the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) prepared a 354 page report on human rights violations. The report said that an estimate of 8000 persons had disappeared in the past two decades, in addition to the death of more than 7000 people. It cited disclosers of more than 6000 unknown, unmarked and mass graves (Gayathri 2012).

The valley of Kashmir witnessed the presence of large number of armed groups and is claimed as the world's most heavily militarised places. These armed forces are operating under some draconian laws like Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and Armed Forces Special Powers Act and Public Safety Act (PSA). The AFSPA was promulgated in the valley of Kashmir in 1990 by which the armed forces possess the special powers. These special powers permit the armed forces to arrest and enter any property without warrant. Also, they are authorised to fire upon or otherwise use force and even causing to the death of any person, if the security person believes it necessary for the maintenance of public order (Singh 2011). In addition, the PSA which is only applicable to the state of Jammu and Kashmir by which a person can be detained for the period of two years without any trail vis-a-vis the detaining authority does not disclose the facts of detention. Under this act, estimates of the number of detainees in the last two decades could range from 8000- 20000 (Ibid). These special powers make the people of valley to live in a

state of constant fear of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearance, sexual harassment, torture and custodial death (Green, 1999) mentioned in (Duschinski 2009).

Under AFSPA, the armed forces find a free hand in the name of law and order and often became the perpetuators of human rights violations. According to the report prepared by two human rights groups namely Indian Administered Kashmir (IPTK) and Srinagar-based Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), almost 500 individual perpetrators including 235 army personal, 123 paramilitary personal, 11 J & K police personal and 31 government backed militants were involved in human rights violations over the last two decades (Gayathri 2012). Quoting Duschinshki (2009), under AFSPA, Kashmiris have become permanent prisoners of the state and through intensive militarization of Kashmiri society, India administered Kashmir valley through a form civil military authoritarianism.

Apart from militarisation and human rights violations, the Kashmir valley over the past 24 years of violent conflict has suffered from severe economic setbacks. Every sector of economy has been affected, be it the tourism, handicraft production, the horticulture, medium and small scale industries etc. The production of handicrafts in Kashmir valley has deteriorated during 1989-90 as Rs 150 crores from Rs 154 crores in 1988-98 and during the peak seasons of turmoil in summer 2008, 2009 and 2012,the production got further deteriorated (Ahamed & Yasmin 2012). Similarly, the conflict has hit hard the tourism sector leading to the heavy loss of tourism appetite. The tourism sector as being the main source of income in the valley suffered a virtual shutdown during the years of turmoil as the number of tourists visiting the valley per year had gone down from around 7,000,000 in the pre militancy days to a few thousand in the following years (Directorate of Handicrafts J & K Government 2012-13).

The presence of violent environment in the valley of Kashmir has affected the development by discouraging private investment and thereby pushing the economy towards stagnation. It had also created obstacles in effective implementation of the developmental policies initiated by public authorities. Also, the state is unable to generate its own resource mechanisms leading to further underdevelopment. In absence of any developed industrial setup, agricultural sector as being the major source of livelihood for the majority of the people also remained poor and underdeveloped. The lack of progress towards the agricultural sector is mainly because of unorganised marketing facilities and absence of export markets vis-à-vis inefficiency of state government to implement such policies that would have boost this sector.

The conflict in the valley had also increased the poverty leading towards malnutrition and hunger, thereby, creating food security issues. According to the official estimates, the total estimated Below Poverty Line (BPL) population ratio in the valley is nearly 13 lack people i.e, 21.37 Percent in 2012 (J and K Economic Survey 2012-13). In addition to the poverty, the valley is facing from acute unemployment problems as there are 3, 21,526 unemployed youth in the year 2012-13 (Kathju 2013). This unemployment further resulted in un-meeting of normal social life pushing towards further poverty. Also, the valley lags behind in terms of the literacy rate as it ranks to the 30th position at the national level (Raj 2013).

The Kashmir valley faced the Human Security challenges so far as the health security of the valley is concerned. Over more than two decades of the violent conflict, the valley witnessed thousands of deaths and injuries leading to thousands of people as limbs and orphans. The estimates showed that that the conflict has caused around 100,000 as orphans (Mcgivering 2000). Also, the health infrastructure has been heavily damaged which was already inadequate further added to the miseries of the valley. The conflict had also severely costed upon the health of women and children vis-à-vis on the mental health of the people. On the other hand, the valley lacks proper mental care facilities as there is single government psychiatric hospital with little capacity to provide proper treatment to psychiatric patients (The Hindu 2011).

In addition to the health problems, the conflict had further costed heavy damage to be infrastructure of the valley. The basic infrastructure of the valley i.e. roads, communication system, regular power supply and drinking water facilities remained poor in Kashmir (Mahapatra & Shekhwat 2008). Further, it is also estimate that from 1989 to 2002, over 1151 government buildings, 643 educational buildings, 11 hospitals, 337 bridges, 10729 private houses and 1053 shops have been gutted in some 5268 attacks on infrastructure (Ibid). Also, as per the survey findings, the road length per 100 km in Kashmiris is 35.71 km as against 104.64 km in the country. Comparatively, the communication facility is also inadequate as is evident that there is one post office for a 60 sq. area to the national average of 20 sq. km. The valley of Kashmir is also suffering from acute safe drinking water facilities as it is not available to 45% people in rural areas and 4% in urban area areas (Ahamed & Yasmin 2012).

The entrenchment of conflict and violence in the valley of Kashmir has deeply affected the human resource. The human resource suffered enormously in J and K due to large displacement of Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs from the valley as around 55000 Kashmiri Pandits families flee their homes and took shelter in Jammu and elsewhere in the country (Singh 2011). However, the migration of this community which changed their sociological and ecological setting had multiplicity of effects on their living conditions and survival (Arora and Dhingra 2005).

The impact of turmoil that Kashmir valley has suffered not only relates itself to social and political aspect, but also, environmentally. The environmental consequences have been enormously subjected to degradation and exploitation. The diversity comprising both flora and fauna has been greatly affected. The forest resources and natural habitat have been continuously degraded in the valley of Kashmir resulting in the loss the vast wild life

reserves which provide habitat for some rare and endangered species including the Snow leopard, Antelope, Hangul etc. More than 100 varieties of birds have virtually disappeared due to the loss of natural habitat.

The Kashmir valley over the years lost its size and beauty in terms of wetlands. The valley consists of 9 wetlands and experts reveal that these will vanish in less than 8 years if continue to be neglected by the state authorities (Mahapatra & Shekhwat, 2008). The water pollution due to the enforcement, sewage, and other relative pollutants could be seen in many lakes of the valley prominently the Dal, Aachar Lake and other water bodies like Jhelum. Thus, looking at the various indicators of human securityin Kashmir valley, no one would claim that the prospect and the condition of human life are under their control.

CONCLUSION

The concept of security has undergone drastic changes since the end of cold war. The focus has largely shifted from territorial defence to people's or community protection. It is within this context that human security emerged in the contemporary era and achieved a top priority concern. It is more human centric approach and included within its ambit the issues of social justice, economic development, human rights issues, environmental protection, health issues and so on. In this way, the valley of Kashmir gives heavy exercise to see what it offers. Also, the issues pertaining to valley of Kashmir provides ample scope to the study of challenges to human security.

While, looking at the Kashmir valley, there are several human security challenges mainly due to the internal conflict vis-à-vis Indo-Pak rivalry. The conflict initiated mostly after the British India's division in 1947 into two dominions India and Pakistan. Both the dominions wished to integrate the valley to their own side in order to broaden their political dimensions. The Indian leaders viewed that it is fruitful to merge Kashmir to its territorial ambit as the claim of India's secularist principle would be enhanced. Pakistan on the other hand claimed that majority of the population of valley belongs to Muslims as well as it bears close proximity in terms of geographical connectivity and socio-cultural set up with the Pakistan. Under such circumstances, the valley of Kashmir emerged as a disputed territory between the two countries on which three wars have been fought. The dispute was ultimately referred to United Nations Security Council in 1948 by the Indian government where decision was reached to conduct plebiscite under the UN supervision. But sooner, the Indian government developed cold feet on the matter due to internal political pressures and kept that decision aside. As a result, no plebiscite has taken place so far and the reason behind this can be understood as the reluctance as well as unwillingness imparted on the part of Indian government. The net resultant of this has been the several challenges in terms of economic, political and socio-cultural factors in the valley of Kashmir. Thus, the paradox of the applicability of human security in the valley of Kashmir become apparent.

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