

## **State of Human Security in Security State: A Case Study of Pakistan**

Received: 22 November 2021 Accepted: 1 April 2022 Published: 18 April 2022

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### **ABSTRACT**

Human Security is one of the novel concepts in international relations developed by the United Nations Development Projects (UNDP). The concept of human security revolves around protecting people from illiteracy, diseases, non-development, and food security. It describes how the state is developing and investing in human development and human capabilities. It is significant to note that international relations literature critically focuses on national security and the importance of state security. Most pundits of international relations do not give importance to human security and assert that the state should protect and invest in its national security instead of human security. However, some countries are utterly focused on national security and spend a significant amount on that, like Pakistan, which spends around 1.37 trillion Pakistani rupees (USD 8.78 billion) for 2021. According to the Asian Development Bank 24% of the population is living below the poverty line. This study is qualitative research that mainly employs case study methodology. Therefore, this paper analyzes whether illiteracy and poverty are a threat to the country's national security. How can national security be improved by investing in human security? This research analysis discovers that human security is equally essential for any state that profoundly focuses on national security and sovereignty by investing more in defense acquisition and military needs. In addition, the study concludes that lack of investment in human security is triggering extreme poverty, illiteracy, and religious radicalization, causing a direct threat to Pakistan's national security.

**Keywords:** National Security, Human Security, Poverty, Pakistan

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Human security is known as one of the idealistic and novel concepts in international relations developed by the United Nations Development Projects (UNDP), which works on human development globally. The UNDP Reports in 1994 prepared by Pakistani scholar Mahbub ul Hassan mentioned, for the first time, the notion of "human development", which means how the state is developing and investing in human development. Later, the notion was modified into "human security" (UNDP, 2006). It is noticeable that international relations literature critically focuses on the notion of security and the importance of state security, as well as survivability through international theories like the fundamental theory of realism, national security, and statism. The concept of "human security" is comparatively weedier and more intangible in international relations. Most pundits of international relations do not give importance to human security and assert that the state should protect its national security in the international system instead of human security. However, some countries are utterly focused on national security and spend a considerable amount on security, like Pakistan that consumed a significant chunk of its budget for defense. According to the World Bank, Pakistan is the fifth

most-populated country in the world and 60% of its population consists of youth aged from 20 to 30 years old (World Bank, 2021). World Bank reports also revealed that 24% of the population in Pakistan lives below the poverty line. The United Nations International Children Fund (UNICEF) reported in 2018 that 22 million children are out of school and 1.2 million are street children living in Pakistan (UNICEF, 2020). Such a figure shows how the human security situation is alarming in Pakistan.

Remarkably, Pakistan is also known as a nuclear country and has the 10th largest standing army globally, as well as fifty to one hundred nuclear weapons for deterrence and second-strike capability (BBC, 2018). Most of the national budget, around 8.78 billion USD, was used to maintain a modern army, missile technology, air force, and navy to improve national security (Grevatt & MacDonald, 2021). Meanwhile, the country invests only 2% on health and 2% on education (ISPS, 2019). In the war on terror, Pakistan lost seventy thousand civilians and half the economy. Most scholars called for countries to invest in poverty alleviation, education, health, and development, without which severe internal security threats and national security threats are caused. Besides, Pakistan is considered a significant but fragile state in the war on terror. The country is locked in a war with various internal conflicts, including local terrorist groups like the Pakistani Taliban, and international terrorism with Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Even in 2018, the last Chief of Army Staff Pakistan mentioned publicly that Pakistan has more threats from inside than the outside. Still, the country cut last year's budget even more on health and education and priority was given to defense procurement. However, a constant one-sided approach focusing only on national security through the military is causing a severe threat to internal security and national security. Therefore, this paper attempts to analyze how human security is equally essential for any state that profoundly focuses on national security. Whereas, ignoring human security could pose a viable threat to its national security from inside, like local militarization and local terrorism. In addition, this paper also attempts to analyze how lack of investment in human security is triggering extreme poverty, illiteracy, and religious radicalization, which is causing a more significant threat to Pakistan's national security. Therefore, this paper raised two critical questions: How are poverty and illiteracy threatening national security in Pakistan? How can national security be improved by investing in human security? Finally, the paper also provides brief recommendations on improving the human security situation in Pakistan.

## **2. METHOD**

This paper contributes a new approach to human security concerning national security. Most countries invest significantly to improve national security by arming the military and police. The paper has employed qualitative methodology, specifically case study methodology (Creswell, 2007). This case study will be based on analytical methods and develop an understanding on how Pakistan is currently investing the human security and show the current situation of human security. Presently, there is limited research present about human security relating to its impact on national security. Therefore, this paper aims to contribute and fill the gap on human security by showing how lack of human development, poverty, economic insecurity, and illiteracy could be a significant threat to Pakistan's national security. This paper will also use critical data from the United Nations Development Project's annual reports on the human development index, poverty index, peace index, and terrorism index related to Pakistan. In addition, the paper also analyzes the annual budget of Pakistan and develops an

understanding of how the country is investing in education, poverty alleviation, and human development locally. Analysis of these important reports and indicators could help to reveal the actual situation about current human security and national security situation in Pakistan.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Poverty: A Threat to the National Security of Pakistan**

Poverty plays a critical and complex threat to any country's national security, including Pakistan's national security. Poverty means ordinary people are deprived of opportunities and unable to develop the capabilities required to lead a basic human life, or people are excluded from society and development processes. Human security focuses on reducing poverty and providing a framework that pushes countries to work and enhance the capabilities of ordinary people who could have freedom from poverty, education, and economic insecurity. Furthermore, poverty also develops critical and massive income inequalities, joblessness, and lack of hope for the future. This may engender sufficient levels of fatalism, perhaps especially among educated, but under-employed, youth and also provides a breeding ground for terrorist foot soldiers who do not see future development and are easy to manipulate on the theme of western development and dominance. Pakistan also has an extended family system and, due to poverty, most parents send their children to religious schools known as madrassas<sup>1</sup>. Around 2.5 million children in Pakistan are enrolled in madrassas that provide free accommodation, food, and pocket money (Jorgic, 2017). Presently, the Pakistani Taliban, who are declared terrorist groups, mostly come from religious madrassas and fight against the state to implement sharia law (Mufti, 2012 p.44). Besides, it is worth noting that mostly uneducated and jobless youth are joining such groups. Therefore, poverty, lack of modern education, and unemployment provide easy steps to religious groups that could manipulate such youth against Pakistan in the war on terror which is still continue in Pakistan.

In addition, Pakistan has a flawed legal and economic system that grants few opportunities to ordinary people to develop themselves and triggers hopelessness in youth and people who are victims of unemployment, have no education, and few development opportunities. Therefore, some youths participate in street crimes, or join local and international terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban, causing threats to Pakistan's national security. According to the Physician of Social Responsibility report from 2015, in civil conflict and local terrorist actions, around 80,000 Pakistan lost their lives (PSR, 2015). In 2013, the Pakistani Army chief called the internal conflict a more significant threat to its national security. Therefore, countries like Pakistan have a weakened state capacity to provide essential human services. Social and welfare services are often inadequate, creating voids in areas like development, education, and health.

Consequently, people living in poverty send their children to madrassas for free education, food, and accommodation. Later, these youth could join extremists and radical groups and pose a grave threat to national security. Analysis results show that poverty is a direct threat to Pakistan's national security. The country constantly increases its national security budget and continues heavily ignoring human security, which could be an existential

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<sup>1</sup>Madrassas: In Arabic madrassas means school or university. However, in Muslim countries Madrassas means such schools that only provide religious education, free housing, food, clothing and pocket to children.

threat to Pakistan's national security. Thus, the result shows that a lack of investment in human security and security from poverty is causing a new internal threat to the security of Pakistan.

### **Illiteracy: A Threat to the National Security of Pakistan**

Education is a social tool for progress in society, which equips the youth to think about their future and provides a pathway to develop their lives. Presently, Pakistan has a 59% literacy rate, which implies that 100 million of Pakistan's population is illiterate in an age of globalization and information (World Bank 1, 2021). An educated youth and nation are the true wealth of any state, and they are motivated to support the state's national security. Unfortunately, around 22 million children are out of school in Pakistan and 2.1 children are street children in Pakistan shows meager situation of human security. National security is directly linked with the nation's development, whereas education is interconnected with its security. Pakistan is facing religious radicalization and the local war on terror that mostly comes from the northern areas of Pakistan, where the literacy rate is chronically low. Poverty touching is high, making these fertile grounds for terrorist recruitment as mostly illiterate youth join the Pakistani Taliban. The terrorist group promises that "sharia law" is the only governance system for Pakistan. According to Human Rights Watch, around 400 schools were destroyed in Pakistan by the Pakistani Taliban and in 2014, the group attacked a school and killed 143 students in Pakistan (HRW, 2017).

Further, Pakistan is also investing a minimal amount of its GDP into education in Pakistan, which also has a drastic impact on education. Even Pakistan's youngest Nobel Peace winner, Malala Yousef, who is promoting education in Pakistan, had an attempt on her life made by the Pakistani Taliban. It shows that illiteracy is an excellent source for militants to inspire the youth and motivate them to fight the religious war against Pakistan. Adding to the problem, Pakistan is also drastically ignoring education and spending only 2% of the budget annually, causing a threat to education and triggering more illiteracy; and providing a new breeding ground for terrorism in Pakistan (World Bank 2, 2021). In order to solve this, Pakistan should balance its national security by investing in human security. It is the only way forward to protect from this existential threat to Pakistan's national security.

### **Present State of National Security Situation of Pakistan**

The concept of security is an older political notion that means security from fear and danger. According to Amitav Acharya, the traditional security concept revolves around providing state protection from external threats like military aggression and other hostilities (Acharya, 2017). The concept of security emerged during the Cold War rivalry between communist and democratic blocs when the state became more focused on military security and national security. Most international relations policy experts developed and shared their narratives supporting state security and believe that state security is more important than human security. Traditionally the state invests in its security, maintaining a large army, deterrence, offensive and defensive capabilities to protect its national security. Even after the end of the Cold War, security does not change, yet the idea of security is constantly thriving and primarily focuses on protecting the state from any outside threat in the international arena.

On the other hand, the concept of national security is contesting and keeps evolving between two main actors: nation and security like modern weapons are important or development for a state. Security is a constant need of humans, who are a core element of any state. According to Plari, that national security notion appeared in WWII and mainly related to military-related safety of territory and population (Paleri, 2008). In addition, national security

means providing enough food to the nation and protecting it from famine, developing policies for agriculture to overcome famine, controlling crimes, and providing relief in the disaster. This also includes, developing industrialisation and a development system so the nation can have jobs, revenue, and opportunities to develop citizen's lives. Further, Plari also explained various approaches to national security depending on threats to nations like protecting ideologies of nations, government systems and providing equal justice to the nation, as well as protection from local threats like civil war or anarchy from inside the state (Paleri, 2008).

The concept of human security is newly emerging and revolves around the security of people who are a fundamental component of any state. Initially, the concept of human security appeared with the United Nations Development Project reports known as "Human Development Reports in 1994" that was developed by Pakistani Yale University scholars Mahbub Ul Hassan and Amartya Sen, who share the core concept of "human development". It focuses on human capabilities and shows how the state is providing capabilities to their people to develop themselves and overcome poverty. Later on, the notion of human development was modified into "human security". The notion of human security means that how the state invests in human development secures the right of individuals to develop and provides the capability to protect themselves from the negative fear of poverty, illiteracy, diseases and violence. The United Nations on Human Security mentions that the objectives and aim of human security are to safeguard human lives, enhance human freedom, and human fulfillment.

Further, Japan adopted human security as its core government step and defined it as "focusing on individual people and building societies in which everyone can live with dignity by protecting and empowering individuals and communities that are exposed to actual or potential threats" (JICA, 2006). This notion aims to promote international stability and security globally (Asteris, and Tzifakis, 2007). Japan also wants to show that military stability is not the only way to provide security to humans, but security could additionally be achieved through development of and investment in people to develop their capabilities. In order to reduce the vulnerability that afflicts peoples, communities and states, Japan also addresses four priority issues: poverty reduction, sustainable growth, global issues and peace-building, and bearing in mind the human security perspective. Therefore, UNDP went into detail and adopted the notion of human security like economic security, food security, health security, personal security, community security, and political security. It is important to note that security is the individual's primary concern. The state and citizens make a social contract, which guarantees protection and provides human security. Therefore, it is essential to state that it should provide human security to its citizens who are facing poverty, economic insecurity, illiteracy, food insecurity, and health insecurity threats.

### **Current Brief Human Security Situation in Pakistan**

Pakistan is the fifth most-populated country in the world, and according to UNDP, 64% of Pakistan's population consists of youth between 15 to 29 years of age. However, it is critically important to know that 24% of the country's population is living below the poverty line (ADB, 2021) and the UNDP human development index (HDI) report of 2019 ranked Pakistan 158 out of 189 countries. The human development report means how people and their capabilities are increasing. The HDI report also gives an understanding of the current development situation in the country. The HDI situation of Pakistan shows that Pakistani people face a lack of development, which may force them to join the militancy to earn their livelihood. In addition, the UNICEF reports mentioned that 22 million children in Pakistan are

out of school (UNICEF, 2021) and 2.1 million children live on the street (SPARC, n.d.). Illiteracy could be a critical reason for youth to join terrorism, militancy, and insurgency due to lack of employment and development opportunities. In addition, the Global Gender Gap Index 2020 report ranked Pakistan 151 out of 153 countries (Forum, 20) and the Global Terrorism Index 2020 reported Pakistan the 7<sup>th</sup> country out of 180 most impacted by international terrorism (GTI, 2020). Notably, the Global Hunger Index 2020 declared Pakistan 88<sup>th</sup> out 107 counties (GHI, 2020). In 2017, Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had 920 billion Pakistan rupees allotted to defence-related expenditure and only 1% (49 billion PKR<sup>2</sup>) of GDP allotted to health, 1% (35 billion PKR) for education, and less than 1% (12 billion PKR) for clean drinking water (Dawn, 2017). Therefore, it shows that Pakistan is investing an inadequate amount in human security compared to national security. In addition, the above reports show that the current human security situation is indirectly threatening Pakistan's national security.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it shows that national security directly relates to human security. Constitutionally state has an obligation to provide security to their citizen, including human security. Therefore, it is the fundamental duty of the state of Pakistan to protect its citizens from external threats and internal threats like poverty and illiteracy. Besides, Pakistan's nuclear state and the global terrorism index show it is the 7<sup>th</sup> most affected due to global terrorism (GTI, 2020). In addition, due to poverty and illiteracy, Pakistan youth are hopeless and vulnerable to local insurgency and international terrorism. It is also important to note that Pakistan is investing in defence and security capabilities annually by increasing its defence budget and acquiring modern equipment for its armed forces.

In contrast, the country drastically ignores human security, only keeping 2% of the budget for education and 2% for health, which triggers the rise of poverty and illiteracy in Pakistan. Both threats are gravely increasing due to a lack of investment in human security and focusing more on traditional security theatre. Further, due to chronic poverty and illiteracy, Pakistan's northern areas connected with Afghanistan become fertile ground to local militancy, religious terrorist groups, and international terrorism that directly threaten Pakistan's national security. Thus, it is essential that Pakistan should balance its GDP expenditure by developing a robust institutional mechanism that focuses on and improves human security with the lens of national security.

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<sup>2</sup> PKR: The Pakistani rupee, abbreviated PKR and 1 US Dollar equal to 175 PKR.

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