

Human Security and Food Security in Bangladesh

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of 'Security' as defined by Peter Lieberman means 'is the protection of a state; person, property and organization from the any type of attacks. Security is mainly the degree of protection against several fears as in danger, damage, loss, and criminal activity. Security is a structure and processes that give or make security better as a condition. It contains state security, regional security, social security and human security etc.' (Lieberman 2010). Using the same definition one may underline here that security is not a new concept it is old concept since human being started living in the groups. The concept of security is very dynamic and broad. Time to time great scholars and thinkers gave different interpretation to the concept. The ways of thinking were different among those thinkers, some time these were totally opposite, but the core issue remains one. In the traditional way security means the interaction among the states used to be the main focus. But modern concept of security rejected traditional and typical security model which basically emphasizes on security of the state instead of security of an individual. After the Second World War in a real way UN system was established to take care of or to protect security of the common people; the UN principle for security was in the beginning emphasized on the practices that could be an indication of threat to a state (Jolly and Basu 2006: 3).

There are two types of security, traditional security (state centric) and modern security (Human centric). The first type of security has traditionally been interpreted as territorial security from external hostility or aggression, or also as safeguard of national interests of a nation's foreign policy or as global level security from the hazard or risk of a nuclear holocaust. Consequently, it is much more connected with the nation-states than to people. And at the same time the second type of security like Human security is well connected with the security of individuals (Ghanbari, 2011).

Human security :

According to the definition of Human Development, which was reported in 1994, human

security has been defined as “safety from chronic threats and protection from sudden hurtful disruptions in the patterns of people’s daily life”. It is worthwhile to see that a disruption and recklessness in human security can cause serious damage to people’s lives (Walter 2003).

Human security is the security of the individual. The other security like national security, Regional security, and global security are biased on the human security. The notion of human security is gaining worldwide acceptance in recent years, especially after the end of the Bio polar World System. Kofi Annan says, “Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict”. He goes on to say that: “Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment these are the interrelated building blocks of human and therefore national security” (Annan 2001). According to the report of UNDP 1994, it has been discussed by UN that the scope of global security needs to be spread so that it can include threats in seven areas: “economy security, food security, health security, person security, community security, environment security and political security”. Economic security means that ‘individual should have some basic income to full fill his basic needs’ (Ghanbari 2011). This security is important for the ‘development, political stability and other disputes’. Food security is ‘main thing to alive for anyone. After the end of Cold War the environment security is most focus point on both national and international level. Its aims are to provide the clean water air without pollution and hygienic place for leave (ibid).

Kanti Bajpai, the Indian scholar gives a lucid explanation to the matter of Human Security. As far as he says, “human security is the ideas that demonstrate how safe and free we are as individual?”. The chief question here remains far behind the idea of human security (Bajpai 2000: 195-228). Amartya Sen is also talks broadly about the human security. He says that “Human security is *promotion of basic human freedoms as on grassroots economic growth*”. Amartya Sen says that “richness of human life is more important, rather than the richness of the economy in which human beings lives, which is only a part of the human security” (Sen 2000: 2-11). Barry Buzan examines human security in the form of, “freedom from the threat and the ability of the state and society to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile” (Buzan 1991: 431-451). Buzan goes on to say that “the main point of security is survival, but it also clearly includes a substantial range of concern about the situation of existence” (ibid).

Links Between Human Security, Food and Environment Security :

Studies demonstrate that: “The linkage between human and environmental security takes both a conceptual and a pragmatic approach to complex environmental issues such as soil erosion, desertification, water degradation, demographic shifts, food security and agricultural prospects, urbanization trends, hazard-induced migrations those affect Gender and human security. Environmental security is an important part of human security and it aims to protect people from the short and long term ravages of nature, man-made threats in nature, and deterioration of the natural environment” (Khagram et al. 2003: 1).

Environmental degradation has a determinate impact on Gender and Human Security, because its impact comes as a form of social, economic and other disturbances. The

environment degradation is increasing with time especially after industrialization (Westing 2001 and Sain, 2015).

Human activity is big reason of environment degradation. Environment degradation normally remained uneven and relatively localized by the period of European global extension and industrial revolution. The increase use of new technologies, fast economic growth, and rising population in this period, generated increasing energy and resource consumption. Development means positive change, not the negative changes in environment. But in reality there are mostly negative change in environment and which have strong control on the Gender and human security issues. Positive change is aim of every welfare system (Dunne 2013: 266-281).

Generally women are responsible for food arrangements and environment degradation has much negative impact on women's life and gender security, either directly (like disease) or indirectly (like unemployment, poverty, migration, conflict etc.). The violation and marginalization of women is related to violation of nature, mainly in the third world. Women produce and reproduce life not only biologically, but also through their social role in providing nourishment. "All ecological societies of forest dwellers and peasants, whose life is organized on the principle of sustainability and the reproduction of life in all its richness, also embody the feminine principle"(Shiva 1997: 62). The common case of the linkage between climate change and gender and human security is often a result of "resource intensive, sometimes resource-wasting patterns of production and consumption, and of inadequate agricultural practices" (Carius 2012: 1-2).

Environment and Food Security :

Today the Global food crisis, hunger and malnutrition have become one of the most important and crucial issues. Nowadays hundreds of people in the world are dying from starvation and suffering because of food shortage. The recent news of FAO of the United Nations tells the number of undernourished people worldwide has reached over one billion, which is equal to one sixth of the world's population. Even though the attention on the world food supply is growing and aid efforts by many organizations are expanding, the world food crisis continues with daily hunger and malnutrition (Enkhbayar 2009).

Food Security in Bangladesh :

According IFO "Food security, is a situation when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Nath, Narayan Chandra 2015:5). Food, in the hierarchy of needs, is the most basic need for sustenance of life and is the perennial problem issue for healthy and active life of mankind. Food security is not just an economic problem but also a social and political issue in as much as food insecurity is a factor to create political instability in the country. Food security is a basic factor for development of human capital and starter for overall development of the society. Right to adequate and stable supply of safe food is a constitutional right of the people in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh is firmly committed to the progressive realization of the right to food, as enshrined in the Constitution (Nath, Narayan Chandra 2015:3).

Though share of rural areas in food insecurity is much high, over time, urban share of food insecurity has been increasing. Its share has increased from 9% in 1973 to 21% in 2010 in case of moderate insecurity and from 6% in 1973 to 31% in 2010 in case of extreme food insecurity. Urban share of extreme insecurity among the total food insecure has increased from 3% in 1973 to 17% in 2013, i.e. increased by 13.5% point as against decline of extreme food insecurity in rural areas by 11%. Thus, though rural food insecurity tends to decrease, urban share in food insecurity has been increasing. Increase of urban food insecurity may be the result of migration of food-poor people from the rural areas to the urban centers without prior arrangement of earnings, food and accommodation (Nath, Narayan Chandra 2015:28). Nutritional Status of Women Maternal undernutrition (body mass index less than 18.5 kg/m²) in non-pregnant women in the country, while declining from 54 percent in 1996–1997 to 38 percent in 2003 and 35% in 2011, is still very high. Along with underweight, the women are suffering from overweight (20%) (Nath, Narayan Chandra 2015:36).

Bangladesh is still a largely agricultural country in terms of employment, it is severely land poor and the incidence of landlessness is rising. Conflicts over land and assets are very widespread and the source of considerable insecurity and violence (Khan Mushtaq H. 2005). Bangladesh has rich biological resource base for fish production. In terms of nutrition, fish occupies a significant position in the dietary habits of the people. The growth in fish production was sluggish in the 1970s; it picked up in the 1980s, and was very rapid (7 percent per year) in recent years due to the expansion of pond aquaculture. The growth in the production of meat and milk has remained unsatisfactory despite the expansion of the poultry industry. With economic progress the demand for animal products has been growing fast. The growth in livestock and poultry farming is constrained by lack of feed, risk imposed by avian flu and other animal diseases, and poor processing, storage and marketing infrastructure. In Bangladesh, 70 percent of the people live in rural areas where agriculture is the major occupation. Almost 60 percent of the rural households are engaged in farming. The farming household can access their food from self-production and/or trading the surplus with other foods available in the local market. But the landownership is unequally distributed, and so is the access to food from self-production. Almost 30 percent of the households do not own any land and another 30 percent own only up to half an acre. Such tiny landownership is insufficient to meet the food needs of four to five-member households, whatever advanced technology the farmer use. The hike in food prices after the food crisis in 2007 has had a negative impact on the real wages and access to food. Sharp increase in food grain prices significantly lowers the real income of poor households who spend over half of their income on staple food. At the same time the instability in producer prices increases risks and uncertainty, and discourages the subsistence farmer to invest in agriculture. The volatility in food prices remains an issue for achieving seasonal and temporal stability in food security (Hossain 2013).

Challenges for Food Security in Bangladesh :

The challenge of improving food security involves an interdependent set of factors involving government policy and institutions, domestic production system, environment and international trade. The complex of several factors magnifies the challenge of achieving

food security: persistent poverty and undernourishment, persistent population pressure, low level of investment in agricultural research and development and changing consumption trends inclined to non-cereal products without adequate technological preparation. There is a high undernourishment of people in Bangladesh and this is a cause of underweight, stunting and wasting of children. Often, the poorest members of society are unable to access food at an affordable price. The country produces and procures from external sources enough calories to meet their nutritional needs, but they frequently lack physical or economic access to food. Barriers include income poverty, inadequate storage and transportation infrastructure, trade barriers, political instability and lack of food safety and quality. Other challenges are land degradation and diminishing productivity of land, climate change, agricultural diseases, weak governance in food management and weak coordination among agencies in the way of efficient food management, Inequality of Income in the society (Nath, Narayan Chandra 2015: 41).

The main challenge for achieving and sustaining food security comes from continuing growth of population. The population is still increasing by 1.8 million every year. Rice production has to increase by four lakh tonnes every year to meet the need for staple food for the growing population. The increase in domestic production at that rate would be difficult due to several supply side factors. Bangladesh is often at the mercy of natural calamities such as floods, droughts and cyclones. Riverine Bangladesh also witnesses frequent land erosion causing thousands of people to lose their land every year (Hossain 2013).

The arable land has been shrinking by 0.6 percent every year due to demand from housing and industries, and infrastructure, as well as loss of land from river erosion. With global warming and climate change, another one-sixth of the land may be submerged with brackish water due to rising sea levels. The on-going climate has made the monsoon more erratic, raising risks in food production. The soil fertility has been declining due to overexploitation of soil nutrients, and imbalanced use of fertilisers. The ground water aquifer has been going down from over-mining for irrigating boro rice. The low hanging fruits with regards to irrigation expansion and technological progress have already been harvested. Due to all these factors the potential for further increase in production is getting limited (Hossain 2013). Other thing is that the more difficult challenge is accelerating the growth in the production of non-rice foods, such as pulses, oils, fish and animal products, whose demand has been growing fast with economic prosperity. It must reduce the growing import dependence of food to insulate the domestic market from the volatility of the world market (ibid).

Government measures :

Ensuring food security for all is one of the major challenges that Bangladesh faces today. Despite significant achievements in food grain production and food availability, food security at national, household and individual levels remains a matter of major concern for the country and it's Government. Since Independence, Bangladesh has made significant progress in increasing domestic production of food grains (Nath, Narayan Chandra 2015: 3).

Bangladesh has achieved considerable success in the last two decades in terms of economic growth and progress towards some critical MDGs. With growth rates of 5.2% per

annum over 2000-04, Bangladesh was one of several Asian economies enjoying a sustained growth spurt over two decades. But there is a widespread perception, not least within Bangladesh, that in terms of governance and aspects of wellbeing related to human security, performance has not improved over this period and some aspects of human security may even be deteriorating. Personal security and the security of property is a serious concern for many Bangladeshis (Khan Mushtaq H.2005).

In Bangladesh a number of international NGOs including Oxfam and Action Aid, as well as local rights NGOs such as Angikar Bangladesh Foundation and Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, are holding national forums - including briefings with parliamentarians - on food rights. The National Human Rights Commission is advising the government on food as a human right (Irin 2013).

The Land Reform in 1984 stipulated a minimum wage equivalent to 3.5 kg of rice at the prevalent market price. The rice equivalent wage had increased from about three kg in 1990 to nearly 8 kg in 2011. The only low groups who have not been able to increase their real income are industrial labourers, particularly the unskilled workers in the garment industry and the fixed wage earners in the public sector (Hossain 2013).

Monisha Biswas, policy and advocacy manager for international NGO Oxfam in Bangladesh, said even though Article 15 of the constitution recognizes the state's responsibility to secure the "basic necessities of life" for its citizens, - including food, it does not recognize a person's right to food. While the 2012 Global Hunger Index noted Bangladesh was one of seven countries that made the most "absolute progress" among 120 evaluated countries in slashing rates of hunger from 1990-2012, its level was still in the "alarming" range (Irin 2013).

Despite the gains achieved by Bangladesh in augmenting availability of staple food, a safety net programme is essential to insulate the poverty-stricken population from chronic as well as temporary food insecurity that results from external shocks. A number of food safety net programmes are in operation in Bangladesh, each with its own specific objectives and target population. These include test relief, Vulnerable Group Feeding, Vulnerable Group Development, Food for Work, Employment Guarantee Scheme, etc. A number of social protection programmes such as vulnerable group feeding, allowance for destitute women, and old age pensions have also been introduced to support food security of the extremely needy people. The present government has given high priority to the safety nets for ensuring food security. Currently nearly 2.2 percent of the GDP are allocated for safety nets and social protection (Hossain 2013).

Despite the government laying out its commitment in 2012 to food security "for all people of the country at all times" at least 31 percent of the population still lack nutritious life-sustaining food. According to the most recently published National Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) from 2011, 40 percent of children are too short for their age (known medically as "stunting"), a harbinger of lifelong development delays and one of the leading causes globally of brain damage. Some 36 percent of the surveyed children in Bangladesh under five were underweight for their age. Despite the government's commitment to fight malnutrition through the Sixth Five Year Plan 2011-2015, its policies are ineffective due to limited distribution of nutritional supplements, inadequate growth monitoring and lack of skilled

personnel, according to the UN World Food Programme. The Washington-DC headquartered International Food Policy Research (IFPRI) has said Bangladesh's food safety-net programmes poorly target the neediest who miss out on safety-net programmes, including "vulnerable group development" and "vulnerable group feeding" (IRIN 2013).

Conclusion

Human security is very broad and old concept, in the recent years its gaining worldwide accept, reason is the speed of globalization, emergence of nontraditional threats, emergence of welfare state and democracy, all are working one center point that is human security. In the UNDP report 1994 by Mahbub ul Haq there are seven type of human security, all are interdependent, but environment security, food security and health security are basis for alive. These are closely interrelated. Present time environment degradation is most challenge inerrant of world, and its effects are on food production health.

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