

# Introduction: Human Security from Concept to Practice

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The origins of the idea of “human security” can be related (if not traced back) to the growing dissatisfaction with the prevailing notion of development and security in the 1960s–1980s. With the end of the Cold War, calls for new thinking in security matters grew rapidly. In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its *Human Development Report*, sought, for the first time, to broaden the traditional notion of security focused on military balances and capabilities to include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. The second important intervention on human security was that of the Canadian government and various Canadian academics, led by Lloyd Axworthy, Foreign Minister of Canada (1996–2000), who spearheaded the Middle Powers Initiative. The Canadian approach concentrated on the goal of “freedom from fear”, calling for the safety of people from both violent and non-violent threats. The broadest category of definition of human security adds “a life of dignity” to freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Human security, thus, seems to appear as an endless debate between its proponents and critics and even among its advocates, who have not agreed on a single unified definition. What is most relevant is not how new human security is, but rather what makes it a new

concept in both the theoretical and practical realms, considering possible policy perspectives and implications. By designating the individual, rather than the state, as the “referent object of security”, human security is emerging as a framework that can serve as a means to evaluate threats, foresee crises, analyze the causes of discord and propose solutions entailing a redistribution of responsibilities.

An ongoing debate in the academic world over the utility of human security concerns the feasibility of its measurement. Human security, like human development, varies widely along regional lines and therefore cannot be understood or applied, let alone politicized, in the same way across all regions. Regional approaches to human security were launched by a series of UNESCO studies for Arab states (2005), Latin America and the Caribbean (2005), East Asia (2004) and Central Asia (2006). Thus, it would be interesting to examine how threats are connected at the local, national, regional and global levels. In view of this, an attempt has been made through this study to develop a set of human security indicators in the context of a state like Orissa, located on the eastern coast of India.

Against this backdrop, the Asian Dialogue Society, with support from The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, developed a two-year human security project for India whose major objective was to develop specific tools that would enable policymakers to address human security challenges. The first year of the project, 2007–2008, was undertaken in India’s northeast region, which has seen a spiral of both conflict and underdevelopment for decades. The second phase of the project, undertaken during 2008–2009, looked at Orissa, one of the poorest states of India, where there has been a growing Naxalite insurgency. Together, these two case studies offered a unique opportunity to explore the nexus between conflict and development as well as the intriguing relationship between freedom from fear and freedom from want, the two core elements of the human security paradigm.

Our project has three distinct aspects which differentiate it from other works on human security. First, we have developed a human security governance index that measures both challenges to human

security and responses to human insecurity. While the UNDP's *Human Development Report* has covered countries and there has been a growing trend towards human development reports at the subnational (state or provincial) level, we do not yet have tools for comparing states in a regional context (within sovereign states) or at the district level. Our project makes an attempt to develop such an index and ranking system, thereby increasing the usefulness of human security as a policy tool. It is our hope that policymakers at national, state and district levels will find the index useful in prioritizing their responses to human security challenges and channeling development assistance from outside.

A second aspect of our project is the development of a mapping tool that can be applied to assess the state of human security in conflict zones. While such tools exist for other regions of the world, and more broadly covering entire continents or on a global scale, we do not have such mapping for the long-standing conflicts in Northeast India. Our project provides a comprehensive assessment of the human costs of the Northeast India conflicts, and in the process offers a framework that may have applicability for other conflicts.

Third, our project seeks to develop a human security impact assessment (HSIA) methodology. The usefulness of such a tool is self-evident. While it has become commonplace to do environmental impact assessment (EIA) for investment, industrial or infrastructural projects, HSIA is of a much broader scope than EIA because the former takes into account long-term local political and social factors that may affect the success or failure of a project designed to improve human security. For example, it helps us to understand local political resistance to large industrial or infrastructural projects which have an obvious potential to benefit the local population. We hope that the ideas and methodology suggested in our studies will be of benefit to governments, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) before they design development projects, so that obstacles to the implementation of these projects can be minimized and their potential to promote long-term human security and human development can be fully realized.

## The Northeast India Project

A large section of people in India's northeast region now live in a web of insecurities, conditions very often not created by them. Delving deeper into the causes, one could ascertain that this is in fact largely due to the failure of the state. The most apparent indicators of insecurity for human beings are poverty and unemployment, for which the fallout is huge. To ensure human security, the approach lies in developing human capital: there should be no school dropouts and ample scope for skill enhancement, the state and society should guarantee a congenial environment and ensure good governance, people should have equitable access to jobs and markets and sustainable job opportunities, and there should be no depletion of social capital.

Since Indian independence, the seven states comprising the northeast region of India have undergone spells of crisis periods one after the other, but their nature and dimensionalities have yet to be properly understood and addressed. At the surface level, people tend to hold the militants and insurgents responsible for the region's backwardness. However, many hidden elements are often ignored, such as deficient infrastructure, limited and constrained access to opportunities, and governance failure. All of these require a long-term development strategy in order to convert the resources of the region productively. They should also ideally reflect an increased sense of security in the social, economic, political, environmental and other relevant spheres.

Against this backdrop, it is important to index the status of human security and gauge the capacity of the state's norms and institutions to deal with the threats of insecurities. The study is based on 14 indicators — poverty, rural youth unemployment, school dropouts, infant mortality, morbidity, crimes against children, crimes against women, incidences of corruption, encroachment of forest area, non-adoption of the right policies, gap between budgeted and actual spending in social sectors, pending cases in courts, occurrence of incidences of violence and presence of security personnel — which form a composite index of human insecurity. The index ranks the states according to their level of insecurity within the region as well as in the

context of the country. The indicators are further divided into the three categories of development, threat and governance, and the states are then ranked accordingly. For rational ranking, factor analysis is employed, which provides weights to the indicators based on their dispersion in the data matrix.

Certain factors (insecurity of women and children, unemployment, pending cases in courts, poverty and encroachment of forest) rank Tripura as the most insecure state for human beings in the region, followed by the states of Assam and Manipur. In the context of development insecurity, however, Assam ranks first in the region, followed by Tripura and Nagaland. Threat insecurity is perceived to be highest in the state of Tripura, followed by Manipur and Nagaland. The indicators of governance insecurity show that Meghalaya is the most poorly governed state in the region, followed by Manipur and Assam. Including the country average in the ranking, it is reflected that overall the country ranks higher in the insecurity index than most Northeast Indian states, and that governance indicators rank the country highest in the insecurity index. On the other hand, the country as a whole is better placed in terms of insecurity from threats than the seven states of the region. The study indicators largely reflect negative outcomes resulting from an absence of approaches to good governance, as the approaches fail to deliver the dividends of livelihood security and socioeconomic prosperity in the region.

While Chapter 1 offers a comprehensive view of human security, combining both freedom from fear and freedom from want, in Chapter 2 Nani G. Mahanta argues that the key conflict management problem in Northeast India is definitional. Essentially, Mahanta believes that the solutions to resolve the security dilemmas existing in Northeast India could be more effectively identified and implemented by taking a more considered approach toward defining the underlying roots of these protracted conflicts.

Two aspects of Mahanta's work distinguish it from previous efforts concerning this conflict zone. The first is Mahanta's presumption that, by applying the human security notions of freedom from fear and freedom from want, a better measurement of insecurity can be achieved, thus providing an improved understanding of how to

address the security challenges affecting this region. The second is Mahanta's belief that solutions to the security situation in Northeast India have been particularly elusive because external explanations of the central issues in these local conflicts have dominated the conflict resolution processes which have occurred up to now; therefore, the principal concerns of people living in these conflict zones have, unimaginably, not been taken into account.

To address this information deficit, Mahanta employed a field study and questionnaire with people living in the conflict zones of Northeast India to better understand their perspectives on security threats and their opinions about methods for addressing these threats. The survey included 2,552 respondents. From the survey results, Mahanta drew these conclusions about the residents' perceived threats:

- Armed groups are identified as a first source of threat;
- Insecurity caused by the state is identified as a second source of threat; and
- Transnational sources, such as narcotics trafficking, arms proliferation and regional insurgencies, are a third source of threat.

Based on these local perspectives, Mahanta observes that the following areas merit strengthened emphasis in the conflict resolution process:

- Governance — Insecurity caused by a weak state provides fertile ground for violence.
- Scrapping of draconian laws and reduced power of security forces — Civilians are threatened by the constant harassment of state security forces.
- Peace dialogue — People want conflicts resolved through dialogue, not repression.
- Civil society initiative — The people in the region can be part of the solution.
- A greater South Asian and Southeast Asian destiny — Northeast India cannot continue to ignore the benefits that could be derived by developing closer regional ties.

- Decentralization of federal offices in Northeast India — Decentralization could help in preventing corrupt public offices.

In Chapter 3, Dilip Sarma *et al.* use the conflict situation in India's northeast geographic region as a test bed to examine the assertion that there exists a causal, symmetrical relationship between underdevelopment and conflict. The authors conclude that underdevelopment is not necessarily the root cause of conflict in this region, but that unequal distribution and the perception of being left out of the development process seems to be the cause of conflict. Accordingly, the authors believe that all development projects are not necessarily beneficial for broad-based socioeconomic development and political stability, and emphasize the need for HSIA to be undertaken when development projects are proposed. In the authors' analysis, HSIA is defined as the process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating those effects of proposed development projects and physical activities that may impair the human security of a certain section of the population. The rationale for HSIA is very much adapted from that which brought EIA to prominence in public policy debates concerning the need to protect the natural environment from industrial processes. An HSIA should be seen as a precautionary measure to prevent unintended consequences such as the potential impairment of human security requirements of resident communities.

Sarma *et al.* outline the key elements of an HSIA:

1. Screening — An initial determination of potential human security impacts of the proposed project and whether a full HSIA will be required is made.
2. Scoping and preparation of the terms of reference (ToR) — This involves the identification of key issues and impacts that need to be addressed.
3. Impact analysis — A systematic prediction and evaluation of each human security impact identified in the ToR is carried out.
4. Mitigating measures — Measures to prevent, minimize, offset or compensate for the impairment of human security due to the project are drawn up.

5. Monitoring — This entails compliance monitoring, mitigation monitoring and impact monitoring.
6. Final documentation — The entire HSIA process should be documented and made available for reference.

## **The Orissa Project**

Moving to Orissa, we have, as a first step, developed a human security index for the districts, thereby differentiating this project from the Northeast India project, in which the index and ranking were done for states. Chapter 4 presents the index. In light of the availability of information from authentic secondary sources and periodicals over 10 years (1998–2007), seven human security indicators were developed for Orissa: number of households living below the poverty line, number of people affected by malaria, number of deaths due to natural calamities, number of deaths due to dowry, incidences of communal violence, habitations not having access to safe drinking water and change in forest cover. Each indicator was assigned a specific weightage by using the principal component analysis (PCA) method for three time periods, i.e. the years 1998, 2002 and 2007. As per the weightage, each of the 30 districts in Orissa was ranked in terms of human insecurity for the three time periods mentioned above.

The composite score of human insecurity and ranking has changed over the years in different districts of Orissa. As per the scoring, 60% and 63.34% of districts had a moderate-to-least level of human insecurity in 1998 and 2002, respectively; while 40% and 36.74% of districts had a high-to-extremely-high level of human insecurity in 1998 and 2002, respectively. The general trend shows that the level of human insecurity decreased from 1998 (15 districts) to 2002 (13 districts), and then increased in 2007 (16 districts). Khurda remained the most insecure district in Orissa from 1998 to 2007, which otherwise occupies the top position as per the Human Development Index (HDI) ranking. This insecurity has been created due to the huge amount of loss of forest for urbanization and the highest number of deaths due to dowry. Out of all 30 districts in Orissa, 4 districts (13%) in 1998, 2 districts (6.67%) in 2002 and 5 districts (16.6%) in 2007 were found

to be extremely insecure districts after clustering the index over the three time periods. The district of Gajapati was ranked as the most secure district in Orissa from 1998 to 2007 due to the increase in percentage of forest cover as well as the negligible occurrence of both communal violence and dowry-related deaths of women.

A perusal of the performance level of selected indicators during 1998–2007 reveals striking facts regarding the state of human security in Orissa. Some indicators have improved in performance, while others have deteriorated. These attributes exhibit spatial as well as temporal variations, and these discrepancies are quite evident from the data analysis. For instance, the indicators “percentage of people living below the poverty line” and “number of people affected by malaria” have exhibited a vastly improved performance over the 10 years. This does not mean that all other indicators are not performing, but the degree of consistency of these two indicators is higher than that of the others. Overall, no co-relation was found between economic development and human insecurity in the state of Orissa.

The paradigm shift away from national or international security to the security of people has far-reaching implications on actors and institutions at the domestic level. The state has the primary responsibility for the provision of human security for its citizens. Thus, an attempt was made to assess the performance of the state of Orissa against five carefully selected governance indicators: social sector budget allocation and expenditure, access to elementary education, expenditure on health and family welfare, presence of police and security personnel, and level of corruption.

The performance levels of the different governance indicators have been mixed. The share held by the social sector in total state expenditure is still precarious. The dropout rate of primary school students remains high, despite government requirements stating that elementary education should be free and compulsory. The poor performance of Orissa in most of the health indicators has become a major concern. The number of police/security personnel per lakh population was found to be well below the national average. The recent trend of increasing left-wing extremist activities in Orissa has put an extra burden for more police presence. Furthermore, as Orissa

is on the path of rapid industrialization, various critical issues like the protection of tribal rights and land acquisition have emerged with a potential for law and order problems. It is commonly recognized that corruption, which has become a universal phenomenon, unless kept in check, can undermine the finest systems. As per the findings of the India Corruption Study 2005, Orissa ranked ninth among the 20 states of India and the judiciary in Orissa ranked among the top four corrupt services in the country. The 2007 study placed Orissa in the category of a “high” corrupt state.

As seen from the above findings, the Human Insecurity Index (HII) tries to convert perception to objectivity by using some qualitative and quantitative data. This is not to say that the HII does not need much refinement; rather, it is a richer and more interesting indicator than the HDI, particularly when developing a composite index at the micro level (district, block or village). The present work on the HII demonstrates that there is considerable potential for such an index when used in the context of measuring sustainability, development and human security.

Chapter 5 parallels the Northeast India project by developing an HSIA methodology for Orissa. HSIA is the process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the adverse effects of proposed development projects by assessing the ills of installed or to-be-installed projects. The purpose of developing an HSIA methodology is not to negate development projects on the grounds that they may have adverse human security implications. Instead, the aim is to anticipate adverse human security impacts, prepare mitigation plans and incorporate these in the project, make contingency provisions for any unforeseen fallout and incorporate a human security monitoring mechanism in the overall project monitoring system.

The key features of the proposed HSIA methodology are as follows:

- Communities are oriented to respond. Respondents need to be persuaded to respond happily and guided inspiringly to answer.
- The domains to focus on include economic, environmental, sociocultural and governance-related.

- For any single domain, not more than 10 questions must be asked to ensure there is no respondent fatigue.
- A focus group discussion is held with no more than 30 participants spread over, at the most, 90 minutes without a video camera. A hidden audio recorder may be preferred.
- A case study method is included that entails observing and narrating the situation, explaining problems, describing intervention techniques and finally presenting the outcome.
- The target communities are chosen longitudinally and/or cross-sectionally to project contrast in absolute terms.

Finally, Chapter 6 presents a survey of three Naxal-affected districts in Orissa, India. The Naxalite movement, which began as a communist-led peasant movement in the Koraput and Ganjam districts of Orissa in the 1960s, is now perceived as a huge law and order problem in as many as 15 districts of Orissa. The activities of the Naxalites have so far been restricted to killing police and security personnel and police informers, abducting wealthy businessmen and contractors for a ransom, looting state armories and intimidating corrupt government officials. The deployment of security forces has been the biggest consumer of resources rather than food, shelter or health security needs. A survey was undertaken in the three worst-affected districts of Orissa (Malkangiri, Gajapati and Sundargarh) to uncover the perceptions of common people about different threats to human security due to Naxalite activities. As per the findings of the survey, the common people attribute the root causes of Naxalite activities to poor governance and failure of the state to ensure public good. About 93.3% of respondents cited unemployment as well as poverty and lack of basic facilities as the main causes of insurgency. The Naxal movement has sustained itself because it revolves around marginalized people of the state. The inaccessible hilly terrain, dense forests, lack of development, grievances of the tribals and poor, and absence of administration have been conducive to the spread of left-wing extremism in Orissa.

Although there is a lot of hype and furore over the Naxalite activities in the state, one conclusion is indisputable, albeit strangely so.

Like in most other regions of India, the self-claiming Naxalites have no projected vision or declared mission. There is no indication whatsoever that they are demanding appropriate development action for the backward communities of the non-coastal districts where they have been operating. Not once has it been made clear by the cadres that their mission is to bring socioeconomic and political justice to the poor, long-neglected regions. Obviously, without any ideological focus or clarity, these outfits have been focusing on making quick money by attracting misguided youth with the bait of living a dignified life of “pleasure through courage”.

Insecurity, as it emerges from the survey findings, is not only a problem of physical safety, but also one of deprivation and restricted access to health and education facilities as well as social and economic opportunities. Human security, as perceived by common people, is not just the end of Naxalite activities; it also refers to the ability to go about one’s business safely, to have a job, to move around freely, to have access to education for children, to live a healthy life, etc. Hence, insecurity should not be dealt with through short-term military solutions, but rather through a long-term comprehensive strategy that abides by the promises of development and realization of entitlements. It should promote public policies and state-building efforts that reduce local incentives which trigger insecurities in the first place.