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D. P. K. Pillay

Abstract: This article explores the concept of human security and examines the scope for its adoption as a normative and policy framework in India. Human security prioritises non-military methods as a means of achieving security without compromising the priorities accorded to traditional security threats. It requires the fulfilment of people's basic needs and rights. The objective of the article is to show that the human security approach can be usefully applied as a policy measure in India to reinforce successes in the social and economic spheres so that the possibility of dissatisfaction turning into violent opposition and internal conflict is minimised.

Introduction

For the modern nation-state, security, as understood in the traditional sense, is about how states manage threats, imagined or real, to their territorial integrity, political, cultural or religious authority and autonomy, disturbances in domestic law and order or attacks on national symbols and national pride. The focus, therefore, appears to be on the preservation, well-being and security of the state, its symbols and its professed values. This notion of security is thus grounded on the principle that if a state continues to exist, the citizens will be 'secure'. However, this 'protection' is essentially from the implications of aggression and violence by other states, that is, protection from war by other states, perhaps because threats to security are generally inter-state. The state, therefore, monopolises the right and means to protect its citizens and to establish order and peace as defined by it. As Mohammed Ayoob observes, 'security strategy has thus far focused on external threats, and more specifically external military threats, which therefore require a military response'.[1] Citizens of the state are placed at the service of the state, and it is obligatory, and considered honourable, for citizens to be called upon to make sacrifices to defend the nation from aggression. This idea of service to the country is also reflected in India's Constitution, Article 51 A (c) and (d), Fundamental Duties, which reads:

> It shall be the duty of every citizen of India …
> (c) To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
> (d) To defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;[2]

Studies on security until the end of Cold War also focused on this narrative of security, which sought to understand and explain the causes of war, the relationships between states, the exercise of state power, diplomacy, threats and the use of force.[3]

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The emphasis was on the 'hard' aspects of power, even though the implications of the 'softer' issues—hunger, disease, poverty—were usually graver. For example, not many recall that the Spanish flu killed 50–100 million people between January 1918 and December 1920.[4] The number of dead was estimated to be around three to five per cent of the world's population at the time.[5] This is in contrast to the worldwide attention and memorial services dedicated to the victims of World War I, which ended around the same time and resulted in 10–15 million deaths. Violence and large-scale conflict are riveting, while peace and personal grief are mundane, even though in the long run the consequences of the latter may be longer lasting. The focus on hard aspects of security abounds as a first choice. For example, while there is stark poverty, malnourishment and suppression of human freedoms in North Korea, the state apparatus persists in acquisition of prohibitive and expensive military arsenals and in maintenance of large standing armies. The erstwhile Soviet Union was also a military superpower, but that did not prevent it from imploding when the tide turned in favour of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Individual freedom, openness and reform appeared to be more powerful than authoritarianism backed by military might. Maintaining large standing armed forces may give a sense of pride and security, as does being part of powerful military blocs and alliances. It does add to a sense of security, but that is not sufficient to address the myriad security concerns a nation faces. More often than not, the sense of insecurity was being generated by this very power of the state itself. Powerful states with strong security forces have the inherent capacity to perpetuate and implement policies and laws that target groups or dissidents within their own population. While the state had the primary responsibility as the vital provider of security to its people, this power became the source of threat to its own people. The numbers of victims of the infamous Cultural Revolution in Communist China and of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia are stark examples.[6] The question to be asked is: who is 'security' intended for—individuals, communities or groups, or a nation, a symbol or an ideology? Furthermore, by what means is that security to be achieved and what is the price to be paid—economically, culturally, socially, politically—to achieve that notion of security which calls on individual citizens to place themselves at the service of the state.

The concept of human security

The logical frameworks and theories that explained wars between states—and prescribed policies to prevent them—became irrelevant in the face of the multiple security threats in the 21st century. The reasoning behind the change in approach to security was because it was proved that people belonging to a country capable of thwarting foreign invasion with well-equipped and strong militaries are not necessarily secure in the true sense. Protecting citizens from invasions and assaults by other countries continues to be an important aspect of security but it is not the only one. There are multiple, so-called 'new issues' that policymakers are contending with, in which the 'hard' or 'traditional' aspect of security is only one.

Since the 1990s, many countries and international organisations, including the United Nations (UN), have advocated serious consideration of the concept of human security. The potential of human security was elaborated by the noted economist and game theorist Mahbub ul Haq who questioned the accepted notion of development that was viewed as a function of economic growth.[7] The *Human Development Report* (HDR) 1994 proposed a concept of 'human development' that focuses on building

human capabilities to confront and overcome poverty, illiteracy, diseases, discrimination, restrictions on political freedom, and the threat of violent conflict.[8] The report was a seminal work. The 'human' was put at the forefront of the agenda of the security practitioners traditionally concerned with state and national security. The report acknowledged that there are gaps in the understanding of these vital issues but that it is understood to be somewhere between the realms of human rights and the obligations and duties of a state to its citizens with no clear template for measurement. Thus, this concept encompasses several research fields, including development studies, international relations, strategic studies and human rights, among others. Proponents emphasise that the concept does not claim to be an alternative to any of these fields, but is a prism on which these studies—centred on an 'individual' instead of a 'state'— converge. They further believe that a human security-centred approach could perhaps offer the basis for operational responses by the institutions that intend to secure people, communities and nations from threats, and find solutions to peace through measures that are not necessarily reactive and military by nature. It is also about the overcoming of the daily struggles that people face, their ability to access opportunities and work towards the future they want for themselves and their families. The concept of human security contends that for peace and security to be established, they have to be built upon the survival and freedom of the individual citizen instead of focusing on the survival of the state. Violence within states often arises due to the assertion of an individual as part of a community that is not part of the larger national construct. Human security in its essence emphasises freedom from fear, freedom from want, and an ability to lead a life of dignity. It implies placing value on protection from fear for all humans, equality of all men and women, fair play and access to justice, equitable access to all public goods and services, assured deliverance of good governance and the ability and equal opportunities to realise an individual's true potential and aspirations. The recognition and understanding of the inter-relatedness of security challenges, therefore, brought about a concentrated and focused thinking, that such inter-linked challenges need to be woven into the fabric of existing security concerns so as to raise the level of attention. Many international agencies, leading academics and practitioners realised that the focus of security has to be shifted from the nation-based approach downward to a community- or individual-based approach, given the nature and scale of the challenges.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) identifies human security and divides the threats into seven domains:[9] economic, food, health, environment, personal, community and political security. The Japanese approach to human security can be derived from the practice of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The JICA is guided by the emphasis of the Japanese government on human security as one of its five basic policies of its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Human security was included in Japan's 2005 Medium-Term Policy on ODA and is defined 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 and potential threats'.[10] Another model was formulated by Canada, also intended to drive its foreign policy. In the words of former foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy, human security was not a new concept, having been defined already by the United Nations, and Canada would 'focus the concept on protecting people from acts of violence and helping to build a greater sense of security for the individual'.[11] The Human Security Report Project (HSRP), a Vancouver-based research centre, observes:

> Focusing on the individual has important implications for policy. Traditional security policy emphasises military means for reducing the risks of war and for prevailing if deterrence fails. Human security's proponents, while not eschewing the use of force, have focused on non-coercive approaches. These range from preventive diplomacy and conflict management, to addressing the root causes of conflict by building state capacity and promoting equitable economic development.[12]

Sabina Alkire lists human security as something that 'safeguards the vital core'. 'To do so is to enhance human freedom and human fulfillment, and the prioritisation of vital and preventable threats.'[13] Former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan states that human security is 'economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratisation, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law'. The domains covered are internal violence, nuclear weapons, mass destruction, repression, 'gross abuses of human rights, the large-scale displacement of civilian populations, international terrorism, the AIDS pandemic, drug and arms trafficking and environmental disasters'.[14] Amartya Sen recognises human security as survival, equity and being concerned with human dignity.[15] Kanti Bajpai recognises human security as individual safety and freedom and the domains are in two categories—that of direct violence, that is, violent death or disablement, dehumanisation, drugs, discrimination and domination, and international disputes; and that of indirect violence, which would include deprivation, disease, natural and man-made disasters, underdevelopment, population displacement and environmental degradation.[16] Amitav Acharya, in his research on human security in India, states that '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, analyse the causes of discord and propose solutions entailing a redistribution of responsibilities'.[17]

A focus on human security offers a common platform to analytically recognise the widespread threats faced by people and to understand the root causes. With an understanding of the issues emerges a holistic response to tackle its consequences, which can be operationalised through policies and programmes. Human security is, therefore, consciously protective by nature. It identifies the vital rights and freedoms for all people without discrimination and aims to create equitable conditions and opportunities in terms of social, economic, cultural, environmental and political freedoms. Proponents believe that human security and national security should be mutually reinforcing. The parameters of human security can in fact be used to describe the inter-related threats associated with events beyond the control of people and communities, including economic and financial crises, environmental challenges, water shortage, social tensions as well as, in extreme cases, terrorist attacks, civil wars, genocide and the large-scale displacement of populations. The attempt to broaden security planning to include human security changes the terms of reference for addressing the security challenges.

Critique of human security

Any suggestion of a paradigm shift leads to reservations and criticisms. The introduction of the concept of human security into security planning is no exception. Critiques have focused on the vagueness of the concept and the fact that international norms and standards on 'protection' of individuals already exist. The debate on human

security at the global level remains inconclusive and there has been no definitional consensus, let alone its operationalisation. The Indian government has participated in discussions in the UN on the conceptual framework for human security.[18] It has been India's belief, expressed at various UN debates on human security, that a comprehensive approach to human security can enable every human to exploit his or her potential to the maximum while pursuing a life of dignity in a safe and healthy environment, but there is a reluctance to accept the human security doctrine and this is possibly due to the apprehension that securitisation of the concept of human security by some countries might result in an interventionist approach challenging the principles of state sovereignty. While speaking at the debate on human security at the 64th General Assembly, Ambassador Hardeep Puri said it was important to ensure that 'human security' was clearly situated within the bedrock of international relations and domestic governance, on non-aggression and non-interference in the domestic affairs of states; the right to national self-defence; and state sovereignty. The definition also needed to recognise the primary role of states and governments for realising human security. He also said, 'obviously, there can be no place for interventionism'.[19]

Policy pronouncements show that India places the concerns of human security within the framework of 'economic and social discourse'. According to Arvind Gupta, India's Deputy National Security Advisor (DNSA), 'the broadening of the concept of security has created a lively debate on the definition of security itself' and the 'concept of security was expanding to include economic progress, climate change and good governance'. Quoting from a speech by former defence minister A. K. Antony at the 14th Asian Security Conference (ASC), he said 'there is a growing view that issues of environment, development, progress, justice, if not addressed in time, could have security consequences'.[20] India's concern about a possible dilution of state sovereignty principles is real, but not completely non-negotiable. There is a need to steer the discourse towards an approach that emphasises capacity building, enhancing local resilience and helping set up democratic institutions that can ensure long-term stability, much like a peace-building strategy, as opposed to an 'interventionist' strategy.

Policymaking potential of human security in India

Can human security be applied as a policy tool in India? The concept of human security as understood today finds resonance in certain ancient Indian thoughts and beliefs. Emperor Ashoka, whose rock edicts[21] spanned his kingdom and beyond, displayed directives that capture the essence of human security. His edicts prescribe morality and service, or *dhamma*, as the ruler's primary duty towards the welfare of his subjects. Stricken by remorse after large-scale killings wrought by a war he undertook, the emperor issued special directives etched on rocks, which still stand today, on the 'right' treatment of slaves, servants as well as animals. Ashoka also prescribed that officials visit the subjects periodically to understand their problems.

Many such cultural narratives place primacy on the security and well-being of the individual, placing it on a higher pedestal than the exigencies of sovereignty and statecraft. In more recent times, we have the example of Mahatma Gandhi, who, when asked about a possible model for the newly independent country, said:

> I shall strive for a constitution which will release India from all thralldom and patronage, and
> give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel

Figure 1.   The rock edicts of Emperor Ashoka at the site of the Battle of Kalinga in Odisha. Next to the edict is a translation by the Archaeological Survey of India describing in detail the rock edicts. As a victor, Emperor Ashoka took a conciliatory approach for pacification of the people of the newly conquered Tosali region and assured the subjects that they were like his own children and that he remained worried about their welfare and happiness. Photograph by the author.

that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony.[22]

Gandhi also advocated *Ram Rajya*,[23] a utopian ideal inspired by the Indian epic *Ramayana*, which exhorted rulers to address the pain and suffering of the poorest and weakest. The prescribed guiding principle for rulers was the welfare of their subjects based on moral principles, justice and equality.

A human security approach is useful in the context of India, which is one of the most diverse countries in the world in almost every category—culture, economy, climate, race, language, religion—and faces threats that cover the entire spectrum of conflict. Since independence, India has made much progress despite its various problems, which include widespread unrest and conflict, unresolved border issues, extreme poverty, high levels of unemployment, recurrent communal and political violence, crimes against women and children including trafficking, high levels of corruption, reckless exploitation and exhaustion of natural resources, environmental degradation and rapid urbanisation and its associated challenges. India's pace of economic growth, its military might and demographic attributes have led it to rightly demand a place at the superpower high table.

Today, India is among the fastest growing economies in the world and with the other BRIC countries—Brazil, Russia and China—will control half of the world's output by 2040.[24] While India's growth performance is indeed impressive, the future is beset with many pitfalls and shortcomings. Growth alone cannot help India emerge from the poverty and insecurity that millions of its people face every day. India is home to a third of the world's poorest people,[25] being outpaced by developing countries on several human development indicators. It is also geographically located in a volatile region, referred to as the 'most dangerous place in the world' by the former US President, Bill Clinton,[26] with a large number of longstanding internal

disturbances and unresolved conflicts. The factors that will shape India in the years to come can be summarised as follows:

(1) *Demographic factors*:
  ● Aspirations of a young population seeking opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship and a better quality of life. This youth bulge can also be restive and impatient and willing to resort to violence to achieve those aspirations. The demographic dividend could turn into a demographic curse if not managed properly.
  ● Increasing demands by communities for equal opportunities and rights in political, social and economic spheres, failing which there may be an assertion of cultural and religious identities leading to splintering within the country.
  ● Shift in professions and occupations, for example from farming to service industries, adversely affecting food security and other labour-intensive sectors.
  ● Changing value systems towards more materialism, leading to erosion of traditional Indian values.
  ● Increasing protests and demands for transparent and accountable governance as seen during the Anna Hazare-led movement.[27]
  ● Increasing demands for, as well resentment against, quotas and reservation by communities feeling left out of the system.[28]

(2) *Democratic institutions*:
  ● Increase in the assertion of regional identities and aspirations instead of a pan-Indian identity.
  ● Lack of political unity and weak leadership unable to take decisions for the larger good.
  ● Strained governance systems in which people are unwilling to accept laws, norms and process that are in conflict with their own interests.
  ● Rampant increase in corruption and criminalisation of politics.
  ● Excess load on legal systems unable to offer timely justice and remedies.

(3) *Natural resources and their management*:
  ● Availability of water affected adversely by the drying up of traditional water bodies, indiscriminate use of tube wells leading to the lowering of water tables, and wastages due to improper extraction, storage, distribution and use.
  ● Depletion of energy resources, continuing dependence on fossil fuels, massive import bills, wastage and excess consumption, as well as failure to harness renewable and new sources of energy.
  ● Availability of land affected by conflicts in land use patterns, the process of land acquisitions and the conflicting claims of development, agriculture, urban development and extraction of minerals for industrial use.
  ● Failure to preserve natural habitats and forests.
  ● Availability of food affected by migration from the farm sector, disproportionate preference for cash crops, and inefficient supply chains incapable of collection, storage and delivery.

(4) *Climate change and environment management*:
  ● Failure to address issues related to climate change will have an impact on critical resources like water, productivity and increasing hydro- meteorological disasters such as floods, tsunamis, droughts and earthquakes.

(5) *Global and regional forces*:
  ● Peace and stability in India's neighbourhood.
  ● China's economic growth and its intentions and aspirations as an international power.
  ● Competition over energy resources.
  ● Barriers to trade and access to markets.
  ● Stability of the world economy.
  ● Global developments and international treaties on climate change, energy, trade, agriculture and cyberwarfare, among others.
  ● Growth of violent extremist groups such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Boko Haram seeking a global footprint.

(6) *Traditional security challenges*:
  ● Internal disorder, breakdown in law and order and spreading left-wing extremism.
  ● Terrorist attacks as witnessed in Mumbai in 2008 and the parliament attack of 2001.
  ● New threats such as pandemics, cyber-attacks and tactical nuclear weapons falling into the hands of non-state actors.
  ● International embargos and sanctions against India as seen after the nuclear tests of 1998.
  ● Denial of systems, transfer of technology, equipment and knowledge.
  ● Failure to establish a well-developed defence industrial base, increasing dependence on imports for national security needs, which could be subjected to embargoes and sanctions in times of crisis.
  ● Ageing equipment profile of the armed forces as well as reluctance of qualified and educated personnel to serve in the armed forces.
  ● Spread of organised crime including drug cartels and mafia groups who have established parallel economies and fake currency rackets causing enormous economic damage.

The challenges to India's security are multifarious. India exists in a highly volatile region with unresolved issues with two nuclear armed neighbours. But more challenging to India will be managing its population, which is the second largest in the world. The future of India depends on how it tackles various traditional security challenges, as identified above, as well as the issue of governance, as almost a third of its population is still economically underdeveloped. Some issues that merit particular attention are:

  ● Closing the gap between the growing economic disparities. If this fails, the demographic dividend that India enjoys may actually turn out to be a threat.
  ● An urgent need to reform institutions, processes and methods of delivery of the various schemes intended to secure citizens' rights and well-being. It is attainable in this era of improved Information and Communications Technology (ICT).
  ● Transparency in government actions and intentions in the spirit of the rule of law prescribed by the Indian constitution.

● Checking corruption and inefficiencies as these eat away at the vitals of the system.

The government must aim to deliver the following based on what can be called 'human security empowered parameters':

● Food security
    - Implying an assured calorific intake for all sections of populations.
    - Water and sanitation—a minimum quantity and assured quality implying unhindered and safe access.
● Health care
    - Affordable, accessible and widespread facilities. This will ensure that infirmity is minimised and the burden of health care is not felt at a personal level.
● Personal security
    - Provision of social security schemes to cater for the safety and security of the old, infirm, differently abled, unemployed and underprivileged.
    - Adequate housing across the strata of society.
    - Education including vocational to ensure a decent future with a guarantee of employment and means of livelihood.
    - Catering for employment by generation of infrastructure and investment for encouraging industry and the measure of people out of gainful employment.
    - Ensuring the enjoyment of human rights and other freedoms as has been guaranteed in the Indian constitution and the speed of justice for infringements.
    - Measures put in place specially to safeguard the rights of women, children and minorities, and processes to handle infringements.
● Enhancing environmental security by ensuring the protection of air, water and the environment for healthy and sustainable development. Stringent regulations to ensure the quality of air, water and land are of minimum acceptable standard. Also strengthening the country's wherewithal, so as to be self-sufficient in agriculture. Policies that make land more available for agricultural produce become critical.
● India must attempt to rein in all internal differences and separatist movements by having a dialogue with the disgruntled sections with the aim to mainstream them. Through better governance and development schemes the alienated people may see sense in working within the confines of Indian democratic systems rather than going against them.
● India must resolve its border disputes and destroy its enemies by making them its allies united in the agenda for peace and development in the South Asian region.
● India must contribute positively to the international agenda to secure peace.

The need for a human security approach in India's experiments for social upliftment

It is undisputable that the country's most pressing challenges might lie in the adoption of a human security approach and its operationalisation. India has not sought to make human security a policy goal; instead, it has sought to operationalise the end-state

envisioned by the human security advocates through a slew of social and economic security measures that attempt to place people at the centre of concerns. Democracy in India is not merely a means to elect a government. It also implies certain assurances and guarantees of freedoms and participation in social, economic and political processes. It has sought to find solutions to the challenges and non-traditional notions of security confronted by people on a daily basis. In keeping with this philosophy—that human development hinges on economic and social opportunity—India has embarked on several projects. The government has enacted several positive policies and schemes with the aim of enhancing the capabilities of people, social opportunities and the economic empowerment of people. This spans several sectors as varied as adult education to sewage and waste water management, from health to food security, and from child rights to minority welfare. To execute and oversee the multifarious programmes and policies, the government has established dedicated ministers and staff and has also specially created ministries and schemes. India has made significant progress in poverty alleviation, education and food security and has made some attainments in the health sector.

Thus, the efforts aimed at mass-scale social and economic transformation leading to an improvement in the quality of life of all Indians, particularly those in rural areas, the minorities and the traditionally underprivileged, are a step in the direction of ensuring human security. Many programmes are unique in nature, and execution is gigantic—the *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana*,[29] the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA),[30] the Aadhaar enrolment exercise[31] and Jan Dhan Yojana (JDY)[32] are a few of the many examples. India has consistently stepped up spending on these basic services and earmarked Rs. 2.27 lakh crore on major subsidies in the budget for 2015–2016.[33]

India is strong in freedom of democratic choices, but where it probably lags behind is in the delivery of good governance and essential services. There are examples of central and state governments having delivered world class services. The Delhi Metro is one; the Public Distribution System (PDS) system in Tamil Nadu and health care and education in Kerala are other examples. The execution of any scheme or project run by the government depends on governance. Good governance is the key to equitable delivery and widespread growth, inclusive development and freedom of choice and opportunity. The fact is that the targets for India are greater than for several other countries in terms of population, and their attainment is therefore no ordinary task.

The plethora of social welfare schemes intended to benefit the people and underprivileged groups have resulted in some success but have failed to make a significant difference to the lives of the poorest. Corruption, gender inequality, the lack of decent work and political, religious and caste-based violence continue to hinder the development project and also affect the enjoyment of rights guaranteed by the constitution. One of the reasons is that these schemes function in silos, without regard to interlinkages. What is missing is the vision—both political and economic—that could bring together these plans and schemes under one umbrella. Adopting human security as a vision, goal and model would help give coherence to intentions and execution of plans and policies. A human security approach could take the impact of these schemes further by identifying the needs and vulnerabilities of people and measuring the final impact of the schemes for improving overall well-being. For example, a scheme might aim to admit a child to school, but does it also ensure that the education imparted is adequate and effective to attain employment? Having the child attend school is a

welfare measure. Ensuring that the child gets an education that will lead to gainful employment is a human security approach. Linking the midday meal scheme for children with school attendance, for example, has increased enrolment and also improved sanitation and hygiene standards. However, what this enrolment has achieved is debatable because attendance levels achieved in schools have not been matched by higher quality educational attainments as the standards of teaching and the facilities available in many schools are poor. An overarching and holistic vision must define an end-state, wherein school enrolments coupled with nutrition and sanitation will result in a healthy, skilled and secure workforce ready for the job market. Thus, instead of merely an education ministry target for an increase in school enrolment, a coordinated effort must involve targets for skills building, health indicators, sanitation goals and job worthiness of the pupils enrolled.

Another example that can highlight the significance of embedding a human security approach into policy is the implementation of MNREGA, which seeks to provide guaranteed employment for a minimum of 100 days. A human security framework would enable an understanding of everyday challenges and long-term needs in addition to mere employment for 100 days. This large available workforce can then be used to achieve community or regional targets, such as planned efforts for rainwater harvesting, thereby increasing the availability of fresh water and raising of water tables. It could also be part of an overall, coordinated plan to achieve rural connectivity within a certain period of time.

A third example is the multiplicity of identity cards held or required by Indian citizens. In addition to being cumbersome, this is also a security risk, as there have been instances of misuse of the cards for fraud and illegal activities. At great expense to the exchequer, the Unique Identification Development Authority of India (UIDAI) created the Aadhaar card which has the holder's biometric details and thus cannot be duplicated. At the time of conceiving this project, a visionary approach would have ensured that all parameters necessary for issue of a BPL card, a Scheduled Caste (SC)/ Tribe (ST) certificate, a Backward Caste certificate, a Ration Card, a voter identity card and a Personal Account Number (PAN) card issued by the Income Tax Department would be captured in the Aadhaar card. A single card should be able to serve multiple purposes. Obtaining a PAN card or a voter identity card is not an easy process, especially for the poor or for migrants who do not have a permanent address and therefore no proper proof of residence. The number of Aadhaar cards issued in India is a record of sorts; no other country has carried out an exercise of this scale for the provision of identity and social security to its citizens. A human security approach would have helped adopt a comprehensive solution to the need for identity, security, as well as access to public services. It would have identified these problems and found a permanent solution to the need for multiple processes, procedures and cards for accessing government services. The UIDAI is, therefore, a unique exercise, but a wasted opportunity to ease the difficulties faced by the underprivileged and migrants in obtaining some form of identity.

The desired end-state of a human security approach is to ensure that India becomes an equitable society where all citizens enjoy equal protection and opportunities without the need for quotas and reservations. This requires that marginalised people are mainstreamed and inclusion is an accepted norm. Inclusion is not achieved by way of handouts and limitless reservations. The emphasis should be on providing opportunities and choices through systematic development of capabilities. If outcomes were more important than statistics, a human security approach would be a handy tool

to understand contemporary challenges and find solutions that are holistic, achievable and sustainable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be admitted that operating with a human security-centred approach is more difficult than a conventional traditional security approach because it involves a change in thinking where 'people empowerment' in addition to 'protection' becomes as important as 'force protection' and 'preservation of the state'. However, the need for a comprehensive approach to security is clear. Real security can only be achieved if the root causes of conflict, particularly internal armed conflict, are addressed through a robust, visionary and long-term approach to development. Where armed conflict already exists, it can be resolved/mitigated using the human security approach by making people central to the intervention, revolving responses around their insecurities instead of the security of the state. The inability of ordinary citizens to meet their basic needs and to access services and opportunities is a 'security' challenge, liable to metamorphose into acts of violence against the state. Towards this end, policymakers and executors must emerge from their silos to understand, undertake and implement welfare, development and security initiatives that involve all organs of the government in a coordinated manner.

While policymakers, academics and even lawmakers might agree on the fundamental principles of human security, the question that remains is: should there be, or is there, a specific institution that can take upon itself the task of operationalising it on the ground? The institution should be capable of taking a long-term view of proposed plans and policies; it must be able to assess and forecast possible impacts; and it must draw on the views, ideas and expertise of a range of individuals and policy bodies. It must have its ear to the ground and yet be capable of translating individual human security needs into forward-looking assessments and recommendations. A possible option is the newly established NITI Aayog, a body tasked with setting the national policy agenda, including strategic and technical advice on policy and economic matters including a resource centre 'for good governance'.[34] As suggested by Arun Kumar in his opinion in *The Hindu*, the 'NITI Aayog could throw light on long-term issues, with solutions that are not just economic or technological but also social and political—of strengthening democracy, building institutions and regaining policy space'.[35] NITI Aayog could therefore be the ideal body to consider and implement policies from a human security perspective.

The essence of human security can be found in line with what Mahatma Gandhi said in one of the last notes he left:

> I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to 'Swaraj' [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melt away.[36]

Gandhi's thoughts were expressed not in the language of nationalism and religious or community identities, but were woven around the individual and the universality of

basic human concerns. Bringing that individual—shorn of the trappings of religion, caste, class, gender and other forms of identity—to the centre of the security and development agenda would be a tribute to that vision. It would also reflect the spirit of *Ram Rajya* that Gandhi lived, worked and died for.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. Mohammed Ayoob, 'The Security Problematic of the Third World', *World Politics*, 43(2), January 1991, p. 261.
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21. The rock edicts are inscriptions on pillars, boulders and cave walls made by Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan Empire during his reign from 269 BCE to 232 BCE. The edicts describe in detail Ashoka's views about 'dhamma', or duty encompassing morality and service, as well as law and social welfare directives. This was an unprecedented and an earnest attempt to solve some of the problems that society faced at that time.

22. This message is etched in stone at the Gandhi Memorial in the place where he was assassinated on January 30, 1948 and located at the Gandhi Memorial at Tees January Marg in New Delhi. See also Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *India of My Dreams*, at http://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/india_dreams.pdf (Accessed May 1, 2015).

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26. Jonathan Marcus, 'Analysis: The World's Most Dangerous Place?', BBC News, March 23, 2000, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/687021.stm (Accessed May 23, 2015).

27. The anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare, a former soldier and social reformer, was a series of demonstrations and protests that spread across India. The protests called for establishing strong legislation and enforcement officials against the endemic political corruption.

28. Since independence in India, affirmative action for the upliftment of the traditionally oppressed and backward sections of the populations that have been designated as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes entitles them to reserved quotas in education, government jobs and many other sectors, including promotions after attaining jobs. They also have special cut-off marks that entitle them to gain admissions with lower grades while those in the 'general' category, which includes other classes of society, have to compete for the remaining seats. In some states, reserved quotas are more than 50 per cent of the available seats, often leading to resentment among those in the general category. This has led to the unusual situation of traditionally privileged sections demanding, often agitating, to be placed in the categories entitled to reservation.

29. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) was launched by the Government of India to provide health insurance coverage for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. Beneficiaries under RSBY are entitled to hospitalisation coverage up to Rs. 30,000 for most of the diseases that require hospitalisation. The government has even fixed package rates for hospitals for a large number of interventions. For more details, see http://www.rsby.gov.in/about_rsby.aspx (Accessed May 25, 2015).

30. The MNREGA guarantees employment for a minimum of 100 days with the aim of enhancing livelihood security in rural areas for those willing to do unskilled manual labour.

31. Aadhaar is a 12-digit individual identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India on behalf of the Government of India. The government has issued 939, 397, 438 Aadhaar cards asof May 2015. Data available at https://portal.uidai.gov.in/uidwebportal/dashboard.do (Accessed November 29, 2015).

32. The aim of the JDY is to achieve financial inclusion through the provision of access to various financial services such as savings accounts, credit and remittance facilities in addition to insurance and pensions to weaker sections of society who are below the poverty line and usually do not have access to banking facilities. Some 15.59 crore accounts have reportedly been opened under this scheme as of May 13, 2015. See http://www.pmjdy.gov.in/account-statistics-country.aspx (Accessed May 28, 2015).

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36. Mahatma Gandhi, *Last Phase*, Vol. 2, 1958, p. 65, at http://www.mkgandhi.org/gquots1.htm (Accessed May 28, 2015).