

Migration, Refugee and Conflict

Week 14 - Human Security and Migration

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Understanding the Term Security

- Security has always been a major concern of academic discipline in international relations.
- Security simply means the absence of threats.
- Absence of threats determines the notion of being and feeling safe.
- Security in world politics has its own dynamics and connotations.
- Booth(2005) defines Security as ;
“ Security in world politics is an instrumental value that enables people(s) some opportunity to choose how to live. It is a means by which individuals and collectivities can invent and reinvent different ideas about being human”.
- The contested concept of security can be indicated by various scholars.

Human Security

- The concept of human security is a new security discourse
- Human security can be defined in contextual scenario.
- Human security as a concept of development in 1994 United Nations Development Report (UNDP) was a new security discourses.
- Earlier the traditional notion of security remained as a central priority of the State.
- Later, the emergence of concept of human security shifted the priority of state.
- The security of people as an important concern arose.

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- After the publication of human development report Canadian government focused on human security in its foreign policy incorporating it as an important policy agenda.
- Japan also focused on the concept of human security in considerations to the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. It highlighted on social safety nets.
- The United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 took a turn while focusing on human security.
- The Secretary-General Kofi Annan advocated on the two aspects; freedom from want and freedom from fear.
- The independent commission on human security then got its existence. The Japan's Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and Kofi Annan took initiatives for this independent Commission.

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- Commission defined human security as “ protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment”
- This above definition basically prioritized on;
 1. Protecting fundamental rights
 2. Protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations.
 3. Empowering individuals and communities to develop the capabilities for making informed choices and determining their well-being.

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Furthermore, commission developed three approaches as an operational tools in order to facilitate the implementation of the concept of human security.

1. Protection of People's security and their basic rights and freedoms
2. Centrality of empowering individuals and communities
3. Finding ways to link the broad issues comprising humans security

First Approach

- Protection of People's security and their basic rights and freedoms :

The notion of human security is not to replace but compliment the state security.

The concerns of state security is on protecting borders, institutions and people from the external aggression.

Whereas, the concerns of human security is ensuring the safety of individuals and communities from diverse threats such as; deadly infectious diseases, human rights violations, financial crises, violent conflict, famine or water shortages .

Second Approach

- Centrality of empowering individuals and communities

The individuals and communities when are placed in center; it supports in overcoming diverse deprivations.

It supports people's abilities to act on their own behalf; providing education and information, access to health care and social safety nets to prepare them for political and economical downturns.

The concerns of empowerment of people included; freedom of press, freedom of information, freedom of conscience and belief and it should be accompanied by policies of inclusions

Second Approaches Contd..

This approach focuses on protection exercised through top-down approach and empowerment through bottom-up approach. However, these two are mutually connected.

Commission also found the slight differences between the protection and empowerment.

People protected can exercise many choices but people empowered can make better choices and can bring improvements in the system of protection.

Third Approaches

- The challenges here is linking the broad issues that comprises of human security.
- Examples includes; settlement of conflicts, observance of human rights, access to health care and education, provision of clean air and water supply .
- The cross-cutting issues are found while focusing on the notion of human security.

Why Human Security?

- It emphasizes on the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. In addition, all the individuals especially vulnerable people are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want .It further highlights on the equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potentials.
- Human security is people-centred, comprehensive, context specific. It adopts prevention oriented responses which strengthens the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities.
- Human security recognizes the interlinkages between,peace,development and human rights. It also focuses on civil,political,economic,social and cultural rights.
- The notion of human security is distinct from the responsibility to protect and its implementation.

Why Human Security?

- Human Security does not use forceful and coercive measures and it does not replace State security.
- Human Security is based on national ownership which means it is contextual. As political, economic, social and cultural conditions vary according to the countries the essence of human security is meeting the local realities.

The adoption of General Assembly resolution 66/290 on 10 September 2012 was a significant milestone for the application of human security.

The common understanding of guidelines presented above provide importance of human

Seven Key individual centric components of human security

United Nations Development Program issued Human Development Report in 1994 that prioritized human security. The involvement of Pakistani Finance Minister MahbubulHaq and economist Amartya Sen.

1. Economic Security
2. Food Security
3. Health Security
4. Environmental Security
5. Personal Security
6. Community Security
7. Political Security

Contd...

- Economic Security : assurance of basic income for individuals. This is from the productive and remunerative work and as well as from publicly financed safety net.
- Food Security : It ensures that people have access to basic food; both physical and economic access.
- Health Security: Guarantees minimum protection from disease and unhealthy lifestyles.
- Environmental Security: Protecting people from both short and long-term effects of nature. It includes human made threats in nature and deterioration of natural environment.
- Personal Security: Protecting people from physical violence. This physical violence can be from both the state or external states. It can be from violent individuals. It can be in the form of domestic abuse.
- Community Security: Protecting people from the loss of traditional values and relationships and from sectarian and ethnic violence.
- Political Security: Ensuring that people have full basic human rights and also it ensures that the government role towards maintaining freedom of individuals and groups.

Root Causes of insecurities are as follows

- Economic insecurity: Unemployment, poverty, lack of access to credit and other economic opportunities.
- Food insecurity: Famine, Hunger, sudden rise in food prices.
- Health insecurity: Epidemics, malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of access to basic health care.
- Environmental insecurity: Environmental degradation, resource depletion, natural disasters.
- Personal insecurity: It includes physical violence in all forms, human trafficking and child labour.

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- Community insecurity: Includes Inter-ethnic, religious and other identity-based tensions, crime, terrorism.
- Political Insecurity: Political repression, human rights violations, lack of rule of law and justice.

Summing up includes five fundamental principles of human security

1. People-Centred
2. Comprehensive
3. Context-Specific
4. Prevention-oriented
5. Protection and empowerment

Core Characteristics of Human Security

- Human Security is a *universal* concern
- The components of human security are *interdependent*
- Human security is easier to ensure *through early prevention* than later intervention
- Human security is *people-centred*.

Report: Human Security Now

- This reaffirmed the goal of human security. The Chapter 1 of its final report clearly states that ;

“to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment... protecting fundamental freedoms ... protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations” (CHS,2003).

- It also focused on the Human security and human rights
- Amartya Sen has clearly mentioned that the idea distinction between human security, human development and human rights is seen. However, he emphasizes that it compliments each other
- This clearly focuses on the migrants rights.

Migration concern

- The pull and push factors in migration can clearly determine the notion of human security approaches.
- Song and Cook (2015) have identifies diverse push and pull factors for migration.
- Pushing factors includes;

Unemployment

Less opportunities

Inadequate resources

Desertification

Famine or drought

Political fear or persecution

Slavery or forced labour

Poor medical care

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Poverty

Natural disasters and Life threats

Desire for more political or religious freedoms

Landlord/tenant issues

Bullying

Environmental Pollution

Poor housing

Mentality

Discrimination

Poor chances of marrying

Condemned housing

Civil War

Pulling Factors includes;

- Job opportunities
- Better life standard
- The feeling of having more political or religious freedom
- Enjoyment
- Better Education
- Better medical care
- Attractive Climates
- Security
- Family links
- Industry

Contd...

Better chances of marrying

Trade and business

Development

Entertainment

Better Environment

Peace

Nepali Perspectives of Human Security

1. Nepal- India border as a concern of human security; nexus between migration and human trafficking as a major security concern.
2. Foreign Labour migration ; proceeding for foreign labour migration due to diverse insecurities.
3. Foreign labour migration and utilization of the remittances ; The use of remittances in a sustainable aspects is a concern.
4. The Returnee migrants and their social capital ;The skills and capital they have gained can be a part of societal development.
5. Other Concerns

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1. Nepal- India border as a concern of human security

The border between Nepal and India is open which basically indicates that citizens of both countries can move freely without requirements of any documents.

Furthermore, the record of movement is not seen hence, making difficult to track the flow of workers and focus on their security aspects.

While focusing on legal frameworks Government has come up with several protection mechanisms(rights and welfare) to those workers proceeding to labor migration other than India. Acts, policies, regulations, directives have been formulated and implemented.

So, In case of workers proceeding via India there is no legal framework to protect them.

In addition, the record of workers have been maintained creating transparency in tracking the flow of labour migration for diverse works in those countries approved by Government of Nepal.

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The concern with India also is in regards to the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950. This treaty emphasized on free flow of citizens from both countries.

The Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950 has not mentioned on the issues of Labour migration nor the cross-border mobility.

The international migration in Nepal cannot exclude the movement via open border to India. Seasonal migration is also viewed in large number. However, the lack of records has made difficulty in tracking remittances as well as exact number of labor migrants.

The nexus between migration, smuggling and human trafficking is a major concern.

These all have their distinct features to focus on.

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Human trafficking basically is a process where an individual is exploited for economic gain.

Trafficking can occur within a country or movements across borders.

Trafficking is different from migrant smuggling.

The use of irregular channel of journey for reaching the destination countries causes diverse vulnerabilities and risks .

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2. Foreign Labour migration ; proceeding for foreign labour migration due to diverse insecurities.

The exploitation to workers is also done by Labor recruitment agencies and job brokers. They glorify the overseas and employment and make a false promise.

Several cases of false promise is a result to workers being deceived about their working and living conditions in labor-receiving countries.

The economic insecurities, personal and political insecurities is the major concern of Nepali migrants. They therefore risk their life and also opt for being smuggled to reach the concerned destination countries.

Sometimes the smuggled migrants fall into the trap of trafficking.

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3. Foreign labour migration and utilization of the remittances ; The use of remittances in a sustainable aspects is a concern.

It can be distinguished to social remittances and financial remittances

The social remittances includes benefits beyond the monetary values.

It basically included the new skills , improved knowledge's, entrepreneurship ability etc. The social remittances is one essential notion towards sustainable utilization of remittances.

The new ideas, skills, perceptions and technologies carried back home by migrants can benefit the country.

Migration also improves social and gender equity among migrant households.

Narratives

Sushila Rai, a Nepalese migrant domestic worker, describes her experience

“While working in Hong Kong I experienced many things – the way people treat a dependent or independent woman. I have gained much experience and my confidence has grown. Now, I have a say in decision-making at home. My husband does not shout at me. I have bought a piece of land and four rickshaws and I am creating a means of livelihood for four other families...” (Jolly and Reeves 2007)

Amartya Sen in his theory of freedom for development have states that migration can offer people the opportunity to expand their ability to control their own lives and also to enhance their substantive choices.

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Financial remittances;

- Remittances as a major source of income.
- Uplifting poverty is witnessed. However, several costs of foreign labour migration in linkages to remittances cannot be ignored either.
- In case of Nepal “*hundi*” is an illegal channel to transfer money however it still exists despite several policy approaches.

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4. The Returnee migrants and their social capital

The skills and capital they have gained can be a part of societal development.

Who are returnee migrants?

Return migration refers to “the movement of a person returning to his/her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country. This return may or may not be voluntary. Return migration includes voluntary repatriation” (IOM 2011).

Similarly, United Nations Statistics Division (as cited in OECD, 2008) defines returning migrants as “persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short term or long-term) in another country, and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year”.

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The term social capital in this research is based on the definition provided by Bourdieu (1986) which states social capital as “the sum of resources, actual and virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”.

Dimensions of Social Capital

- a. Structural Social Capital (Network, civic engagement)
- b. Cognitive Social Capital (resource providing, shared representations)
- c. Relational Social Capital(Bonding, Bridging, linking)

5. Other Concerns; Internal Migration

The internal migration also depicts the concerns of human security.

Within Nepal also forced labor and debt bondage still exists inside few informal sector works.

The debt trap exists and exploitative situations arises where workers are forced to work longer hours and below minimum wages.

This eventually leads to the form of modern slavery to those who cannot repay the debt.

The Annual report 2015 of Maiti Nepal studied a total of 299 female workers in Kathmandu Valley and 16 percent were children. It clearly indicated that 80% migrated from outside the Kathmandu Valley.

The several researches also have found that large number of involvement are seen in informal sectors. Basically the city-centric migration due to diverse insecurities such as economic, personal, food, community and political.

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- While studying the research conducted on women workers in informal sectors ; especially the entertainment sectors.
- The entertainment sectors included dance restaurants, massage parlors and open/cabin restaurants in Kathmandu valley.
- The majority of migrants are young girls from remote areas of Nepal who due to employment opportunities migrate to Kathmandu.
- These workplaces due to not being regulated female workers are in a greater risk of exploitation, violence and trafficking.
- In addition, it is also claimed that female workers in the entertainment industry are in slavery like conditions.
- Basically, the conditions of vulnerabilities includes;

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- Forced to Work with less Salary
- No Labour Contract
- No fixed Working Hours
- Arbitrary arrest by the Police
- No Safety Nets provided

The driving force of human trafficking is the poverty. However, there are other factors also equally complementing the poverty such as;

Caste based discrimination, social expulsion, unemployment, community insecurities.

Migration and Human Security Threats

- Refugees
- Internally Displaced Persons
- Statelessness
- Asylum seekers
- Trafficking in Person
- Smuggling
- Boat Refugees/ Climate Refugees/ Environmental Refugees

Migration and Human Security: Summing

Economic Security: Security associated with both migration sending and destination countries. Immigration issues and remittances along with continuous brain drain .

Political Security: The xenophobic traits developed by locals to the migrants and accusations made to the migrants. The existence of racism, ethnic tension, economic jealousy, cultural friction or political instability.

Social security: The social security threats arise due to internal increment of crimes and societal disorder. However the immigrants are blames disrupting societal peace. The other concern is declining skill levels of immigrants.

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Cultural Security: The acceptance of culture becomes a threat at times. The ability and willingness of locals and immigrants to embrace each others cultural practice can prevail cultural security.

Environmental Security: The environmental pollution and diverse effects are linked with migrant population

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