

Global Initiatives in Environmental Security: The Need for Policy Revisions

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Abstract – After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the unequal transition trends in economic, political, and technological forces occurred, often labelled globalisation. One of the repercussions of this has been the introduction of a new concept: human security. Nations of the world started to think about the integrity of the government and the community. Though we liberated ourselves from the danger of major-power war, environmental destruction and natural disasters pose a major threat to human life. The United Nations Security Council has made declarations and resolutions on the tie between natural and manmade disasters and resources and the incorporation of ecological information into security policy. Security and uncertainty are not restricted to armed war or its exclusion but are embedded in sustainable livelihoods, social care and well-being.

This paper analyses the challenge faced by the government and the policies and programmes that can handle the “freedom from hazard impact” principle. By incorporating economic, social, and security processes into security policies and strategy and making intervention to change the asset protection strategies that are currently in effect, as well as focus on developing new sustainability policies.

Keywords: Human Security, Environmental Security, Disasters, National Policy

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INTRODUCTION

During the late 1990s, the two prominent foreign policy ideologies— economic growth and national security – were fused together. Over the same period, the economic and defence establishments had often experienced a period of intellectual tumult. As the cold war ended, the unequal transition trends in economic, political, and technological forces occurred, often labelled globalisation. One of the repercussions of this has been the introduction of a new concept: human security. As promoted by the United Nations Development Program, this term usually means “freedom from fear and freedom from want”.(UNDP, 1994)

The policymakers and experts also realised that even the most sophisticated defence measures would collapse if the government and community begin to disintegrate and fall into a state of disarray. In this apocalypse framework, it is necessary to consider environmental destruction and natural disasters such as epidemics, flood, earthquakes, and droughts as significant risks to security as much as human-made military disasters. The Cold War was finished with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, which liberated us from the danger of major-power war. This prompted the scholars to consider whether it is important to think about modern conceptions of defence.

Population explosion and industrial development are the two major factors that can harm our climate. These transitions may aggravate several functions that may raise a person's risk of infection, like deteriorating the state of someone's immune system or worsening symptoms that render them more susceptible to diseases.

Factors including massive use of pesticides, misuse of antibiotics, and the growth of antibiotic-resistant bacteria are the causes of human-induced genetic alterations. It results in the emergence of resistant microbes that suppress the capacity to give immunity to the species. Besides, environmental pollution attributable to a lack of sanitation, heavy rainfalls triggered by severe events related to climate change, and the increased erosion induced by the untraversable surfaces of urban sprawl has been associated with several disease outbreaks. The accumulation of chemical contaminants such as pesticides and fertilisers in marine areas has been correlated with a rise in harmful algal blooms, a significant source of food poisoning.(PAHO, 2012)

In international security negotiations in humanitarian reaction and public policy, growing importance is provided to the climate. The United Nations Security Council has made declarations and resolutions on the tie between natural and manmade disasters and resources and

the incorporation of ecological information into security policy. Environmental security has been identified as a bunch of concerns which includes the function that the ecosystem and biological capital can have in security and stability, especially various conservation causes and triggers of dispute, environmental consequences of strife, environmental restoration, and post-dispute peacebuilding. Security and uncertainty are not restricted to armed war or its exclusion but are embedded in sustainable livelihoods, social care and well-being.

The various methods and significances of security should be addressed. The term is also confusing. Its meaning is vague. Is it protection from risk, terror, desire and dearth? There is confusion regarding the state as part of an environmental security framework or is it exclusively for the citizens. As our stability is being undermined, does the world present a hazard to national or human security? What protection and safety steps are being taken? These are some of the problems which have given rise to significant discussions among researchers over the last decade.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Lodgaard and Westing claim that linking the environment to security – and thereby to ‘high politics’ – has created the political awareness and sense of urgency required to resolve environmental problems and increase our security. (Westing, 1989) Environmental loss or transition may contribute to a naturally violent confrontation. Some shift or future transition in our climate and the effects it could have may contribute to improvements in our society’s security policies. The now growing topic of water wars, the deterioration of communities, and the other massive threats we pose today are linked through scholarly studies, policy implications, and media to the comprehensive debate of climate change.
2. The Brandt-Report (1980) noted that “few threats to peace and survival of the human community are greater than those posed by the prospects of cumulative and irreversible degradation of the biosphere on which human life depends”. The Brundtland Commission (1987) argued that the security concept “must be expanded to include the growing impacts of environmental stress – locally, nationally, regionally, and globally”. The Commission on Global Governance (1995) called for a broader concept of global security for states, people, and the planet. It claimed a linkage between environmental deterioration, poverty, and underdevelopment as causes of conflict. These reports put the linkage between environmental stress, conflicts and conflict resolution on the political agenda of international organisations.

In this regard, United Nations Environment Programme has been active in three areas: a) Disaster Management Branch; b) UNEP’s Ozone Action Programme; and c) UNEP’s Post Conflict Assessment Unit (Haavisto, 2003). In January 2004, UNEP identified a “need for scientific assessments of the link between environment and conflict to promote conflict prevention and peacebuilding” (Töpfer 2004: 1).

3. The former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan has pointed out three building blocks of the human security concept: “freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human – and therefore national – security”. (2000). By being true to the enduring philosophy of sustainable development and human security goals implies the “freedom of future generations to inherit a health environment”. The United Nations Development Programme identified environmental degradation as “real threats to human security” in the 21st century.

Right now, we see that our behaviour patterns as a community are greatly influencing our surroundings. The consequences of environmental destruction in critical locations across the world have intensified and culminated in global events that have arisen. The drastic rise in catastrophic events suggests that our world is highly vulnerable to calamities. If climate change causes more extreme weather events such as floods and heatwaves, its frequency will intensify.

Responses and Responsiveness to Environment Security

The human dimension to environmental degradation consists of both the response of communities to the transitions and the responsiveness of communities to the changes. The interfacing and connectivity processes that are prominent demand ethical and philosophical questions. International transition impacts and meshes with the ecosphere and the anthroposphere. The anthroposphere deals with populations, social organisations, knowledge, culture, economy and transport, and other human-related systems. The study that is currently undertaking demonstrates that humans already have the potential to modify the natural ecosystem in ways that endanger the very mechanisms and elements, both biotic and abiotic, upon which the human race relies. Since the early 1990s, the environment and security concerns became an important focus of the policy dialogue, contributing to new initiatives of the UN.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has complied with security concerns from environmental stress. Among the non-traditional security risks confronting OSCE countries in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, in Central Asia, and other parts of the former Soviet Union are transnational contamination, a lack of water supplies, processing of nuclear waste, and decrease in the number of human casualties during manmade or environmental catastrophes. Among them are several hot spots in the Baltic Sea region, the Balkans, Central Asia, in the Black and Caspian Seas as well as in the Caucasus (Brauch 2003: 85-86).

The European Union has pursued two strategies for environmental security: 1) integrating sustainability targets into all sectoral agendas, including infrastructure policies, international policies and national security policies; and 2) dispute resolution and mediation in the operations of multinational organisations, and in particular areas (Brauch 2003: 86- 89). At the meeting of the European Council held in Barcelona in March 2002, in order to support growth and development, the environmental sustainability policy included in the sectoral policies.

The United Nations University Institute on Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) in Bonn was established in late 2003 to develop the environmental dimension of human security further not only with regard to the scientific conceptual debate but also its operational consequences for capacity building primarily to enhance governance capabilities within the UN system and in the member states. Through UNU-EHS, the university is trying to predict the overall effects of these long-term, accelerating environmental tragedies for humanity as rising temperatures, rapidly declining groundwater levels, soil depletion and other implications of environmental negligence.

Need for Policy Revisions

To establish a human-centred environmental protection concept, the first move is for all citizens of the community to work with one another to maintain the world for the good of every single one of us, and our descendants. Being associated with environmental concerns is the process of minimising unsustainable environmental issues, which appear to include people as the main target. It discusses the effect of important environmental concerns on both the citizen and the community as a whole such as hunger, limited resources, and freshwater.

The nation-states may have the institutional and legal frameworks through which legislation is conceived and implemented. They are not even close to catching those flows of the spatiality in our lives, in the flows at the micro-level. The notion of "freedom from hazard impact" is intended to further foster human security by broadening and mainstreaming it.

This revolutionary theory is intended to add a "hazards" component definition that bridges both environmental and human security. Mainstreaming efforts are needed on the scientific and political tracks with regard to the environmental dimension of human security, i.e. the conceptualisation and debate within the scientific community; and the conceptual change within the UN Framework from a global perspective to a view that takes into consideration the significance of environmental threats, issues, weaknesses and risks. Regarding the work of international organisations, a dual mainstreaming may be needed: 1) to integrate a human security insight into environmental security-based programmes and include an environmental security dimension into the work of the Human Security Network focusing primarily on freedom from fear; 2) it takes human beings or humankind as referents of analysis.

As part of this quality standards book, case studies are needed to include the policy mechanisms and how the state and community have reacted to the problems and results, and they should emphasise the role the knowledge factor (learning, capacity building) has played in developing adaptive and mitigation strategies to reduce vulnerability and to strengthen resilience. A regional viewpoint is required on the triggers of the policy process and consequences it can generate. Identification of a range of relations at the regional scale involves a mixture of various analysis techniques (climate, soil, water), and case studies from a variety of fields (social studies).

Study into environmental protection can be directed at minimising the environmental effects, shielding against the impacts on the environment, and supporting others who are in unfortunate post-developmental states. Because natural disasters are rapidly being caused by changing climate factors, it is important for countries to establish policies to manage the effects of natural disasters as they become more common. Our emphasis should be based on avoiding abuse that might emerge from the usage of this technology. The emphasis of the analysis should be on relations between disasters and the widespread difficulties that infuriate affected societies, which tend to lead to displacement, and how they may cause, contribute to, and exacerbate domestic extreme socio-economic and political crises. The triggers and mechanisms that occur in the volatile environmental disputes or the wars should be examined. A framework of resilience is to be built for policy-relevant interventions to tackle environmental problems and discourage them from evolving into conflict through targeting long-term and slow-onset environmental root causes.

In a nutshell, tragedies like this cannot be avoided, but only mitigated. However, the effects can be minimised by both improved early warning

services and greater emergency preparedness. "Freedom from hazard impact" will suggest that citizens would leverage their capital to solve global development objectives rather than stay stuck in a sustenance loop. Attainment of "freedom from hazard impact" demands four distinct styles of policies, many of which are technological, as well as a range of internal and legislative steps to avoid or restrict the hazard:

- 1) the slow-onset risks that coastal flooding creates are exacerbated by sea-level rise and thermal expansion related to climate change
- 2) rapid-onset hydro-meteorological hazards as hurricanes, cyclones etc. causing floods and landslides, as well as droughts
- 3) rapid-onset geophysical hazards like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and their possible extreme consequences like Tsunami
- 4) Manmade disasters as technical (e.g. malfunctioning of technical systems, the collapse of buildings, dams), industrial (e.g. chemical industry, nuclear reactors) and traffic accidents (e.g. road, railway, ships, aeroplanes etc.) or a combination of these.

CONCLUSION

Human security as freedom from risk impacts is accomplished when citizens who are susceptible to these myriad environmental accidents (e.g. floods, landslides, and drought) that are also exacerbated by other related social threats like hunger, problems like food shortages, weaknesses and risks like an inadequate shelter in particularly dangerous flood-prone and coastal regions are properly alerted of potential hazards, trained and secured against these disruptions and are encouraged to brace themselves sufficiently to figure out how to deal with the survival dilemma.

The overarching aim of the Human and Environmental Security and Peace (HESP) project is to persuade politicians to involuntary action through embracing new frameworks contributing to constructive environmental initiatives and attitudes that identify and resolve the underlying causes of serious complications of environmental stress until they result in disruptions which can intensify into volatile unrest. The goal of both the natural and social sciences is to generate information that is scientifically accurate, and which can be re-examined and assessed by other scientists. Being wrapped up with figuring out the environmental aspect of human protection, both philosophically and organizationally, and in particular, working towards the "freedom from hazard impact" principle is the obstacle for the lawmakers/policymakers in the future.

India can alleviate the challenge by implementing two progressive and realistic policies. One solution is to incorporate economic, social, and security processes into security policies and strategy. India's navy, one of the world's most advanced organisations, could be able to provide the defence and transformation of the nation's global energy requirements. The other intervention is to change the asset protection strategies that are currently in effect, as well as focus on developing new sustainability policies that can help utilise the resources that are still not in short supply. In reality, these measures will not reverse India's security concerns. So they will be able to be more regulated and productive.

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