Peace and Human Security

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Introduction

The concepts of peace and security have connotations in different contexts. Both words are used quite commonly and are in fact inseparable. While separately, both of the words convey different meanings, together they provide safe conditions for individuals and nations to go ahead with their pursuits of interest. In general this refers to relatively stable social, economic, and political conditions. Social stability implies a state free of conflicts which generate threat and fear. Human rights are protected under stable economic and political conditions. The conditions: that support absence of conflicts and protect human rights are equally important for both peace as well as security.

The new notion of peace and security is much broader and includes a wide range of dangers and threats to human existence. Among others, these threats may be from terrorism, insurgency, and genocide, denial of human rights, health epidemics, narcotics trade and irrational use of natural resources. This notion is primarily addressed to individuals. It includes freedom of individuals from hunger, freedom from wants, diseases and epidemics, environmental degradation, exploitation and sub-human treatment. In fact, peace and security is to be seen as the precondition to socio-economic development and to the maintenance of human dignity.

Literature is replete with views, opinions, philosophies, and rigorous academic work accomplished in peace and human security studies depending upon the contexts of specific development, democracy, human rights, and humanitarian assistance with regard to socioeconomic and political situation considered in the investigation. The present article is a brief survey of the work done to highlight the salient points on the subject.

Peace

Peace can be viewed both as a state of mind, and a social and political condition. An individual is concerned with peace of mind or tranquillity. In such a state of mind, an individual can be at peace irrespective of external disturbances. It is a common observation that we can think about the peace of other people only when we are at peace. Therefore, before promoting peace, we must begin with individual peace first. Peace is also seen as concord or harmony. So, in relation to a family or a community, peace refers to a state of cordial relationship. On the other hand, peace

does not mean a condition of complete absence of disturbances or conflicts. In fact, complete absence of disturbances or conflicts in the society or among nations is not possible. So, we peace must also be understood at the level of societies, nations, and the world.

Peace is a social and political condition for economic growth that fosters development of individuals, societies, and nations. Perhaps the most popular view is as an absence of hostility, violence, or war. It is possible when justice prevails, i.e., there is a rule of law. There is a rule of law, when order prevails. Under a working political order, there is existence of healthy interpersonal relationships, prosperity in the matters of social or economic welfare, and the establishment of equality that serves the true interests of all. Consistent with this approach, Reardon (1988) places global justice as the central concept of peace and asserts that "justice, in the sense of the full enjoyment of the entire range of human rights by all people, is what constitutes positive peace." In that sense, peace suggests the existence of healthy relationships among nations, and a balance of Powers. Peace in national or international relationships is generally considered as the absence of hostility, and lack of conflict or violence. In this context, peace suggests sincere attempts at reconciliation and the existence of healthy international relationships.

Peace has always been among humanity's highest values. It may be just as elusive to define as are other virtues characterized by truth, beauty, trust, love, and justice. In this state, we can celebrate our diversity, and search for the good in each other without the concern for personal pain and sacrifice. It provides us a chance to look at ourselves and others as part of one human family. This state is possible, when all people behave according to prescribed codes of conduct. Correspondingly, we need to create an environment of peace that must begin at homes and in schools.

Kennedy (1963) took a narrow view of the human value of love in international relationships, "World peace, like community peace, does not require that each man love his neighbor—it requires only that they live together in mutual tolerance, submitting their disputes to a just and peaceful settlement." However, he proposed that it was well within the realm of human achievement, "Peace need not be impracticable, and war need not be inevitable. By defining our goal more clearly, by making it seem more manageable and less remote, we can help all peoples to see it, to draw hope from it, and to move irresistibly toward it." He further said, "Let us examine our attitude toward peace itself. Too many of us think it is impossible. Too many think it unreal. But that is a dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable—that mankind is doomed—that we are gripped by forces we cannot control. We need not accept that view. Our problems are man-made —therefore, they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings."

Strictly speaking, peace is very subjective and we can't hope for peace in the world until we all have peace in our own hearts. When we are at peace, we emanate peace from our personality and thus motivate others to seek peace. Peace can be experienced and realized only through disciplines, such as meditation. In the state of peace we have good will toward all people and the thought of hate or violence wouldn't enter our minds. According to Gandhi nonviolence is precondition to the existence of peace. His understanding of nonviolence was *ahimsa*, which is the absence of harm or injury to all beings in thought, speech and action. Practice of *ahimsa* is so powerful that it creates a moral force that has potential to transform all negative thoughts of causing harm, injury, or violence on others with positive thoughts of love, brotherhood and understanding. A*himsa* is a universal value that must be cultivated at all levels: personal, social, national, and international so that all conflicts can be resolved through dialog and understanding alone (Rai). Gandhi's thinking was that there is no dividing line between private and public life, so he recommends that moral principles should be followed in politics. World peace is possible if nations willingly cooperate to prevent warfare.

War and violence result in the systemic and sweeping denial of civil and political rights, along with economic, social, and cultural rights as scarce resources are expended on weapons and preparation for war. Human rights are the crucial connection between peace and security and the rule of law. Enduring peace will be attained only when all human rights are fulfilled. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that if "man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression," human rights should be protected by the rule of law.

Human Security

Human security is a subjective experience and it can be defined in terms of individual experience on a daily basis. Human security is the combination of threats to their survival from violence associated with war, genocide, and the displacement of masses, to their livelihoods, and to their dignity. It can be from a sudden loss of a job, healthcare, and social welfare. It may be from devastation caused by natural disasters, health pandemics or terrorist attacks on people etc. It may stem from violation of human rights, domestic violence, extremism, displacement, etc. In general human security means freedom from violence and from the fear of violence.

The concept of human security came to prominence in 1994 *Human Development Report* (HDR) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report gave a broad definition of human security encompassing everything that constitutes freedom from want and freedom from fear. Since then understanding of the term human security is becoming clearer in the wake of changing social, geopolitical and environmental landscape. Consequently, the

general view of human security is evolving with respect to individual perspective. Some significant definitions of human security follow.

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Frechette (1999) considered human security from the standpoint of ordinary families. "What do we mean by human security? We mean, in its most simple expression, all those things that men and women anywhere in the world cherish most: enough food for the family; adequate shelter; good health; schooling for the children; protection from violence whether inflicted by man or by nature; and a State which does not oppress its citizens but rules with their consent."

Political movements can effect a social change than any other avenue. In that vain, given political will, public policies can create a culture of peace. Annan (2000) addresses human security in the context of a peace culture, "We must also broaden our view of what is meant by peace and security. Peace means much more than the absence of war. Human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather, it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law."

In addition to consequences of political actions, human security faces threat from environmental disasters, spread of disease and arms trafficking. Annan (2000) includes those factors in his report for the General assembly, "The demands we face also reflect a growing consensus that collective security can no longer be narrowly defined as the absence of armed conflict, be it between or within States. Gross abuses of human rights, the large-scale displacement of civilian populations, international terrorism, the AIDS pandemic, drug and arms trafficking and environmental disasters present a direct threat to human security, forcing us to adopt a much more coordinated approach to a range of issues."

Many academicians have made revisions to the UNDP's original list of human security issues. Nef, for example, has devised a fivefold classification scheme, arguing that human security comprises (1) environmental, personal, and physical security, (2) economic security, (3) social security, including "freedom from discrimination based on age, gender, ethnicity, or social status," (4) political security, and (5) cultural security, or "the set of psychological orientations of society geared to preserving and enhancing the ability to control uncertainty and fear." According to Reed and Tehranian human security is comprised of ten constituent elements based on psychological security, which "hinges on establishing conditions fostering respectful, loving, and humane interpersonal relations," and communication security, or the importance of "freedom and balance in information flows."

From the perspective of human quality of life, Thakur (1997) defines human security as, "Human security refers to the quality of life of the people of a society or

polity. Anything which degrades their quality of life – demographic pressures, diminished access to or stock or resources, and so on – is a security threat. Conversely, anything which can upgrade their quality of life – economic growth, improved access to resources, social and political empowerment, and so on – is an enhancement of human security."

Human security is also connected with national security. In the words of Annan (2000), "Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a steep towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment -- these are the interrelated building blocks of human – and therefore national – security."

The emerging definition of National Security includes not only the security of the state, but also the security of the individuals within the state (Bayer, 2010). The security includes the protection of the individuals within the state against violence as well as from hunger, disease, disaster etc. Hunger resulting for example from a large percent of population being unemployed, or farmers facing crops destruction is a national security issue. In brief, National Security is both about the ability to protect individuals within a state as well as safeguard the state.

A slightly different view of human security from individual safety and freedom as provisions of good governance is given by Bajpai (2000). "Human security relates to the protection of the individual's personal safety and freedom from direct and indirect threats of violence. The promotion of human development and good governance, and, when necessary, the collective use of sanctions and force are central to managing human security. States, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and other groups in civil society in combination are vital to the prospects of human security."

Human security is from to include social and psychological factors In the evolving scope of Leaning and Arie (2000) consider human security as an underlying condition for sustainable human development, "Human security results from the social, psychological, economic, and political aspects of human life that in times of acute crisis or chronic deprivation protect the survival of individuals, support individual and group capacities to attain minimally adequate standards of living, and promote constructive group attachment and continuity through time. Its key measurable components can be summarized as: a sustainable sense of home; constructive social and family networks; and an acceptance of the past and a positive grasp of the future. It is suggested that these components can be best measured by

trends in their inverse indicators (social dislocation, dynamic inequality, and discount rate) according to metrics and units that will require further specification."

Conclusion

Peace is possible only by our collective willingness to have it and we practice *ahimsa*. Bar natural calamities, human security is possible if we all are free and we have mutual trust. Director of the Institute of International Studies, Tsinghua University summarizes these thoughts, "World peace and security cannot be achieved unless the common people are liberated from the ruling classes of their own countries. We must be allowed to go where we want, buy what we want, and be happy with the Earth as one country. Then nobody will resent anyone and all will be liberated without restraints and without boundaries. Until this utopian state of world citizens is achieved, we will have armies fighting armies to protect narrow national boundaries and proving to be superior to each other. "

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