

National Cohesion and Human Security

Amber Khalid
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Executive Summary

Under the purview of International Security, which addresses fundamental questions of war and peace, it is essential to comprehend the relationship between national cohesion and human security as a component of international and national security. Human security indicators measure the threat to the safety and survival of humans on the international stage. Therefore, specific measures must be taken to survive in a world where power constantly shifts from one entity to another.

Traditional security is limited to protecting state borders from external threats, whereas human security is concerned with the safety of individuals. Despite not being interchangeable, human security and traditional security relate to security in different spheres of influence. However, it is not necessary for a person to feel secure according to the conventional definition of security. The concept of human security operates through the lens of seven dimensions of security paradigms, which explain the fundamental issues presupposed to be threats. These include food security, health security, economic security, environmental security, political security, community security, and individual security. These threats must be mitigated for a peaceful and secure society to exist.

Issue

How is the Human security situation in Pakistan? How could national cohesion and human security be achieved most effectively, highlighting their connection?

Analysis

Human Security focuses on protecting individuals and measures the security index of any state or society based on seven factors. First, significant conflicts, especially those of an intrastate nature, pose the greatest threat to the existence of peace in society. Such patterns result in potentially catastrophic events and governance gaps. National Cohesion is derived from National Integration, which entails uniting various segments of humanity into one nation. On the other hand, national cohesion is a feeling or sense of belonging to one country or identity. These ideas complement each other and can be a tool for enhancing human security if combined. In the case of Pakistan, however, the situation is such that it has severe consequences for the nation. Therefore, national cohesion and civic nationalism are viewed as two sides of the same coin that go hand in hand with the level of human security. Sadly, Pakistan's human security indicators need to be developed if the current situation is analyzed in light of typical standards.

Economic Governance

Any nation's ability to exert force is determined by its economy. The economic state of Pakistan is a direct result of our actions and inactions. Due to domestic and international factors, Pakistan's economic policies and implementation are highly problematic. In recent years, the nation's trade balance has been adversely affected. While imports have skyrocketed, exports have fallen precipitously. This dollar outflow has harmed the rupee. As a result, the national currency has significantly depreciated against the dollar in a short period. This consequently pushed the inflation rate to an all-time high of 24.9 percent. Pakistan's foreign debt has long

exceeded the optimal level and is estimated to exceed 130 dollars. A debt-dependent nation cannot function effectively.

The political leadership's irresponsible and indifferent economic approach has created a human security dilemma. A nation already battling inflation, foreign debt, and political crisis cannot afford additional threats that would exacerbate the situation. The nation's misery has been compounded by precipitation from the atmosphere. Already unable to provide for their families, breadwinners now seek refuge in public schools and tents. An estimated \$12 billion will be required to repair the damage caused by mother nature. The required amount of rehabilitative capital is a tall order for an economy that has already been severely weakened. There is a need for structural reforms with deep roots.

The political elite frequently promises structural economic reforms but rarely follows through. Economic prosperity requires strong political will and consensus, which cannot be achieved unless the nation's political leadership acts selflessly and for the nation's benefit. Pakistan faces significant socioeconomic disparities, which has resulted in a development paradox. The widening gap between the wealthy and the poor has exacerbated social tensions.

In Pakistan, the causes of poverty encompass many social, economic, and environmental issues. Almost every measure of human security is profoundly impacted by poverty. The inability to maintain a decent standard of living poses a significant threat to Pakistan's national cohesion and identity. Given that poverty sparks violence in the country, vulnerable groups threaten the peace and security of every nation. According to the 2014 World Bank report titled "Addressing Inequality in South Asia,"¹ food insecurity and land inequality increase the likelihood of violent attacks by insurgents, sectarians, and terrorists in Pakistan. Suppose a vast majority of the population is deprived of clean water, shelter, education, employment, and efficient justice. In that case, it is predictable that social frustrations will lead to crime, violence, injustice, chaos, and, ultimately, a global human security crisis.

Education

More than 22.8 million children are not attending any schools or colleges for their education, leaving the youth estranged. The literacy rate of Pakistan was estimated at 58% in 2021-2022, asserting that about a little less than half of the country's population is illiterate. One of Pakistan's predicaments is the vast proportion of the illiterate population disguised as ticking-time bombs. Any young mind would be enticed to hold weapons and resort to violence for a few bucks.

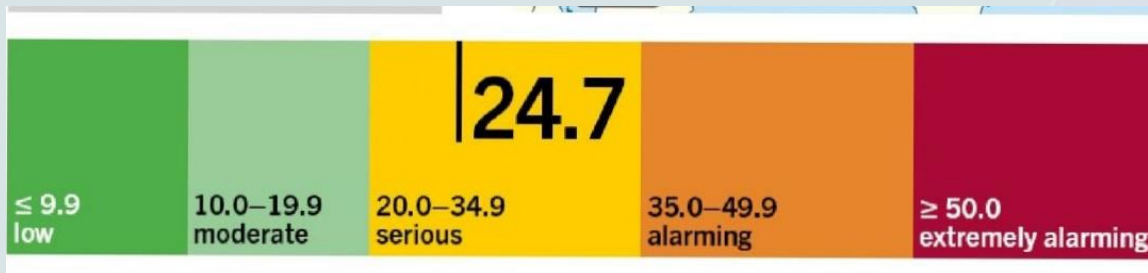
In addition, the literate population faces substantial obstacles in disparate education systems for various classes and social standings. This adversarial approach is reflected in students' opposing opinions and perspectives. Students graduating from a Higher Secondary School are taught differently than those enrolled in the Cambridge Curriculum, resulting in disparities in the job market. To move the wheel of national cohesion in the right direction, the youth of a nation needs to resonate in the same order. There are 22 million illiterate children in Pakistan and children with diverse educational backgrounds attempting to compete in a highly competitive job market. Under such conditions, Pakistan's future generations will be productive and intellectually fertile.

¹ <https://www.ppaf.org.pk/doc/PolicyBriefs/6.Poverty-Perspective-Issue-5-Part-II.pdf>

Poverty and Healthcare

Pakistan ranked eighth in wheat production, tenth in rice production, fifth in sugarcane production, and fourth in milk production, according to the Ministry of Health and UNICEF's 2018 National Nutritional Survey. Still, only 63.1% of the country's households are "food secure."² Despite such remarkable statistics, food security remains inadequate—homes in Pakistan waste more food than they consume.

A significant proportion of the population is influenced by begging and continues to practice it as a profession. In addition, the affluent class of society is not contributing to the fight against hunger by paying its taxes. In a country where inflation has surpassed the horizons, poverty, hunger, and unemployment galvanizes the will to beg for one's survival. Pakistan ranked 92nd on the Global Hunger Index among 116 countries in 2021. With a score of 24.7, the level of hunger in Pakistan is considered severe.³ Children between the ages of 5 and 15 suffer from malnutrition due to a lack of essential vitamins and minerals, which contributes to the development of chronic diseases. Child stunting is another factor that hinders nation-building and exacerbates food insecurity.



The unequal distribution of food within households exacerbates a precarious social situation. This demonstrates how food insecurity can directly lead to severe conditions that pose grave threats to Pakistan's national unity. In conjunction with all these misfortunes, Pakistan's inadequate health care system and indifference on the part of its respective authorities have caused grave health issues. Not only are there a small number of hospitals in Pakistan, but the country's health is also deteriorating daily. Inadequate equipment and crumbling infrastructure deprive hospitals of fundamental amenities. Private and public hospitals' competition for supremacy has resulted in the loss of many lives. The right to medical facilities is only supported by the wealthy, who can afford treatments costing millions. At the same time, the poor rely on public hospitals with inadequate management and infrastructure. As a result, Pakistan ranked 130th out of 195 states on the Global Health Security Index in 2021 with an index score of 30.4, a change of -0.9 percent from 2019. Pakistan needs a standardized healthcare system with advanced facilities to prevent the worsening health insecurity from causing further devastation.

Climate Change

In addition to these problems, Pakistanis face climate change as a significant issue. Unfortunately, Pakistan's environmental degradation is at an all-time high.

² <https://www.sbp.org.pk/reports/quarterly/fy19/Third/Special-Section-2.pdf>

³ <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2021/Pakistan.pdf>

According to a report, Pakistan's Environmental Performance Index score of 24.60 ranked 176th out of 180 countries.⁴ No hospital, factory, industry, or city drainage system can consider and prevent the environmental threats posed by hazardous substances. Another red flag that has been ignored is the presence of life-threatening chemicals that cause severe health problems in large populations. In addition, protecting flora and fauna of Pakistan's terrain is also a thing of the past. This state is the eighth most susceptible to climate change despite contributing less than one percent of global carbon emissions. One-third of the nation is flooded and affected by severe floods.

Moreover, ineffective governance and lack of preparation meant no plans were in place to combat the devastation caused by the massive floods. The 2010 floods had already contributed significantly to the destruction, so the novelty was not an issue. This year's flooding had unprecedented effects, with 35 million people displaced and approximately 73,000 women due to give birth within the next month, even though the nearest health care facilities were completely submerged. On the UN's Human Development Index (HDI) 2020 rankings, Pakistan ranked 154th out of 189 countries.⁵ Typically, the Human Development Index is determined by several factors, such as living standards, health, and education; however, in 2022, environmental standards will also be emphasized by adding two new indicators, carbon emissions and material footprints. Climate change has long threatened Pakistan's human security, but no proactive measures have been taken. Pakistan, a state of extreme vulnerability, had to pay for the criminal negligence of other states.

Political divisions

Moreover, political turmoil in Pakistan has always been in the spotlight, affecting nearly every aspect of the state apparatus. Political parties have long used the people of Pakistan as scapegoats for their interests to consolidate power. The absence of the rule of law has shattered society's democratic structure. Pakistan ranked 130th out of 139 countries on the Global Rule of Law Index in 2021, with a bad score of 0.39 out of 1.00.⁶ This speaks volumes about the respective authorities' unprofessionalism and lack of seriousness in carrying out their responsibilities. In pursuing political advantage, the people's inherent rights are compromised. This has precipitated a political crisis in the state under an ineffective government. In addition to political differences, the ethnic rivalry has exacerbated the separation between societies. The symbiotic relationship between political parties and ethnic fragmentation has polarised society to an unprecedented degree and exacerbated the situation to an unparalleled degree.

The Global Innovation Index is another essential indicator that must be considered. It is comprised of 82 indicators organized as seven pillars. According to the Global Innovation Index, Pakistan is ranked 99th out of 130 countries.⁷ It is essential to comprehend these figures because they reflect the consequences of human insecurity in Pakistan. According to the human capital and research indicator, Pakistan is ranked 117th. Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States are the top three innovative nations, while Vietnam is ranked 44th.

⁴ <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2022/component/ep>

⁵ [Pakistan ranks 154th on UN's Human Development Index \(tribune.com.pk\)](https://www.tribune.com.pk/story/154th-on-un-human-development-index)

⁶ [WJP-INDEX-21.pdf \(worldjusticeproject.org\)](https://www.worldjusticeproject.org/wjp-index-21.pdf)

⁷ <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/pakistan-news/pakistan-ranks-99-out-of-132-in-global-innovation-index-owing-to-low-literacy-rate-report.html>

India is ranked 46th, and Iran is ranked 60th among Asian countries. Moreover, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2022, Pakistan is severely threatened by several other issues. This statement validates the debt crisis, extreme weather problems, inflation, the failure of cyber security measures, and environmental change caused by humans.

In light of the threats mentioned earlier to human security, it is evident from the presented facts and figures that Pakistan requires a plan to elucidate the issues and devise specific solutions.

Recommendations

- Education should be provided to all using a national curriculum that strictly adheres to contemporary teaching methods. Under these teaching methodologies, teachers must be introduced to and their performance assessed.
- A digitalized tax collection system that strictly adheres to the rules. Reforms should be implemented at the fundamental levels of government.
- Imports should be reduced, and exports' value should be prioritized to strengthen the domestic economy and reduce the trade deficit.
- A standardized system of healthcare should be implemented.
- Pollution of the environment, conservation of natural resources, and protection of wildlife should be strictly regulated. Flood control and forestation require planning over the long term
- Mainstream and especially Digital Media will undergo radical change.
- Political parties should increase their youth quotas, and any anti-state actions or narratives that undermine national cohesion should be met with severe repercussions.
- Introduce a computerized system of law and order; digital FIR against crimes and criminals.

Conclusion

A country whose population is expected to reach 229.50 million this year, making it the fifth most populous in the world and the third most populous in Asia, faces grave threats to its human security. National Security Policy of Pakistan defines national cohesion as “The Islamic Republic based on the principles of equality and justice, empowered by cultural diversity, ensuring fundamental rights and social justice without discrimination, and fulfilling its social contract with its people through good governance to strengthen national esteem and cohesion.”⁸ Unfortunately, a country with the world's most extensive canal system, fertile agricultural land, tallest peaks, vast deserts, hundreds of kilometers of coastline, and a population of 229 million cannot utilize its enormous human resource for human and social development. In addition, there is a lack of competent, diligent, and visionary leadership and functional state institutions to manage the state apparatus in a more productive and accountable manner. Addressing human insecurities will stabilize the country's prospects for prosperity and steer national cohesion in the proper direction.

⁸ <https://dnd.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/National-Security-Policy-2022-2026.pdf>