

*Mohd Aminul Karim*

## **TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP - BANGLADESH BUREAUCRACY**

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### **Abstract**

Colonial legacy and Weberian concepts tend to block the sharpening of Bangladesh bureaucracy which has to meet the challenges of a fast moving transformational society of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is changing fast, as is clearly discernible, among others, in the fields of private sector, economy, technology, culture, values, attitude and hopes and aspirations of the people to meet the demands of the globalized fast moving knowledge based world. The felt need of the Bangladesh society today is to revamp the otherwise stereotyped bureaucracy that can look for vision and be more proactive, more positive, more responsive, able to challenge the *status quo*, and be creative, risk taker, better decision maker and harmonizer. What needs to be stressed is the imperative of Emotional Intelligence relative to the Intelligence Quotient. There needs to be an attitudinal change armed with the latest knowledge of how to take charge of an ambiguous, uncertain and volatile environment. A tested institutional/field level model that meets the needs of a transformational society like Bangladesh may be followed to instill the values, attitudes, skills, visionary abilities in the otherwise routine bureaucracy of Bangladesh. The moot point is: the bureaucracy should cross the transactional threshold to enter into transformational arena.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is undergoing phenomenal changes/reforms in its economy, governance, women empowerment, human resource development, poverty reduction, health, education, etc. Its economy is moving at quite a good pace, given the spurt in export earnings, mainly due to private entrepreneurs, and high remittance earnings mainly coming from the Bangladeshis working in the Middle East, Europe and America. Bangladesh has huge potentials, as the experts predict, even to reach to the middle income group of countries, given some more momentum in terms of improving governance, eradicating corruption and ensuring political stability. As is known, Bangladesh is often battered by natural calamities which cause substantial damage to its infrastructure, and its effort to eradicate poverty, not to speak of the loss to human lives. Bangladesh has certain advantages like homogeneity in terms of ethnicity, religion and a culture of tolerance which play a great impacting role in its integration process. It has a huge population, which may be called a comparative advantage that can be converted into competitive advantage like turning them into human resources. If the huge population can be turned into more literate, skilled, semi-skilled manpower, and utilized domestically and exported to developed countries then the country would greatly benefit economically and socially. Given the limited space of Bangladesh that finds it difficult to sustain such a huge population, this is one of the most feasible and pragmatic options left for Bangladesh. Otherwise Bangladesh's human security will be in jeopardy.

Bangladesh is slowly and gradually turning itself into the mainstream of globalized world but is facing hiccups due to political instability, corruption and weak governance. Leadership and management skills, although better available in the private sector, are lacking in the public sector. Political leadership, however, does not fall within this ambit, since that is naturally homegrown; a kind of informal sector, coming from the grass root levels of Bangladesh. Political leadership, however, is intricately involved with the public bureaucracy in running the governance of the country. Political leadership is definitely more pronounced since they give the policy decisions and direction for running the state affairs. But the real challenge remains in the realm of implementing those on the ground,

where there are almost insurmountable challenges and handicaps in different stages of implementation process. In both the tiers of leadership, there is a dire need of vision, charisma, creativity, changing and challenging the *status quo*, transforming the subordinates or the followers to get into the vision of the leaders or be able to look into their emotions and energy. It is, however, a sorry state of affairs prevailing in Bangladesh where especially in the formal tier of leadership, who also provides impetus to the political leadership for decision making, the bureaucracy is usually carrying out routine, stereotyped functions which, is otherwise, supposed to impact much in the change of the system of governance of Bangladesh. Gulick and Urwick in the book “Functions of the Executive” talk about “POSDCORB”, the acronym that stands for Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting, that implies for scope of leadership; however, the critics found the model mechanical and without concern for the ground realities in which the bureaucrats operate.

What is needed is the awareness of the importance of Five ‘I’s– Information, Inspiration, Innovation, Introjections and Integration.<sup>1</sup> “Awareness of the need for innovative thinking on the part of the administrators was considered essential in order to achieve the development goals that could not wait for slow and incremental methods at the expense of suffering masses”. Governance, as a system, in Bangladesh needs a thorough overhauling in order to meet the challenges and constraints, opportunities and threats of the socio-economic life of Bangladesh. Routine work may keep the life functioning but it would not be able to cope with the changes or adapt to the fast moving information technology-driven, knowledge-based, proactive environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century intelligent globalized world.

Such being the necessity, this paper attempts to suggest options/remedies that can remodel/reorient or revamp the bureaucracy of Bangladesh. The paper would attempt to show the differences between transactional and transformational leadership

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<sup>1</sup> Valsan, E.H. “Leadership in Public Administration for Alleviating Poverty and Development: A Conceptual Approach”, (<http://www.adb.org/Document/Books/Role-of-Public-Administration/default.asp>)

traits and would impress upon the bureaucracy to adapt more towards transformational leadership which would help provide visionary, proactive, perspective planning for the development of Bangladesh. A more vibrant bureaucracy is essential for Bangladesh, as could be true to any other country. Such vibrant bureaucracy would also act as a restraining factor in politicization of administration and would lead the nation, within its perspectives, enthusiastically towards the achievements of national goals and objectives. The paper would attempt to concretize the options, as much as possible; however, implementing the options would need a motivation level that comes from a very high level of value system which is otherwise lacking in Bangladesh society today. Here, however, the concept of introjections, suggested by American scholar Fred W. Riggs, may be relevant. Borrowing the idea from the discipline of psychology, which calls for the selective internalization of values, Riggs suggests for “accepting reforms and innovations that can work in a society, and rejecting those that are not suitable or even cause disturbance to the polity”. A typical example was the successful male sterilization programme in Kerala, India, because of its high literacy rate whereas it failed in North India because of poor literacy rate. Bureaucrats and politicians who wanted this programme to succeed even used force and thereby causing political damage to the Congress Party and contributing in ballooning the population of India beyond a billion. Such manifestation was obvious because family planning became a taboo. Given this experience, positive orientation and attitude is also the call of this paper.

## **2. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAITS**

Transformational Leadership is the latest and most promising phase in the leadership spectrum. “Here the focus is on leader behavior during periods of organizational transition and on processes such as creating visions of desired future state and obtaining employee commitment to change.”<sup>2</sup> Transformational Leadership is a kind of leadership that can transcend the normal boundary management of an environment. It aims to walk an extra mile, or take a bit more risk, or take more responsibilities instead of passing

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<sup>2</sup> Philip Sadler, *Leadership*, mba masterclass, Kogan Page India Private Limited, New Delhi, 2005, p.13.

the buck in undertaking a task. It should be able to improvise, if required, to reengineer or reinvent. Stagnancy or maintaining status quo is the job of a routine manager or a transactional leader but creating a new context in order to be more productive is the goal of a transformational leader. It should be able to take the team along who strongly upholds the visions, values and objectives of the leader to be their own and inspires them in such a way that they would carry out the tasks enthusiastically even at the peril of their life. They would not necessarily turn into rabble rouser. They should, as far as possible, reflect charisma, be able to inspire the subordinates and should be able to intellectually stimulate the subordinates or the stakeholders.

Charisma entails providing vision and mission to the stakeholders so that the team moves along the path the leader has foreseen. He should be able to instill pride and gain respect and trust from the subordinates or his constituency. Charisma reflects his personality, knowledge, wisdom, sense of justice and commitment. One may argue this is a born quality- a gift from God. This argument is largely not tenable since - many scholars term it as a myth – such qualities can be acquired through rigorous exercise, given a deep commitment. Next point is about inspiring the stakeholders in undertaking even the arduous jobs. The leadership is about understanding the environment, adapting to the environment and be able to communicate the contingencies commensurate with the environment to the stakeholders. Now the leader should be able to communicate the high expectations expected of the team members in a simple and understandable language. He may use different symbols at his disposal. Gandhi and Mao Tse Tung inspired the whole nation to fight for freedom and emancipation in such a way that hundreds and thousands of them were even ready to die for the cause at their every beck and call. However, such historical examples may not appropriately apply to every level, tier or environment of leadership. But one can always draw lessons from such examples.

A leader should be able to intellectually stimulate his team members. He should understand the context, environment, rationality of his cause or vision, and that would need deep intellectual exercise. He should be able to provide careful and creative problem solving techniques to his team members. All great leaders of the world are

generally men of knowledge and wisdom. Henry Kissinger called Mao Tse Tung one of the greatest teachers of mankind. A leader must pursue knowledge-based critical thinking, especially in this globalized intelligent world. Practical knowledge has no substitute for a leader in order to inspire his subordinates with ideas, values, attitudes, perceptions, visions, missions and objectives. The subordinates are unlikely to accept one as leader if he cannot provide rational and creative problem solving techniques. Without such course, a leader might become redundant in the society.

The last point the author would like to make is personal touch a leader provides to his subordinates. This aspect of leadership practice is seriously lacking in Bangladesh environment. A leader has to give personal attention, and treat all his subordinates individually. He has to counsel and mentor his members, if possible. A leader has to care about the welfare, mental or health state, family problems of his subordinates. This works marvel in Bangladesh environment. Mere patting makes a lot of difference to an employee in the Bangladesh environment. Maslow's Theory of Needs does indicate such directions in order to upgrade the motivation levels of the employees.

A leader should be an innovator apart from being an administrator only. He should be able to inspire trust than merely relying on control. A leader, depending on the tier he is holding in the hierarchy, should generally have a long range perspective and an eye on the horizon apart from having an eye on the bottom line. A leader should not ask how and when an event took place; he, however, would do better if he asks what and why of the incident. He challenges the system or status quo, of course not unsettling the environment. Conflict management is a good technique but that should not destabilize the system one is holding. In a nutshell, transformational leaders are seen as change agents, courageous, believing in people, having a strong set of values, life-long learners, capable of coping with complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity and visionaries.<sup>3</sup>

### **3. BANGLADESH BUREAUCRACY IN PERSPECTIVE**

Max Weber, the chief architect of bureaucracy, provides certain features of bureaucracy like hierarchy, promotion based on

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Sadler (quoting Tichy and Devanna), *op.cit.*, p.25.

professional merit, development of a career service, reliance on and use of rules and regulations and impersonality of relationships among career professionals in the bureaucracy and with their clientele. To a commoner, taking cue from Max Weber, bureaucracy would appear to be something to do with red tapism, inefficiency and abuse of power in the context of official-client relationship. It develops a system of authority, which is indestructible and an entrenched bureaucracy that can serve any interest. It shows allegiance only to the authority above it even if political changes have taken place. Webster's New International Dictionary defines bureaucracy as a system that is narrow, rigid and formal, depends on precedent, and lacks initiative and resourcefulness. The essence of traditional public administration tends to be rigid, rule-bound, centralized, insular, self-protective and profoundly antidemocratic; and such traits often collide with the contemporary paradigm of bureaucracy that "allows qualified voters an efficient instrument through which the will of the people may be expressed; makes officers both responsive and responsible," and thereby ensures common welfare.<sup>4</sup>

Theorists and practitioners would like to emphasize bureaucratic paradigms like fairness, representation, participation, accountability, responsiveness, political neutrality, efficiency, rationality, and expertise. But the very nature of public administration poses problem to such value. The bureaucrats have a tendency to rely more on expertise and knowledge than over accountability, participation and democratic control.<sup>5</sup> Now, therefore, a pertinent question arises: are the bureaucratic traits legitimate in terms of democratic principles. In this regard, David Rosenbloom opines that the legitimacy of bureaucracy occurs when bureaucratic policy making is subject to direct popular control. If bureaucracy is isolated from public

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<sup>4</sup> Lynn, Lawrence E. Jr., "Globalization and Administrative Reform: What is Happening in Theory?", *Public Management Review* 3 (1 March): 19-208, 2001

<sup>5</sup> Ahmad Martadha Mohammad, "Administrative Discretion and Representative Bureaucracy: Linking Descriptive Representation to Substantive Representation" (<http://www.adb.org/Document/Books/Role-of-Public-Administration/default.asp>)

accountability, bureaucracy can in no way be responsible to public interests and desires.<sup>6</sup>

Again Merton, an American sociologist, goes deeper into the pitfalls of bureaucratic system. Bureaucracy's adherence to rules originally conceived as a means, turns into an end-in-itself, thereby resulting in the displacement of goals. "In Bangladesh, the bureaucracy, to a large extent, conforms to the Weberian model..... Bureaucrats are not always assigned specific positions on the basis of their specialization or expertise but rather on the basis of belonging to a particular civil service cadre. Rationality is conceived in a narrow sense. It is primarily equated with administrative efficiency and economy both of which are considered ends in themselves rather than means to an end- the effective delivery of public service."<sup>7</sup>

Bureaucracy's strict adherence to regulations induces timidity, conservatism and technicism. Bureaucracy's avowed norm of impersonality and its dependence on abstract rules put it in conflict with the personalized consideration the members of public and clientele would expect. Bureaucracy's entrenched corporate interests, which may be called *esprit de corp*, totally negates the concept of transformational leadership traits.

Given the traits as shown, bureaucracy, theoretically speaking, goes against the grain of transformational leadership. However, such theoretical branding may not always find true reflection in the practical application by an individual bureaucrat. He may have the charisma, vision or personalized consideration like that of a transformational leader and he may exert to establish his leadership, but the environment of the boundary around which he is operating may not permit him to realize his full potentials. Initiative of an individual bureaucrat is greatly circumscribed in decision making process; there may be ten tiers, in the Central Government, to be

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<sup>6</sup> Rosenbloom, David H., *Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics and Law in the Public Sector*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> Mohammad Mohabbat Khan and Habib Zafarullah, "The Political System and Bureaucracy- Currents and Crosscurrents," in *The Bureaucratic Ascendancy-Public Administration in Bangladesh The First Three Decades*, Habib Zafarullah and Mohammad Mohabbat Khan (ed.), AH Development Publishing House, Dhaka, 2005, p.12



crossed, when the final decision is made. However, in most of the cases, all the ten tiers may not have to be crossed. Anyway, a kind of timidity thus sets in such a process. Initiative, dynamism, and creative and innovative thinking, the *sine quo none* for transformational leadership that should be undertaken by a bureaucrat are lost, at best diluted. Risk-taking is one of the hallmarks of real leadership. In a scenario like this, a bureaucrat will not take any risks since he has somebody above him.

It is reportedly known that a Secretary to the government puts forward a file to his Cabinet Minister seeking sanction of a paltry sum of Tk. 25,000 (equivalent to US\$350) to be disbursed for the repair/maintenance of a small building in a remote village of Bangladesh. Now this brings to the fore another predicament where the authority is so much centralized that such a simple decision has to be taken by the Central Government located in Dhaka. ADB Country Governance Assessment (Draft), Bangladesh, May 2004, under heading 'Centralization' observes, "An additional constraint to good governance at the local level is the extremely centralized form of government now in place. Union Parishads (UPs) derive their authority and a substantial portion of their funds from national ministries whose effective reach to the level is constrained by intervening levels of government. For example, Union Parishads (UPs) must submit their budgets and work plans for review and follow-up action by several appointed officials at the Upazilla and district levels. As a result, the UNO and the Chairman of the Upazilla Development Committee have more *de facto* power over development projects in Unions than do the UPs themselves."

Although Bangladesh is a unitary system, there are three administrative tiers and local government structure which could have easily taken care of such problem. Even for posting of foundation level officers like lecturer/teacher of a college/high school or a medical officer at Upazilla (Sub-district), the Central Government, where again so many tiers may have to be crossed, gets involved. Here again, timidity sets in and that delays the decision making process. This also gives rise to more probability of corruption and sufferings of the employees. Motivation, which is conditioned more by intrinsic factors than extrinsic ones, gets badly affected and the overall productivity of the government definitely suffers. However,

the probability of corruption still remains valid even if decentralization in relatively important decision making is done at the administrative levels. Federalism is, however, a far-fetched idea at the moment since basic structure of the Constitution has to be amended and for that political consensus has to be reached.

Even if an individual bureaucrat would like to exert his dynamism, creativity or initiative, the system would not permit it. The system constraint has become a serious problem in transforming the officers. Delay in the system is unwarranted and is a recurrent phenomenon. This author learnt about a case where a simple clarification on a point, pending for last about six years, asked from the higher office of the Republic to a functioning ministry took about six months, that too after several reminders. Such delays are caused both vertically and horizontally. Horizontal delays (reasons for vertical delays are already pointed out) are caused mainly because of consultation or opinion seeking with the other line ministries. In the horizontal plane also files have to again move up and down the tiers as mentioned. And if there is a disagreement, the matters get further complicated. It further delays the decision making process. This author was shocked to learn a state of affair where an important appointment case remained pending in a functioning ministry for three years. The case could have been processed to the appropriate authority for his approval. As a matter of fact, the incumbent continued functioning presumably without lawful authority for three years. When, on the eve of a ceremony, it was discovered that the appointment was not validated and hence the subsequent actions that followed could be questioned, the Pandora's Box was opened. How and why it happened was not looked into. The accountability and transparency, which are so much essential for good governance, were totally lacking in this case. The matter was, probably, somehow patched up. Even in a transactional leadership spectrum, the *status quo* is at least maintained. In this case, even the *status quo* or routine functioning was not maintained, let alone challenging and changing the *status quo*. So the creative or innovative ideas cannot be expected that are so critical in this globalized, intelligent 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

Transformational leaders are supposed to be intellectually sound, so that they can transmit to their followers their wisdom; and it results in two-way traffic. A leader has to command the respect

through his personality, values, wisdom, and long-range view and make them think the way he thinks. Only then can the leader take the team along with him. He has to capture some of their styles or traits in order to be successful in his domain. And his own domain is to have contemporary and up-to-date knowledge and the ability to apply those in the field he is handling. If he is handling WTO matters, he should be a reasonable expert on the subject so that he can communicate, negotiate and be able to enter into agreements, keeping the country's interests above everything, with his expert counterparts coming from both developed and developing worlds. This is a knowledge-based world, but sad enough Bangladesh has turned out to be a knowledge starved society.

If our bureaucrats could be armed with more technical and appropriate knowledge, then the Government would not probably have signed the Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) with the International Oil Companies (IOCs) where 72% of the revenue earnings are given to the IOCs in foreign currencies. Gas is stored in the territories of Bangladesh but it only gets a paltry 28% percent of revenue earnings. Again, because of the lack of adequate technical and appropriate knowledge or realizing the urgency Bangladesh, as yet, could not place its case before the United Nations regarding the maritime demarcation of the Bay of Bengal, although it ratified the UNCLOS in 2001. Bangladesh has not yet carried out necessary survey to decide about the extent of its continental shelf. The control points of its base line, both in the western and eastern sectors, have been contested by both India and Myanmar. Bangladesh is likely to get 'zone/sea locked' and if serious negotiations are not undertaken immediately with the actors concerned, mostly applying the equity theory as against equidistance theory, much of Bangladesh's life sustenance resources and maritime freedom might get jeopardized. It is to be especially mentioned here that the neighboring countries like India, Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia have settled their scores of maritime boundary demarcation.

There is a big question: is Bangladesh prepared for such serious negotiations with its neighbours in order to protect its interests? Or it is going to surrender its interests as it did during the last Hong Kong round of WTO negotiations because the Bangladesh team did not carry out enough home work for such negotiations? There can be a

further question: is the person who is supposed to carry out his homework has the requisite ability and the right attitude to do so? There is a concern about it. The answer is simple: the person may not have the requisite expertise and the positive attitude that would take care of the national interest.

This author learnt about a case where a summary for an appointment to a very high office was placed in the higher office in such a way that the constitutional provision apparently got violated. When someone pointed out such violation, the reply given to him was that there was such a precedent earlier. To that officer, what was important was the precedent not the Constitution. It also shows lack of knowledge of the Constitution both by him and his predecessor. It could be also attitudinal tendencies to show what they did was right, not what the Constitution stipulates. It can be surmised that it was more of a lack of adequate knowledge of the Constitution. Superficial knowledge on such critical issues could be disastrous for the nation and on occasions national interests might get violated. Even a transactional leader is expected to have enough knowledge on a subject he handles in order to maintain the *status quo*; otherwise atrophy would take over. In a globalized interdependent world, specialist knowledge by the bureaucrats in their respective field of activities is essential even if we presume they are not transformational leaders. Intellectual stimulation is *sine quo non* for someone to be a transformational leader.

It is generally believed that the bureaucrats, especially officers from the Administrative Cadre, probably, acted as a pressure group (there could be other pressure groups also) to block the separation and independence of the judiciary and Anti-Corruption Commission. It also did not work favorably to institutionalize the local government system of Bangladesh. The Supreme Court, through its twelve point directive in 1999, asked the Government to completely separate the judiciary, especially the lower judiciary, from the executive. But the successive governments started dilly-dallying the process, presumably also at the behest of the bureaucrats. Bureaucrats might have apprehended that their power could get greatly curtailed by such action. This could also be true in the case of the local governments, as already pointed out. However, the local

political leaders also had their vested interests in not institutionalizing and strengthening the local government structures.

Be that as it may, bureaucrats would not like to part with the control and superintendence they have on different aspects of the local government. Bureaucrats both at the local tiers and also at the central level have varying degrees of control over the local governments. It is a well nigh difficult task to meaningfully direct, control and monitor the activities of the local governments, from the capital city, spread in every nook and corner of the country. Personalized consideration would be totally lacking in such a scenario which goes against the concept of transformational leadership. Innovativeness, creativity and emotional attachment are essential in transformational leadership styles but sad enough such inputs may be absent in a scenario like this.

#### **4. RESPONSE**

A thorough overhauling of the bureaucratic structure, span of control, style of work, motivation, values, attitudes, and mindset may be necessary in the context and environment of Bangladesh. There may be a necessity of strategic planning for this. Donor assistance, both in terms of money and expertise, may be necessary.

Firstly, flatter organization system, which generally goes with the modern management concepts, as against many-tiered vertical organization in the bureaucratic hierarchy of the Central Government, may be thought of. It could be brought down to four to five tiers that would facilitate better and faster decision making. However, the number of streams, dealing with limited subjects, within a Ministry/Division may be increased. This will help in faster decision making and specialization.

Secondly, similar types of Ministries/Divisions could be clustered together within which the officers/employees would generally rotate. Example could be the Ministries/Divisions of Finance, Planning, Commerce, External Resources Division, Expatriate Welfare Division could be clustered together, something like Strategic Business Units (SBUs), as practised in the business world, where the officers from their foundation level to even up to highest level would rotate during their stint of staff appointments. Another example could be the Ministries/Divisions like Foreign,

Home, Defence, Disaster Management, Chittagong Hill Tracts, etc could be clustered together. The specialization that would accrue in such clustering would better take care of areas like WTO, maritime or land boundary demarcation, counter-terrorism, etc. where there are tendencies of faltering. This is given merely as a suggestion; one may not be sacrosanct about it. In a similar vein, Zafarullah's categorization of ministries/divisions merits consideration, may be with certain adjustment. Those could be categorized, as he prescribes, like Executive (President's Office, Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Division), Regulatory (Establishment, Finance, IRD, Local Government, Commerce, Home, Jute, Civil Aviation and Tourism, Shipping, Lands, etc), Service-orientated/Welfare (Relief, Special Affairs, Health and Family Welfare, Railways, Post and Telecommunication, Social Welfare, Women's Affairs), Food, Labour and Manpower Developmental (Agriculture, Rural Development and Cooperative, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control, Roads and Road Transport, Industries, Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Works, Fisheries and Livestock, Jute and Textile), Promotional (Primary and Mass Education, Education, Science and Technology, Environment and Forest, Information, Cultural Affairs, Youth and Sports, Religious Affairs), Advisory (Armed Forces Division, Planning, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Parliament Secretariat), Research (Statistical and Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division), and International (Foreign Affairs and Economic Relations).<sup>8</sup>

Thirdly, Strategic Management Planning, along with Management by Objectives (MBO) technique, as practised in the business world, dovetailed to the culture of public service may be adopted for the Bangladesh Civil Service. Vision/Mission, long term objectives, strategies, yearly objectives, policies, feedback system for each Ministry/Division, Corporation and Department should be clearly spelt out in a realistic, achievable, time bound benchmark.

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<sup>8</sup> Habib Zafarullah, "The National Administration-Organizational Arrangements and Operating Methods" in *The Bureaucratic Ascendancy-Public Administration in Bangladesh, The First Three Decades*, Habib Zafarullah and Mohabbat Khan (ed.), AH Development Publishing House, Dhaka, 2005, pp.75-77. Some of the Ministries/Divisions, over the years, have been renamed or reorganized.

This is not to say that broad objectives are not spelt out in the yearly /three yearly/five yearly planning processes. Bangladesh has a good macro level planning, but what it lacks is the micro level planning and implementation. It also lacks feed back loop which helps in further planning. Objectives are not set out in a realistic and achievable manner; as such Bangladesh generally falters in implementing the Annual Development Plans or in utilizing the foreign assistance. Strategic planning involves all segments, spectrum, activities, cohesion, top down and bottom up approaches, etc. It also involves participatory planning. All stakeholders should be consulted before deciding about an objective. Each Department/Tier/Local Government should be given their yearly achievable, tangible and intangible (to be quantified as much as possible) objectives that would, in totality, meet the yearly objectives of a particular Ministry/Division. Our foreign missions, as part of economic diplomacy, could be given the yearly objectives like export to the target country be increased by say 10% or so many skilled/non skilled manpower be exported to that country. Such objectives could be decided realistically based on past experiences and future trends. Management by objectives, although an American concept not fitting into our culture, may be followed at least in its spirit. Now any player who fails to meet a reasonable expectation of the objectives may be made answerable. Such lapses may be reflected in his yearly performance appraisal in clear terms which would ultimately impact on his career advancement. An independent team has to work out the details of modalities, in case the Government decides to implement the concept.

Fourthly, in order to attract the better graduates of the universities (private sector is now a better destination), their pay, perks and privileges should be greatly enhanced. ADB Country Governance Assessment Bangladesh (Draft), May 2004 acknowledges that the Civil Service no longer attracts the same calibre of entry- level officials that it did in the past. It prescribes salary reform, “mindful of the need to balance the prospect of competitive salary increases with the corollary need to reduce the overall costs of public administration”. If necessary, a portion of the Annual Development Plan may have to be diverted to the Revenue Budget in order to cater for the extra expenditure involved in salary increases. In the long term, it would prove to be more cost-effective.

If the actors are not efficient, output would be always problematic. One cannot be expected to be efficient, if his/her physiological needs are not adequately met, when he is de-motivated.

Fifthly, since the quality of Bangladesh University education has deteriorated to a great extent, especially in relation to communication skill in English and latest developments around the world, there is a dire need for an exhaustive, realistic, up-to-date training package programme to be developed in the training institutions. This is borne out by the observations made by Shawkat Ali, a former career civil servant, "various studies have drawn attention to the deficiencies in the training of civil servants, specially post-entry and pre-entry training. Some of these deficiencies are as follows: lack of qualified and well trained staff arising out of posting unwilling civil servants in the training institutes and such postings do not take into account the qualification and experience of the civil servants which result in low quality of training and lack of motivation; the post-entry training and in-service training courses are not well integrated and scheduled to provide and continuously update the level of training and knowledge of civil servants. ...Questions have already been raised about relevance of training, utilization of training and incentives for training.<sup>9</sup> Training should be both class room and field based. Exhaustive training programme generally for greater duration than what is done today, especially at the foundation level would pay rich dividends in the long run. Training in the form of case studies, seminars, group projects especially at the field levels, presentations, research papers, In Basket Exercises, visits and orientation with varied types of installations, institutions, corporate world, NGOs, local government, industries, etc may be given more emphasis. Field trips and exercises, something similar to military system, could be given a consideration. For such extensive training system foreign advisory team from countries like Singapore, Japan, UK, and Australia as also from the Bangladesh Armed Forces may be sought.

Sixthly, for career advancement, successful field level appointments like Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and Deputy Commissioner (DC), an independent assignment in a foreign mission

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<sup>9</sup> A.M.M. Shawkat Ali, *Bangladesh Civil Service- A Political-Administrative Perspective*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 2004, pp.138-139.



may be given more credence. One who performs poorly in such appointments may not be given further enhancement in career. Based on the performance reflected in the Annual Confidential Reports, the officers in the promotion chain, at different tiers, may be required to go through the Assessment Centers where they would undergo various group exercises and individual tasks as well as psychometrics and interviews. Only the successful candidates would qualify for further promotion. This practice is followed in the U.K. Civil Service.<sup>10</sup> This has relevance to military system of promotion as well. It is heartening to note that Bangladesh Government is already thinking of introducing similar system.

Seventhly, there is generally a degeneration of values in Bangladesh. Corruption is rampant in all segments of the society. Such situation should be arrested through greater transparency and accountability. Parliamentary standing committees may be more assertive to make the bureaucrats more accountable. Even the courts of law may, if not already doing, attempt to go into greater details of a case that involves the government projects and functionaries and make the public servants accountable. Higher bureaucracy may regularly visit the field level projects and offices to ensure better accountability and transparency.

Eighthly, E-governance or Digital Governance should be given especial priority. E-Governance has to be seen as a tool for good governance and human development. Good Governance occurs when Electronic Governance is able to enhance the “Public Value” of information supplied. The Civil Service members may be made

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<sup>10</sup> The promotion of Japanese government officials is regulated by two methods i.e. “Slow” and “Prize accumulation”. The “Slow” promotion system means that almost all officials employed in the same year are simultaneously promoted to the next higher position until a certain level is reached, and then the system becomes very competitive. The “Prize accumulation” promotion system means that the “prize” results from the appreciation of superiors and peers for one’s steady and cautious accumulation of “no error” service to one’s group, rather than for some spectacular positive achievement in one’s position. (Source: Professor Tatsuo Oyama, “Educating and Training Japanese Government Officials: Current Trends and Policy Study Aspects”- <http://www.adb.org/Document/Books/Role-of-Public-Administration/default.asp>)

aware of the necessity of E-Governance and be thoroughly armed with necessary competencies. Chandra Babu Naidu, a former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, India, could be a role model for our system.

Lastly, as long as necessary expertise, required of a particular Ministry/Division, is not developed, a core committee of experts drawn mainly from the civil society, universities and research institutes may be formed, as a stop gap measure, to assist the concerned Ministry/Division in handling the technical/complicated matters that involve vital national interests. Of course, this has been done many a time. This now needs to be made more structured with definite terms of reference.

## **5. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This paper has presented a proposition of the transformational stage in the administration, bureaucracy, and state. In fact, it is emphasized here that all other organs and structure of the state are poised for change. Partisan polity in the transitional stage is about to introduce reforms after a huge paradigm shift. The quality of leadership in all spheres – politics, business, profession, bureaucracy – is in question and calls deeply for reform.

In the current reformist and transformational scenario, the bureaucracy has a critical role in enabling an orderly transition to provide the prerequisites for democracy and development. For achieving this, the bureaucracy may help establish the rule of law. Without this, the arbitrary and capricious decision making of the past could reappear.

Leadership in Bangladesh is definitely at a critical juncture and, needless to say, standing at the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Bangladesh has to discard the old perception of it. In this regard, the author considers this phase of history as transitional and transformational. Whether we like it or not, the coming generations will complete the full circle of change that is needed to move from one level of development to the next and thank us for “beginning the beginning”.

*Abdus Shuman*

## **COUNTER-TERRORISM IN BANGLADESH: THE IMPERATIVE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH**

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### **Abstract**

Terrorism in Bangladesh is home-grown and does not have external links. The paper identifies religious fundamentalism, a fight against liberal values, general deprivation and political grievances as the root causes of terrorism in Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh is focusing most of its efforts on conventional methods of counter-terrorism, which is only effective as a short-term process, but does not address the root causes of terrorism itself. For this, civil society organisations need to be allowed to play their role in the counter-terrorism strategy. Bangladesh requires the strengthening of local governments to give them more autonomy from the national government and more authority to resolve local situations without state's interruptions to fight against terrorism. Communities can also work together with local governments to strike at the root causes of terrorism.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

On 7 July 2005 four bomb blasts caused massive damage to London's public transport system. This attack made the British government very much aware that terrorism was now a threat to its own national security. The British government had been very active since 2005 in its efforts to counter terrorism. For instance, the government enacted the 2006 Terrorism Act which made it a criminal offence to directly or indirectly encourage the commission, preparation, or instigation of acts of terrorism or to disseminate

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terrorist literature. As well as the conventional counter-terrorism methods such as intelligence surveillance, the government has also used non-conventional methods such as the Preventing Extremism Together (PET) initiative, where the government works with local communities to combat extremism. Furthermore, think tanks have also written booklets on alternative means to combat the terrorist threat: Demos' publication *Bringing It Home* (2006) argues that it is imperative to use a *community*-based approach to counter-terrorism.

What is interesting about the methods used by the British government is that it has two factors: using both conventional means such as the intelligence services as well as legislation, *and* non-conventional means, such as using grass-roots level organisations, local communities, and civil society to engender possible long-term solutions to the terrorist threat. The government uses a realist model to strike at the terrorist threat, as well as a liberal democratic model which seeks to utilise civil society and communities to strike at the root causes of terrorism in Britain.

In the case of Bangladesh, the government is focusing most of its efforts on conventional methods of counter-terrorism which tackles force using a counter-force. This is effective as a short-term process of curbing terrorism, but does not address the root causes of terrorism itself. This essay's main argument is that to counter terrorism in Bangladesh requires the use of government sanctioned force against terror suspects *and* an increased involvement of civil society organisations, as well as working with communities themselves to keep a check on their own locales, which is best achieved by the improvement of local government systems in Bangladesh. Thus, the essay is split into seven sections. Firstly, the essay deals with the root causes of terrorism in a general sense, which include religious extremism, the battle against liberalism, general deprivation, and specific political goals. Secondly, terrorism in Bangladesh will be discussed by looking at terrorist groups operative in Bangladesh which are motivated by the root causes as described in the first section of the essay. Thirdly, the government's strategy to deal with terrorism and its limitations will be analysed. Fourthly, an argument is presented to suggest that democracy in itself is not enough to counter terrorism. Fifthly, how civil society can achieve more long-term solutions to the terrorist problem.

Sixthly, an exposition of the British model which seeks to use communities to counter terrorism will be given. And lastly, it will be argued that local government systems need to be improved if communities are to help counter terrorism, which in itself is a long term solution to the terrorist threat in Bangladesh.

## **2. CAUSES OF TERRORISM**

### **2.1 Definitions of Terrorism**

Many papers on terrorism begin by demanding an exact, universally accepted definition. Part of the frustration must arise from the fact that there are so many different definitions of terrorism. This was demonstrated in Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman's study of terrorism, in which they analysed 109 academic and official definitions (Khan, 2006: 157). They discovered that the element of violence was in 83% of definitions, political goals in 65%, inflicting terror in 51%, indiscriminate targeting in 21%, and victimisation of civilian non-combatants in 17.5%. They found that whereas academic definitions varied, official definitions for terrorism were quite similar. For example, the US Department of State and the FBI believe terrorism to be "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives". SAARC holds that "any person commits an offence within the meaning of this additional protocol if that person by any means, directly or indirectly, unlawfully and wilfully, provides or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out any [...] act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or international organization to do or abstain from doing an act" (Ahmed, 2006: 21).

The similarity of official definitions of terrorism show that they are based on a western perspective and at variance with the Third World perspective, which could for example see the Palestinian issue as not terrorism but the legitimate fight to win back a people's homeland. Furthermore, it shows that terrorism is defined as such so as to keep the state immune from charges of terrorism in that

terrorism is “legitimate” if carried out by the state. However, such definitions do not elucidate the root causes of terrorism, the knowledge of which are necessary if counter-terrorist methods are to succeed. The next four sections of this paper will deal with the four root causes of terrorist violence.

## **2.2. Religious Extremism as a Cause of Terrorism**

Imtiaz Ahmed describes the twenty-first century’s Islamic militancy as “post-rational terrorism”, a terrorism which has gone *beyond* the reason of the state and the subaltern (Ahmed, 2006; Ahmed, 2007). The reason of the state is the violence or threat of violence used by the state mainly to reproduce the power of the state, and it includes right-wing, counter-terrorism, state terrorism, and white terrorism. The state in using any of these four methods would vehemently deny that it is engaging in terrorist activities. The reason of the subaltern is the violence used by such a group to aid their fight against domination, be it oppression because of racial, ethnic, or social divides. Its forms of violence stem from various groups, including non-state, anarchist, anti-state, nationalist, revolutionary, Red, and left-wing protagonists. Terrorism *between* the reason of the state and the subaltern is the rationalized use of violence using the state or the subaltern. There are nine types of such terrorism: good, religious, ethnic, cultural, groupuscular, urban, domestic, international, and transnational. The last type of terrorism is that *beyond* the reason of the state and the subaltern: “there are versions of terrorism that defy rationality. In fact, violence and terror carried out not only beyond the domain of the state but also beyond the rationale usually put forward by the state or the subalterns. [... This terrorism] threatens not only the state but also the life and living of the subaltern masses, and therefore remains generally unacceptable to both the state and the subalterns” (Ahmed, 2006: 32).

There are seven types of such terrorism: nuclear, bio-terrorism, narco-terrorism (violence by drug traffickers), catastrophic (violence against civilian masses with vengeful or messianic goals), post-modern, and suicidal. Post-modern terrorism is a new threat which faces the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It is characterised by the whole world being a potential target; there being a genuine support for such apocalyptic movements which seeks to

cause mass destruction; and there is a real chance that very lethal weapons may fall into the hands of terrorist groups (Lacquer, 1996). Suicide terrorism had been used by the Jewish sects of Zealots in Roman occupied Judea. By the end of the twentieth century, it had become the ultimate weapon of the relatively disempowered subaltern elements, beginning with the Hezbollah in 1981. In the post 9/11 era, suicide terrorism had attained an international dimension, going beyond the territorial domain of the state. Of suicide terrorism, Edward Said remarked that although he did not agree with Palestinian terrorism he at least understood it as an act of desperation by human beings. Yet, suicide terrorism was different as the perpetrators of 9/11 were educated men with stable or high incomes. Yet, they refused to negotiate or engage in any dialogue: there was no note or political message following the attacks, and therefore it transcends the political and enters the metaphysical for it suggests the cosmic quality of the minds at work (Ahmed, 2006: 35/6).

Ahmed explains Islamic militancy as a radical version of Islam which has displaced reason from religion (Ahmed, 2007). Kant saw the importance of reason within religion, that having knowledge and rational capabilities was not enough, but that there ought to be “room for belief” in order to nurture a moral dimension of freedom, immortality, and religious fulfilment for man. This echoes the rationale of the Islamic Sufi scholar Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) who believed that true knowledge depended on seeing all things with the eye of the imagination as well as the eye of reason, that one needed a certain faith/imagination to see the unity of God amongst the numerous categorisations of the world that reason had constructed. Thus, both thinkers believed that faith and reason were essential in order for one to live in the world. One cause for the displacement of reason from religion was due to the influence of various revival movements in the nineteenth century which called for a return to an authentic version of Islam. The most influential movement was the *Faraidi* movement led by Shariat Ullah who studied Islam for ten years in Mecca and came under the influence of Wahhabism, a puritan movement developed by Muhammad Ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703-1792). The *Faraidi* movement criticised the Pirs (cult of saints) in Islam, and their stance led to the cessation of spiritualism, mysticism, and piety, and towards an understanding of Islam which

focused on “ritualistic formalism” and “legalism”. Furthermore, the spread of the influence of the Deoband Madrasah which was first set up in the town of northern India in 1866. This madrasah worked under the *dars-i Niazmi* system which focused on the teaching of *fiqh* (jurisprudence), whilst keeping the teaching of the rational sciences at bay. Deobandism denounced the worship of saints, and music and dancing, it refused any ideas of progress and wished to return to a puritanical view of Islam where a militant jihad was a core value, one which sought to inculcate the belief that *sharia’h* law was immutable and that the *ulema* was authoritative. Ahmed blames the spread of such a misguided view of Islam in the twentieth century, and which is carrying on in the twenty-first century, to five specific causes: the bad state of Islamic scholarship in the Muslim world; the misperceptions of what “secularism” means; the influence of Saudi Arabia and Wahhabization due to the rise of petrodollars; the post-national diaspora in the Middle East, those involved being attracted to a puritan version of Islam; and the weaponization of society.

### **2.3. Terrorism as the Fight against Liberal Values**

Firmer British Prime Minister Tony Blair argued that the fight against extremism is actually a battle for global values (Blair, 2007). In the twentieth century Turkey became a secular nation. But other Islamic countries were not modernising at the same speed as Turkey, and some saw this as symbolic of Islam’s decline. Their solution was to restore Islam through religious extremism and populist politics. However, the extremists realised that if they presented the striving towards a pure Islam as a fight within Islam itself, many Muslims would disregard their cause. The solution was to present the battle as one against the western world, where the “west” represents Hindus, Christians, or Muslims who supported ideas of progress, including freedom of expression, democracy, and human rights. Muslim religious extremists do not want Muslim countries to modernise, instead they want the Muslim world to retreat into governance by a semi-feudal religious oligarchy. And so the current war in Iraq is interpreted by Blair as a fight not against American occupation, but one which is trying to prevent a democratic government being implemented in the country.

### **2.4. General Deprivation as a Cause of Terrorism**



The literature reviewed suggests that poverty in itself is not a direct cause for terrorist activities. Generally, terrorists do not endorse a specific economic system that differs from that which is in the place of the country that they have attacked (Blair, 2007). Instead, terrorism arises from and can spread because of general deprivation suffered by a section of the population. Barkat discusses the notion of the “economics of fundamentalism”, which is a “concentrated expression of religious-based communal politics” that rejects a secular democratic mind-set and encourages the growth of fundamentalism and its economic agents and interests (Barkat, 2005:3). With the influence of Wahhabism and the dire economic conditions of Bangladesh, it was possible for a communal based politics to gain a foothold by misusing Islam as a slogan: religion as a way to tackle the poverty issue. A self-destructive culture of plundering made strong roots in the economic, political, and social sectors of Bangladesh, which led to the spread of corruption, proliferation of small arms, black money, and mal-administration, which all contributes to the economics of fundamentalism and the consolidation of religious-based politics (political Islam) in Bangladesh. This economic criminalization has increased effective demand of political criminalization, thus the economics of fundamentalism stretches to encompass the political sphere where economic/political criminals can determine the budget allocation, patronise grafts etc., all for personal gain and without the reduction of poverty. Thus, research shows that the number of poor has actually increased in Bangladesh, suggesting a solid basis for the influence of religious extremism in Bangladesh. Furthermore, Kabir writes that the “the key factor in the dynamics of violence is relative deprivation and inequity. The magnitude of violence in Bangladesh is often induced by relative deprivation where frustrations and discontents of the societal groups and younger generation can be easily politicised” (Kabir, 2005: 38). Terrorism is not directly related to severe downturns in the economy, but a response to political conditions and long-standing feelings of indignity and frustration.

## **2.5. The Terrorists’ Political End**

Kabir continues by stating that if poor countries facing terrorism, such as Bangladesh, were to improve their economic conditions and eradicate poverty this would make it harder for terrorists to find new

recruits, but would not completely deter terrorism. The reason is that some terrorists are motivated by political ends. Pape rejects connections between suicide bombers and Islamic fundamentalism or poverty. His research, which analyses every suicide bombing and attack around the globe from 1980 to 2003 (315 in all), suggests that “nearly all suicide terrorist attacks actually have in common a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland. Religion is often used as a tool by terrorist organisations in recruiting and in seeking aid from abroad, but is rarely the root cause” (Pape, 2005: 29). Furthermore, Khan defines terrorism as “the deliberate use of violence employed as an instrument of coercion in order to achieve political ends” (Khan, 2006: 153); the important word being “political” where the terrorists are working at the macro-level for the benefit of a group/people, whereas criminals generally work at the micro-level for personal gain.

### **3. TERRORISM IN BANGLADESH**

Four general root causes of terrorism have been analysed. The next section will investigate terrorism in Bangladesh, asking whether Bangladesh has become a breeding ground for al-Qaeda recruits, and investigating the terrorist groups residing in Bangladesh and their motivations for engaging in violence.

#### **3.1. Bangladesh as a Breeding Ground for Terrorists?**

The Bangladeshi people appear split between two opposing sentiments: firstly, to sympathise with fellow Muslims who are being killed in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the “war against terror”, and secondly to support American efforts to fight extremist Islamic factions. Some commentators have focused on the former sentiment by claiming that Bangladesh has become a hot-bed for Islamist terrorists. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* carried a cover story claiming that Bangladesh was a potential hub for Islamic terrorists, a report that was reproduced by the *Wall Street Journal*. This media campaign caused a severe blow to the Bangladeshi image (see Khan, 2004: 225). The image problem was further harmed when the US placed Bangladesh on its list of terror prone countries. Furthermore,

there is a tendency for some Indian writers to exaggerate the threat that Bangladesh faces from al-Qaeda terrorist groups. Joshi argues that Afghans that fled the American strikes in 2001 had settled in Bangladesh. He reported rumours of a ship sailing from Karachi to Chittagong carrying assorted militants from Afghanistan, and that a senior leader of HUJI had told *Time* magazine that 150 Taliban fighters had entered Bangladesh in this way. In 2002, the Bangladesh Islamic Manch was formed which circulated speeches by Osama bin Laden, their goal being to create a larger Islamic land than the territorial limits of Bangladesh and which would include the Muslim areas of Assam, north Bengal, and Burma's Arakan province (see Joshi, 2004: 94/5). Furthermore, Bhaumik writes that "all major Islamic radical groups active in South Asia have bases, safe houses, sympathisers and rendezvous points in Bangladesh" (Bhaumik, 2003: 275). He also argues that agents in Pakistan's covert war against India use Bangladesh as an effective launching pad for its attacks in the northeast region of India, and that the heavy flow of Islamic petrodollars from the Middle East has strengthened the financial sinews of political groups such as the Jamaat-i-Islami, which has provided a legitimate base for which recruits can be drawn from the general population. His conclusion is that "Bangladesh is well on the way to become South Asia's second front of Islamic terror after Pakistan" (Bhaumik, 2003: 282; also see Rahman 2006, for a list of Indian accusations against Bangladesh).

However, there is no evidence to back up the allegations that Bangladesh has links to external terrorist organisations, and any "evidence" suggested from the writers above have been ascribed to sloppy reporting. And so Major General Ghulam Quader writes, that "it has been proved beyond any doubt that there does not exist any connection between al-Qaeda and Bangladesh's militant organisations. While some organisations may have received foreign financial assistance, the goals and objectives of the home-grown militant organisations seem to be limited within the boundary of the country, which distinguish them from global Islamic terrorism. It is obvious from this that Bangladesh is by no means exporting Islamic terrorism, either at the international or the regional level" (Quader, 2007). Thus, Bangladeshi terrorism is home-grown and not related to al-Qaeda. Bin Laden's target is America and American allies, and he has little concern with Bangladesh. Also, the US Ambassador to

Bangladesh (Mary Ann Peters) refuted the claims that Bangladesh was a breeding ground for terrorists. The American government has to justify its expenditure on intelligence and security in its global fight against terrorism, and therefore it demonises certain countries so that the American public and Congress has a reason to give the government the funding it needs. Essentially, Islamic fundamentalism is on the increase in Bangladesh, yet “the upsurge of rightist forces is very much a global and regional phenomena. To be precise, on a regional comparative scale, religious violence in Bangladesh would be relatively small [...] it is difficult to keep Bangladesh insulated from whatever takes place in the region [...] But that al-Qaeda type violent extremists will emerge in Bangladesh to destroy the system either in Bangladesh or elsewhere is not supported by the social, economic, and political realities in a country with a moderate culture and the vibrant poverty alleviation programme of the NGO community” (Khan, 2004: 227). Furthermore, the exaggerated Indian accusations against Bangladesh have been caused by the strained relationship between the two countries, stemming from India’s denial of the two-nation theory, disputes over Ganges water sharing, and India’s hegemonic view toward its smaller neighbours. Yet the accusations are mutual, for Bangladesh also accuses India for harbouring terrorists. What can be deemed from the following discussion is that although Bangladesh is not a rampant breeding ground for terrorism as some media analysts and academics would suggest, Bangladesh has the *potential* for harbouring terrorist groups, due to its poverty levels, high unemployment, unchecked madrasah education, and influence from the Middle East. It is not right that Bangladesh’s image has been so badly tarnished from such misguided reports, but instead of fervently denying *any* link to external terrorist groups, the government must act to ensure that such links cannot emerge in the future.

### **3.2. Terrorist Groups in Bangladesh**

The paper will now focus on four terrorist groups which correlate with the four causes of terrorism as related earlier in the paper (religious extremism, anti-western liberalism, deprivation of the population, political ends), although the four causes are not necessarily exclusive of one another.

Firstly, HUJI (Harkatul Jihad al Islami) was led by Mufti Hannan before his arrest in 2005, and he organised terrorist activities against the internal political, social, and religious structures and belief systems of Bangladesh. HUJI's aim is to establish Islamic *Hukumat* (rule) in Bangladesh by waging war, killing progressive intellectuals, and waging *jihad* against a "corrupted regime", a corrupt western system of democracy and judiciary. Hannan admitted to being taught at the Deoband madrasah which advocates a literal and austere interpretation of Islam and excludes all learning that is not obviously Islamic, and creates a form of Islam where the state is irrelevant. HUJI members have been incriminated in the following crimes: the July 2000 attempted assassination of Sheikh Hasina, the May 21 2004 attack against the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Anwar Chowdhury, assassination of former Finance Minister Shah A.M.S. Kibria, and the grenade attacks on the Udichi cultural programme (Amin, 2007: 11).

Secondly, members of JMB (Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen) aim to cripple Bangladesh's modern secular democracy and establish a nation under *sharia'h* law. The JMB were responsible for the nationwide bomb blasts on August 17, 2005. A note issued after the attack warned that further violence would continue if the Bangladesh constitution was not changed so that it aligned with Islamic principles (Ali, 2006: 81). JMB member Hasan al Mamun was captured for killing two judges in a bomb attack on November 14, 2005 in Jhalakathi. He still had an unexploded bomb on his thigh when he was seized. He also had a leaflet stating that "we don't want *Taguti* (non-Islamic laws), let Quranic laws be introduced. Laws framed by humans cannot continue and only the laws of Allah will prevail" (*Daily Star*, November 15, 2005). Also, Abdur Razzak became Bangladesh's first suicide bomber when he exploded a bomb at Gazipur courthouse near Dhaka on November 29, 2005, where two judges were killed. Razzak had a note in his pocket describing himself as a *Fedayee* (one who devotes himself to Allah), and stating that the bombing was a "primary warning message from a dedicated *mujahideen* for the forces deployed for the judges' security. We will continue our *jihadi* mission until establishing an Islamic welfare state" (*Star Weekend Magazine*, December 9, 2005).

Thirdly, in the 1960s communism became the prevailing ideology of outlawed groups operating in Bangladesh, including the Revolutionary Communists of Bangladesh. They were once influential with their ideals of abolishing poverty and the dire social conditions of the Bangladeshi people, but now such groups have very much lost any influence that they once had. For instance, the group PBCP (Purba Banglar Communist Party) has simply split into different factions, each sub-group posing minimal risk to the state. When not engaged in infighting between rival groups, they commit isolated acts of extortion and abduction. Most civilian fatalities inflicted by these groups are more in line with routine criminal acts than “terrorism” (Amin, 2007: 10).

Fourthly, insurgent groups have operated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) since the 1970s. The Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (The CHT’s People’s Solidarity Association) was formed in 1972 as a mass contact organisation with communist leanings. The Shanti Bahini formed the armed wing of the PCJSS, responsible for attacks on government security forces. After the CHT Peace Accord was signed in 1997 between the Awami League government and the PCJSS, the United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) emerged which led to rivalry with the PCJSS for increased control over the hills. This is an example of terrorism caused by the secular and political ends of a group.

#### **4. THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

There has been much written about government inaction toward the terrorist threat. Though in the respective times in which the BNP and AL were in power they claimed that they would find the perpetrators, their main priority was always to deflect the impact of the terrorist incident and prevent the opposing party making much political capital out of it. It was only until February 22 2005 that the government finally acknowledged the existence of terrorism in Bangladesh, and banned the JMJB and the JMB (Rahman, 2006: 96-108; Rahman, 2007)..

##### **4.1. Government Strategies**

Khan (2006) uses Bajpai’s study, *Roots of Terrorism*, to map out governments’ responses to terrorism on a theoretical and general

level. The liberal response blames the increase of terrorism on the government itself since terrorism is seen to be a reaction to the state's bad practices. The state's failure in tackling issues of deprivation and poverty engenders feelings of marginality as the state cannot even provide the most basic needs. Its failure makes it a target of terrorism, when all other legitimate means of redress have been exhausted. Thus, the state should target the root cause of grievances to divest the militants of their rationale of striking the state. The state should only use force as a last resort, otherwise a cycle of violence develops. The conservative approach views terrorism as arising from the processes of nation-building and the stresses that this process entails, which is more pronounced if statehood is reached before nationhood. To enforce the new regime some groups may become alienated, which leads to fear which may lead to violence. The conservatives believe that force is necessary to counter terrorism, since economic, political, and social engineering is a waste of time. The realist approach holds that terrorism is a reflection of the competition between states, where one seeks to "control" the other through the exercise of power. Terrorism is promoted by states in order to weaken rival states. Thus, no amount of state-building or civil society schemes to better democracy will work since the terrorist attacks are externally motivated.

In his empirically based study, Kalam documents six approaches that the Bangladeshi government actually used to curb the terrorist threat (Kalam, 2006). Firstly, the coercive approach is an on-going law and order approach. The government launched Operation Clean-Heart in 2002 which led to 11280 arrests and the seizure of 2028 weapons, and Operation Spider-Web in 2003 to check the left-wing extremist parties operating in the south-western districts of Bangladesh. Secondly, peace approaches were used, especially over the CHT conflict. Disagreements over the land issue continue to hamper chances of a resolution, but progress has been made by the government allocating TK15 crores to the PCJSS for the purpose of job creation. Thirdly, a general amnesty approach was used especially with members of the *Sarbahara* group (left radicals) operating in south-west Bangladesh. When amnesty was declared in 1999, 2700 operatives of the underground movement responded. However, the group resumed their violent tactics in 2003 which led to the government using coercive methods again. Fourthly,

negotiating approaches which bears similarity to general amnesty, where the government helps insurgents return to a normal life after they had surrendered. Fifthly, approaches towards the Jehadi-Islamic groups have not fared well largely due to the party's needs to not alienate potential political allies, and so neither the BNP nor the AL have outlawed the Jamaat-i-Islami but instead use the Islamic party for political leverage. Sixthly, cross-border bilateral approaches involve regional co-operation against the terrorist threat, especially with India. The Indian High Commissioners to Dhaka are usually very proactive, talking to high officials and members of the media and NGOs. But there is still a tendency for both sides to hurl allegations at each other.

#### **4.2 Limitations to Current Government Strategies**

Khan argues that to use any one of the three strategies (liberal, conservative, realist) in isolation will fail; there is not simply one set of counter methods for what is a very complex situation. The realist remedy of using force is the most prevalent in Bangladeshi policy circles, perhaps due to the legacy of its imperialist past since Britain used coercive capabilities to discipline any resurgent elements. South Asian nations may see the use of force as quicker than long drawn out dialogues or social transformation. Yet, Khan advocates the "exclusivist" approach that uses all three methods, the advantage of which is that terrorism is therefore tackled in the short *and* long term (Khan, 2006: 185). Khan also notes fifteen limitations to the government's approach to countering terrorism. Many of these limitations stem from problems with the government itself: over-centralization of the government, this leaves local problems unresolved and sometimes unattended which breeds resentment toward state powers; internal politics, that the governments may at times release known criminals or ally themselves with groups with links to terrorists for the sake of political expediency, will merely give terrorist groups an added legitimacy; lack of knowledge of the terrorists, if the government does not know or care why some lash out at society, then they will never hope to resolve the problem; and a politicised administration does not allow government functionaries to act decisively and objectively to resolve government issues for fear of political reprisal.



The government's response to terrorism shows an upward swing of the use of force to counter the rising spiral of violence, without making any headway in addressing the root causes of terrorism (Kalam, 2006: 176). The current caretaker government is using RAB (Rapid Action Battalion) to seek out the terrorists and bring them to justice. To some extent, they have been very successful, bringing in the top leaders of groups such as JMB and JMJB, including the notorious Bangla Bhai who, along with five others, were hanged on March 30, 2007. However, some terrorists were suspiciously killed in cross-fire shooting. Whilst some members of the public seem indifferent to the extra-judicial deaths of criminals, members of the media and civil society have lodged complaints. "While pragmatic considerations in dealing with a terrible law and order situation may gain some temporary support for such summary actions by RAB, questions continue to persist about both the legal rationality and societal acceptance of such extra-judicial action for long" (Rahman, 2006: 116). The issue is how democratic states can combat a largely unidentified enemy within the bounds of the law, or without descending to methods which question their own allegiance to democratic principles. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to stop seeing counter-terrorism as merely counter-force, and to introduce constructive dialogues between politicians and policy-makers, the police and the people, and the upholding of justice and not its decline.

## **5. DEMOCRACY AS AN IDEOLOGY TO COUNTER TERRORISM**

### **5.1. Western Values against Islamic Extremism**

Tony Blair argues that the long-term fight against Islamic extremism must involve democracy promotion (Blair, 2007). This attitude is not about regime change, but about *values* change. He argues that fundamentalists are not attacking American policy as such, but using it as an excuse to gather support in their actual fight against western values, which include liberty and democracy. The extremists assert that democracy is a western value imposed on Islamic cultures. However, Blair holds that it is only by showing that democratic values are better than what the fundamentalists endorse that al-Qaeda can be defeated. His evidence is based upon the many

who risked their lives to vote in the Iraqi and Afghani democratic elections, arguing that given the chance, people in the Middle East will vote and *do* want democracy. This is ultimately a battle about modernity, but there are millions of Muslims who do want to live under Western values, which is better defined as *global* values (e.g. freedom of expression) common to all humanity whatever their culture and faith. In Harish's analysis of the essay he sees a subtle new strategy in formation: there is less about why fundamentalism/terrorism is wrong, and more about the need to promote democracy and global values; less about rejecting "bad" values, and more about accepting "good" ones (Harish, 2007).

## **5.2. Democracy is not Enough to Counter Terrorism**

Gause's essay "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" argues that it cannot, thereby refuting Blair's insistence that democracy can end the spate of violence caused by terrorism. Gause argues from an American perspective, criticising Bush's belief that pushing for Arab democracy will spread American values, improve American security, and eventually stop the production of anti-American fundamentalists. Gause is less sanguine since the data shows that there is no strong relationship between democracy and the absence/reduction of terrorism – terrorism stems from factors much more specific than regime type. It should also be noted that from the evidence of public opinion surveys, if people could vote they are more likely to bring to power anti-American political parties (Hamaas was voted in), who would be much less likely to co-operate with America over issues such as terrorism, oil supply, and Israel, than the authoritarian leaders that are in place now. Rather than push for quick elections, America should exert more effort into encouraging the development of secular, nationalist, liberal political parties that could compete in an open democracy with the Islamist parties.

Furthermore, much of the evidence suggests that terrorism is more likely to occur *in* democratic countries (see Gause, 2005). William Eubank and Leonard Weinberg's studies in the 1980s showed that more terrorism occurred in democratic countries and that both victims and perpetrators were citizens of democracies. Robert Pape argues that the targets of suicide bombers are almost always democracies, but the motivation of the bomber is to fight

against military occupation and for self-determination: terrorists are not driven by a desire for democracy but by their opposition to what they see as foreign occupation. The American State Department's annual "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report showed that between 2000 and 2003 269 terrorist attacks occurred in countries classified as "free" by Freedom House (75% of which were in Pakistan/India, thereby terrorism in that case is a regional tussle and not about values); 119 occurred in "partly free" countries; 138 occurred in "not-free" countries (50% in Iraq/Afghanistan, thus the implementation of democracy has not stopped the terrorism there); and no attacks in authoritarian China. Thus, "showing that there is no relationship between incidence of terrorism in a given country and the degree of freedom enjoyed by its citizens" (Gause, 2005: 66). The Americans and British should also take heed that a 2002 poll by Zogby International showed that most people surveyed in Kuwait, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE held favourable views of American democracy and freedom even whilst having negative views of American policy in the Arab world.

Though Gause's essay is more related to the western fight against al-Qaeda, the essay has relevance for its argument that democracy is not enough. Simply by having a democracy with democratic values is *not enough*, even if it is a healthy democracy. Of course, Bangladesh must get the basics right, which means a much greater record on good governance, but there is more to be done than implementing a democracy if Bangladesh is to really stem terrorism. The remainder of this paper will deal with what needs to be implemented in Bangladesh in order for its fight against terrorism to be truly effective.

## **6. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AS AN APPROACH TO COUNTER TERRORISM**

### **6.1. Civil Society in Bangladesh**

The history of civil society in political thought from Hobbes to Putnam has been adequately described in Khan and Kabir (2002), Wadood, and Eusuf (2006). There are multiple ways to view civil society. Guhathakurta and Karim's study shows how various global aid organisations perceive civil society: ODA states that civil society should include business interests; USAID that it is non-business and

non-partisan; UNDP that it should have freedom of association and participation; and the World Bank holds that it should have freedom of association and free expression of opinion (Rahman, 2006). Shethi describes civil society as the locus of actions by actors bent on change whether these are foreign or domestic groups, charities for relief, action groups devoted to raising consciousness, and protest or political groups. These groups are not interested in gaining power themselves, but helping the people as a whole become empowered, and thus they work with a moral mandate. Civil society also acts as an enabling environment, as its starting point is the stabilisation of a system of rights, constituting human beings as individuals, both as citizens in relation to the state and as legal persons in the economy and the sphere of free association. Civil society only works if these ideas are established *a priori* and civil society is expected to maintain these ideals. One can also see Rahman and Zafarullah (2002) for a detailed discussion of the differences between civil society and NGO's.

For the purposes of this paper, Key's definition of civil society will be used because it emphasises its links with democracy (Key, 2006). Key points out that civil society is a social value and a set of institutions, and therefore not all countries have a civil society for they may lack a culture of respect for the values of citizenship or the actual institutions which make civil society work. Civil society can promote fuller participation in public life in two ways: firstly, civil society is predicated on the belief that every individual has inherent worth and rights within the larger society, and secondly, that individuals gain power when united together. Key's idea of civil society is akin to Tocqueville's ideas of "associations". Tocqueville was a nineteenth century political theorist who wrote a seminal work on democracy, *Democracy in America* (1830/1835). He believed that if men were to be civilised, they needed to learn the art of associations, the art of working together to solve a community's political and social problems. This was good preparation for living democratically since civil associations led to political associations. Whilst civil society is not singly a sufficient condition for democracy, it is necessary for its durability for democracy relies on public participation. Tocquevillian associations are echoed in Putnam's phrase "social capital" (1993), which refers to the capacity of states and societies to establish a sense of community that leads to

a significant proportion of the community to voice their concerns and seek active involvement in the community to redress any problems. It is believed that highly active civic associations are strongly associated with effective public institutions, and that norms and networks of civic engagement have promoted economic growth (Rahman, 2006).

Civil society in Bangladesh, though not fully developed, is not a new concept. By the second half of the twentieth century there was a growing sense of the equity of people. The Teheran Proclamation of 1968 declared that “since human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible, the full realisation of civil and political rights without the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights is impossible” (Rahman and Zafarullah, 2002). In Bangladesh the human rights debate has gained momentum because of the expansion of the human rights issue especially after so many failures, and the growing strength and influence of the NGO and civil society sector. Civil society is not new in Bangladesh: major political events (end of colonial rule in 1947, the language movement in 1952, the autonomy struggle in 1969, war of independence in 1971, anti-authoritarian resistance in 1989-90, and the revival of the democratic political process in Bangladesh in 1991) all featured direct civil society involvement. Civil society thus became the voice against poor governance, oppressive regimes, and ineffective service delivery systems for those who felt isolated from the state. Due to its growth the Bangladesh state can no longer ignore the civil society sector. Previously, the traditional view of the Bangladesh state had been that it had comprised of the parliament, judiciary, and executive. In recent times, this model has been broadened to include the local government, private sector, and civil society. The state had to concede some of its powers to civil society to appease the growing demands for the latter.

## **6.2. How can Civil Society Help to Counter Terrorism?**

As previously described, Bangladesh has the potential to build on its civil society programmes (Key, 2006). Signs of encouragement come from Bangladesh’s Language Movement of 1952, the first struggle in the world to be based upon the necessity to keep a national language. This movement showed that popular sentiment as

expressed through civil society organisations should be acknowledged by the government. Also, an independent media is necessary for civil society as it serves as a mechanism for communication between like-minded people. Bangladesh is doing well in this respect. Even if there are many allegations that newspapers are politically biased, there is still a range of newspapers with a variety of perspectives. Technological means of communication are also spreading with the numbers of cyber-cafes with cheap access to the internet rising, as well as mobile phones being readily available to people from rural areas.

Participation in civil society prepares people to fulfil their civil obligations and exercise their rights (Key, 2006). The ability to communicate also yields the potential for much needed dialogue between rulers and ruled. Meeting with civil society groups is the best way for officials to get information, building trust between government and governed. The state should make further room for civil society; the state cannot force people to think, it should allow for calm and democratic dissent otherwise it becomes tyrannical rule. Thus, civil society is able to succeed where government cannot in certain crucial matters, such as the development of feelings, ideas, and understanding, which need to be artificially created by civil associations (Key, 2006: 456).

The establishment of civil society yields not only political benefits but also economic and social benefits (Key, 2006: 459). Civil society leads to civil order, this allows for economic growth which benefits the private sector. Civil order means fewer *hartals* (strikes), fewer disruption of production, fewer lost contracts, and an increase of foreign investments. Civil society organisations are used by governments worldwide to help them construct welfare systems which provide greater opportunities for the lower classes and aids in the efforts towards fair wealth distribution. Businesses will ultimately benefit and they should therefore rethink the way they do business and become more “socially conscious”, and thus underwrite some of the cost of welfare programmes. This will help alleviate poverty and stem social deprivation from worsening, both vital since the poor are often targeted to become new recruits for terrorist groups. The social benefits include civil society’s compatibility with the Islamic religion, Islam being an inclusive faith which prescribes

alms-giving and reinforces community. There has been some concern amongst the Bangladesh people of the increasing secularisation of the public sphere, thus leading academics and policy makers to find new ways to incorporate religious sentiment into public life. Social programmes organised by religious groups are seen as more effective than similar government programmes as they are run by those who are morally righteous. Thus, civil society allows a space in which religion can express itself and exercise its moral teachings in an efficient manner, therefore allowing a truer version of Islam to be received by the people instead of the extremist version of the radicals.

The paper will now focus upon how exactly civil society can help in the drive against terrorism. Democracies need a strong and vibrant civil society because the latter can achieve certain things that government alone cannot do. There is evidence of a worldwide trend amongst the modern and more established societies for the authority of the state to be questioned on normative/moral grounds, whilst the demand of the people desiring more representation has meant the expansion of civil society (Key, 2006). This has yet to be a tendency in the newer states, such as Bangladesh, which suffer from what Max Weber calls the “liability of newness”; new states have yet to routinise their government procedures or to develop the capabilities of civil society, and thus exercise force when dealing with terrorism within the state, instead of looking for peaceful and longer-term solutions which would require the aid of civil society. “The Third World Security Predicament” is a term referring to the fact that domestic threats are more prevalent than foreign threats, which could be attributed to the process of nationalism/state building, or third world poverty. The suppression of civil society actually broadens the appeal of extremist groups for they see the state as dominant and responsible for all the ills of society, and oppressive in the sense of not giving a voice to the common people.

Civil society is also fast coming into the discussion of state security for three specific reasons (Khatri, 2004). Firstly, civil society broadens the definition of “security” (usually seen from the perspective of the state, i.e. state defence, foreign policy issues) to “human security”, which focuses on conditions of daily life including food, shelter, and unchecked population growth, issues that

are finally being seen as detrimental to a population's way of life. Secondly, there has been a shift in the focus of security studies from inter-state to intra-state. Between 1990-2002, 58 major armed conflicts occurred in 46 different locations worldwide - all but three were internal conflicts. Many argue that there is an inexorable link between the security of a people with good government and institutional development, which the traditional notion of military security cannot encompass (Khatri, 2004: 271). Thirdly, the increase of democracy (60% of the world is run by democratic governments) and the spread of influence of the liberal model with its emphasis on openness, human intervention, and economic security, makes it easier for civil society to be involved in security issues.

Khatri points out seven ways in which civil society has made a positive impact on the security issues which face South Asia (Khatri, 2004: 274). The achievements include: exploring alternatives for conflict management at a non-government level; acting as informal channels for exploring policy options without committing governments; influencing public discussion of regional issues; prompting government action by calling public attention to escalating problems; lowering barriers between officials and citizens, especially on economic issues; creating new connections between research institutes and among NGO's in the region; and serving as a formative influence ground on individuals who would later go into leading national roles. He also notes three broad approaches by which civil society organisations can work in order to counter terrorist violence (Khatri, 2004: 275). The band-aid approach addresses the immediate need of the victims of conflict through the welfare approach by providing them with food aid and carrying out relief activities. The reformist approach attempts to reform the system by advocating a peace-building approach through de-escalation of conflict, denuclearisation, etc. And the structural change approach advocates bringing about long-term fundamental changes in thinking and in the economic, social and political systems to change thinking and behaviour. Therefore, civil society participation in the peace-building process needs to go beyond the realist school of thinking to the democratic liberal approach where terrorist threats can be addressed through radical social, economic, and political reforms to bring about transformative peace.



However, civil society organisations have also been much criticised for their ineffectiveness. The problem stems from members of civil society being involved in political parties, and thus many take a particular political stance. Though the civil society movement is booming, it has very little impact on actual political policy issues. These organisations lack a systematic approach to deal with political issues, especially after the 1990s where there was no example where civil society had an effect on a policy decision: there was much research, but no direct impact. Though there are ways to improve the direction in which the civil society movement is going (have a strategic plan for the next ten years so that organisations know when, how, and what fields they will be working in; maintain a separation between civil society and political parties to keep impartiality), at the present time it appears there is too much research and not enough direct action. It is the need for *direct* action to tackle the terrorist threat head on, that local governments and communities can have a huge impact. They can act in ways which can deal with terrorist threats, and they must as it is their communities which are being affected and so the stakes are high.

## **7. THE USE OF COMMUNITIES IN COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIES**

### **7.1. The British Model**

After the 7/7 terrorist attacks in London, authorities realised their grave mistake of allowing radical Muslim groups that incited violence to stay in the UK as long as they did not directly attack the country. This allowed the extremist groups to organise, recruit new members, and spread their newsletters. The UK government's strategy to deal with terrorism is known as "Contest" (Briggs et al., 2006: 24-25). It consisted of the four Ps which spanned all aspects of the counter-terrorism agenda: preventing terrorism by tackling the radicalisation of individuals; pursuing terrorists and all those that sponsor them; protecting national security; and preparing for the consequences. Before the 7/7 attacks, the "prevention" part of the strategy received less funding and attention than the other three parts of the plan. The strategy was criticised for being nothing more than a set of police and judicial powers, the "harder" end of the general counter-terrorism strategy. Analysts therefore believed that it was

crucial that the government broadened their scope of attention to include the “softer” side of counter-terrorism – namely community involvement. Looking at the past it became evident that “all our experience in Northern Ireland told us that community engagement is the cornerstone of effective counter-terrorism policy, influencing both the formation and implementation of policy”. And thus in the aftermath of the July bombs, the government launched the “Preventing Extremism Together” (PET) initiative in an attempt to work with the Muslim community in order to fight terrorism.

The British realised that “while a security response is vital, it will not, on its own, be enough. Winning hearts and minds and preventing individuals being attracted to violent extremism in the first place is also crucial” (*Preventing Violent Extremism: Winning Hearts and Minds*, DCLG, 2007: 4). In an effort to counter the terrorists’ ideology, the Home Office leads on protecting those individuals most at risk from violent extremist influences; the Department for Education and Skills has an important role in relation to the impact that education can have; and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office works on the overseas dimension. The Department for Communities and Local Government argue that it is vital that local communities are used to challenge the extremist threat. The strategy has four approaches. Firstly, it is important to promote shared values. Since 100,000 4-15 year-olds attend *madrassahs* after school, increasing citizenship classes to reach these religious schools would have a huge impact on the younger generation of Muslims living in the UK. The government is also addressing how faith and culture is taught in the national curriculum. Secondly, the government aims to support local solutions, by promoting wider cultural activities and inter-faith work. The government hopes to help local authorities set up forty local forums by April 2008, which will act as a meeting ground for discussion and debate. Thirdly, the scheme will hope to build civic capability by supporting leadership organisations working to tackle violent extremism. And fourthly, the government hopes to strengthen the role of faith institutions and leaders. The Department of Education and Skills will support the development of an accredited Continuous Professional Development Programme for faith leaders, to develop the skills needed for imams to engage effectively with members of their local communities.

The UK government has also increased spending in initiatives to tackle terrorism using “soft” methods. The Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund will make £6 million available to support local authorities. The aim of the fund is to develop a society in which Muslims in the community identify themselves as part of a wider British society, condemn violent extremism, support the security forces, and develop their own capabilities to deal with local problems as they arise. Cohesion and integration are key government priorities. Since the disturbances in northern towns in 2001, the government has tried to identify how best to manage community tensions and foster interaction between groups. The government solution was to invest in community initiatives: “the investment of £6 million pathfinder funding for community cohesion from April 2003 to October 2004 provided a firm foundation for good practice, and good ideas for ‘what works’” (*Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund*, DCLG, London: 2007). This rationale has led to the government providing more money for similar such schemes. For example, the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund distributed £7.7 million to faith-based organisations so that they may engage more effectively with government, civil society, and other faiths.

There are many examples of how government money has been spent in order to build greater community ties. There are four priority areas which the UK government has provided funding from the pathfinder fund. Firstly, activities are funded which provide effective local campaigns to confront extremist ideologies. The Radical Middle Way Roadshow travelled throughout the UK and presented Islamic speakers who spoke about community engagement. The roadshows were attended by 60,000 18-30 year-olds. Secondly, the fund aims to support and nurture civic and theological leadership. Therefore, Women’s Voices was set up as a steering group which discussed how Muslim women could have a greater role in democratic participation. Thirdly, increasing the resilience of key organisations and institutions and supporting early interventions. Funds will be given to activities to promote intelligence gathering and sharing at the local level, and to develop ways to target extremism in universities. For example, the North London Central Mosque worked with the Metropolitan Police Service’s Muslim Contact Unit on how to identify signs of extremism and how to respond accordingly. Lastly, capacity and skills development, and

the provision of guidance and awareness-training for front-line staff/managers in organisations providing services or community support. The Dudley Forum on Extremism and Islamophobia works with the Dudley Muslim Association to train its volunteers on the best way to deal with race relation issues arising in the UK. For more examples of projects which use community initiatives to tackle terrorism, one should read *Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund 2007/08: Case Studies*. However, the point is that the UK government fully believes that investing money into community projects is worthwhile. It is perhaps too early to judge the results of these schemes, but past research suggests that the Muslim community in England wants an opportunity to air their views and participate in the political life of the country, and therefore money should be spent on such community projects. This shows that even the British, with their healthy democracy and vibrant civil society, needed to address people on the community/grassroots level in order to fully tackle the terrorist threat.

The next section of the paper looks at what “soft” powers the Bangladesh government can use to tackle terrorism in the country.

## **7.2. Bangladesh and Local Government**

National government is too huge an organisation to be able to deal with the specifics of handling a community-based approach to counter-terrorism. The solution is for local governments to be strengthened and better funded so that it can engage the communities in its respective areas. There are a number of arguments for the development of local government systems, especially in developing countries. Firstly, the strengthening of local governments aligns with the need to pursue pro-active policies for local autonomy. This has the beneficial effect of promoting democratisation and popular participation; delivery of public services at the local level; and the efficient allocation of public resources. Secondly, since the early 1990s there has been a trend in the decentralization of previously highly centralized governments and the broadening of local governance capacities. This has been demonstrated by Korea, China, Japan, and the Philippines all pursuing policies which will invigorate local participation in the political process. Thirdly, the Bangladesh constitution itself supports the existence of local government bodies:

“the state shall encourage local government institutions composed of representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions special representation shall be given, as far as possible, to peasants, workers, and women” (Article 9; also see Articles 50/51). And lastly, local governments are the crucial mediator between the people and the government at the national level. Local representatives have a duty to report the demands of the people to government at the higher levels and ensure that the government works towards these common aspirations. The point is that individuals are capable of the responsibility of managing public goods and services, and therefore self-governance is possible and a desirable outcome of democratic institution-building (Syedur Rahman, 2000).

The structure of Bangladesh’s local government system is as follows (Democracywatch, 2007). The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives is the overarching body in charge of the rural and urban local organisations. The urban population are organised by the 6 City Corporations and the 302 Pourashavas. The rural population are organised by the 64 Zilla Parishad, then the 482 Thana/Upzilla Parishad, and finally the 5002 Union Parishads. The Union Parishad is the lowest level of local government in Bangladesh and is governed by the elected Chairperson who manages 12 elected members in charge of 12 separate Wards/villages. It is clear that the UPs are in a unique position to monitor communities, to really know a single community and thus be responsive to any fundamental changes to that locale, including for example whether individuals are inciting messages of hatred. This attention certainly cannot be given at the national level, and not even at the Thana level of government. Thus, the community approach is best to *build trust* with the local population so that they themselves will understand the need to report disturbances within the villages, knowing that their local Chairman is on call to investigate as soon as possible.

However, the local government system in Bangladesh is generally weak (Syedur Rahman, 2000: 235/239; Democracywatch, 2007: 4). Bangladesh is a relatively young nation and its priorities were focused toward economic development planning, regional integration, and economic stabilization, which resulted in the neglect of the local government system which was seen as a peripheral issue.

Local government bodies in Bangladesh lack managerial expertise, and adequate financial resources to undertake the activities within their domain. Dependence of grants from higher levels of government have increased over time rather than decreasing. Interventions from the national level have not allowed local government growth. They also lack the resources and information to fulfil their duties: rural local governments are formally allocated 38 separate functions, but are realistically only able to do 6 of these activities. The system is also far from transparent due to a lack of involvement of stakeholders and a concealment of decision-making. Essentially, the UPs are wasted resources. Democracywatch's report entitled "People's Perception of Union Parishad in Bangladesh" showed some disappointing findings in regards to people's interaction with the Union Parishads: 66% are not concerned/well informed about the UPs activities; 50% thought that the reason for the UPs inadequacies were based on the inactivity of its senior members; and the majority believed that the UP members had made no impact on key issues such as law and order, black-marketing, and health.

Yet, there is hope for the future. It is estimated that there are 13 000 non-governmental organisations, and also 500 women's organisations in Bangladesh with a total membership of over 2 million. This signals that the formation of further community and local groups in Bangladesh will be a major factor changing the composition of Bangladeshi life. These groups have the ability to become partners of the public sectors programmes for economic growth and development. There are a number of ways in which the UPs can improve their performance (Syedur Rahman, 2000: 241): the employment of skilled management personnel who will come with sound management practices including accountability of financial resources; the end of micro-management from the top; the training of female UP members; and raising awareness of the UP activities to the people. The rewards for improving the local government system in Bangladesh are great and have the potential to improve the daily lives of the millions.

### **7.3. Local Government and Counter-Terrorism**

There are many reasons why local governments and communities need to be included in the counter-terrorism effort. If Union Councils (UPs) were given the necessary funding and authority to act as they deem necessary in local issues, then these bodies, with the help of the communities that they serve, can monitor the terrorist threat themselves. If given the responsibility of monitoring their own community for extremists who may reside there, or radical imams preaching messages of intolerance, then the members of the community will know that they are in a better position than the national government to deal with such situations. The threat may not be a national crisis, and may only be something small, such as the fiery rhetoric of a pro-Taliban supporter, but words could turn violent and if this was remedied as early as possible, then it may *prevent* individuals continuing their path towards radicalism. Local communities with the support of their UPs are the best instruments to use to check the daily situation of their various villages. It should also be noted that Bangladesh is geographically different from Afghanistan; there are not many hills in which to hide, and if a terrorist were to act in this country he would need the co-operation of the community which he would be unlikely to get. Intelligence agencies can only reach a certain point, they need the co-operation of communities. This was demonstrated by the Liberation War: the war was won by the Bangladeshis because the communities united together in order to hide the liberation fighters who were then able to stay in East Bengal and eventually win the war. This shows that when there is a risk to the lives of the Bangladeshi people, the communities are willing and able to bandy together for a common cause. It is this resilience and determination which is needed now in order to prevent the spread and growth of terrorism in Bangladesh.

Communities can help counter terrorism in different ways (Briggs et al., 2006: 58/59). Firstly, communities offer important sources of information and intelligence – an early warning system. This is especially important in the case of terrorist groups such as the JMB which is willing to strike without any prior warning. Secondly, communities noticing the signs of terrorism in their locale are best placed to act pre-emptively to divert their young people from extremism: the self-policing society. Thirdly, though the state needs to play its role, communities must take the lead in tackling problems

that create grievances, such as low unemployment and lack of educational facilities. Finally, the security services cannot act without the support of the communities they are there to protect. Though the RAB have been effective in capturing leaders of terrorist groups in Bangladesh, their presence has been perceived as removing the people from the political process. RAB may also be seen as a symbol of the government ignoring civil rights in their efforts to counter terrorism, by for example looking over those killed in the cross-fire of RAB attacks. The worry is that if the government does not act justly, but chooses when and when not to enforce justice, then the government itself has lost its appeal to fight terrorism in the name of freedom and people's rights. The main point is that "security is always delivered through consent, never through force". The nature of the threat means that the security forces must act earlier to catch the terrorists before they act, not during their criminal acts which may be the detonation of a bomb, but this increases the likelihood of mistakes being made. Sustaining this practice in the long-term will only be possible if communities give their active consent to the police, because the former will have to allow the police the benefit of the doubt on more than one occasion.

The community approach to counter-terrorism is also able to strike at the root causes of terrorist violence. In terms of religion, it should be noted that there are approximately 200 000 mosques in Bangladesh, staffed by approximately 350 000 religious functionaries, yet unlike many Middle Eastern Islamic countries, the network of mosques operate outside the state control, and retain considerable autonomy despite several lacklustre attempts by the state to weaken their independence (Ahmad, 2000: 3). In many small towns and villages there may not be a public hall or similar civic facility. As such, mosques as well as being used for religious matters also play a role in the local communities, doubling up as public forums where important issues can be debated. Since the state cannot keep track of so many mosques, it seems that UPs are in a better position to ensure that the imams of mosques are not preaching an erroneous and violent version of Islam. It is essential that the teachings of Islam are not misconstrued in such a way that it breeds hatred for values of tolerance and liberty. As well as mosques, madrasas should also act as sources of knowledge. The situation of so many unobserved mosques is similar to the numbers of



unobserved madrasas. There are four types of madrasas in Bangladesh: Quomi madrasas (6500), government/'Alia madrasas, non-government madrasas (6906), and elementary/Ebtedayee madrasas (only 5150 out of 18000 are approved by the government). The Quomi madrasas teach a curriculum known as Dars-i-Nizami, which focuses solely on Islamic studies. These madrasas are private, and do not receive financial support from the government but from religious endowments. This relative autonomy means that these madrasas do not reform their education system and continue to produce graduates unable to compete in the labour market, thus worsening the unemployment problem in Bangladesh.

It has been argued that people do not send their children to these institutions by choice as such, but simply because it is cheap. These madrasas may preach an extreme version of Islam, or may act as recruitment centres for terrorist groups (Hannan of HUJI was taught at a Deoband madrasa, for instance). So like the situation with mosques, local communities are in a better position to monitor what is being taught at these institutions. There would also be a huge incentive to lobby for change, or alternatively make local school fees cheaper so that there is less reason for parents to send their children to madrasas which refuse to teach a modern education. Local education committees could be formed which simply check the teachings of the madrasas by interviewing teachers and students. They could also act to ensure that madrasas have competent headteachers in charge of the whole school. Of course, one does not want to stop religious education, but like the 'Alia madrasas it is possible to combine a liberal education which encompasses maths and English with a teaching of Islam.

One of the arguments against the government's handling of the terrorist situation is their use of RAB, which led to a break of trust between communities and the government. This suggests that the government is only willing to use force to counter terrorism. This supposed suppression of dialogue encourages violence, especially since there is now no way for terrorist groups to feel that they can express their grievances, the result being acts of force to express their anger over their plight. By strengthening local governments and communities, this empowers local people, allowing them to take part in the political process. In this way, individuals can take their local

grievances to local representatives who will hopefully be able to take it to national representatives, if the situation cannot be resolved locally. By this way, individuals from terrorist groups may see that democracy is the best means by which individuals from all sectors of society can voice their views, that an ideal democracy promotes egalitarianism over elitism, that the voice of the marginalized has its best chance of being heard in a liberal democracy which favours freedom of expression. The promotion of local government would hopefully *demonstrate* how democracy can actually benefit the people, and therefore counters one of the causes of terrorism, that of the attack of global values, such as liberty and human rights.

General deprivation is another cause of terrorism when recruits can be made from the poor and vulnerable, or like the wealthy Saudis responsible for the 9/11 attacks who simply could not bear to see their Muslim brothers suffer, it is clear that alleviating the poverty issue in Islamic countries is a necessary step in combating terrorism. In the Commonwealth's publication *Making Democracy Work for Pro-Poor Development*, it is stated that pro-poor development is about expanding opportunities so that individuals can help themselves out of poverty. Many believe that the poverty issue can be resolved by economic growth. Advocates of pro-poor development believe economic growth to be necessary, but do not think it is enough. In some contexts the poor lack a voice, and powerful elites may simply serve their own self-interest and therefore economic growth does not have the desired impact on poverty alleviation. Instead, the ideal is for democracy to work for pro-poor development. At the general level, this means that the democratic structures of Bangladesh need to be fair and reliable. Beyond the core institutions (parliament, independent judiciary) that need to be in place, democracy requires the reinforcement of a democratic culture, such as respect for human rights; representation and participation in the political process by a wide variety of social groups including the disadvantaged, a process that can be enhanced by the strengthening of local government; and a free media which may encourage citizens to hold their government to account. The major point of pro-poor development is to allow those suffering from poverty to have a say in the possible ways for the community to resolve the problem together, and to ensure that the government keeps any pledges that they make.

In order for this programme to work, it is necessary to have communities which engage with their local governments. Once communities become empowered, locals can manage resource distribution or fix enduring problems in their villages. “In the long run building stronger and more accountable local government is the only way to make decentralisation pro-poor. But it requires time, resources, and capacity building. For the poor the lasting benefits will outweigh the immediate costs” (Commonwealth, 2003: 13). Such community participation links to the earlier emphasis made in this paper about the community having a say about local education and also such engagement with politics strengthens the argument for democracy being the best form of government. If communities can help themselves out of poverty so that their daily lives are improved, the change may signal to others that community participation can yield results. It will be a long process, but the rewards are deterring those losing hope away from terrorism as a potential answer to their grievances.

Specific political disagreements can also be causes of terrorism, as shown by the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Kalam, 2006: 161-164). One reason that the problem has continued for so long is that the previous governments have been reluctant to engage in dialogue with the affected parties. For instance, the PCJSS see the continued presence of army camps in CHT as against the terms of the 1997 Peace Accord that the government signed. The creation of a Regional Council is one way to supervise the governance of the CHT (Ahmed, Mohsin, Chakma, 2003: 164). The Council has responsibilities to coordinate the general administration, law and order, and development of the CHT. If the government wishes to implement any laws regarding the CHT then it needs to go through the Council first. This Council is therefore the point of call for locals to air their perspectives of the situation. It was previously noted that the introduction of RAB signalled to communities that the government is reluctant to engage in dialogue with affected groups, but the existence of the Council has meant the creation of a forum where the United People’s Democratic Front and their rivals the PCJSS can discuss their grievances. This decentralisation of authority, and the potential for locals and members of the PCJSS and the United People’s Democratic Front to say how they wish for the problems of land distribution to be resolved, may help solve the

situation in the long-term. In the short-term, the benefits could include the cessation of violence if the communities affected believe that their voices are being heard by the state.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

After analysing the general causes of terrorism to be religious fundamentalism, a fight against liberal values, general deprivation, and political grievances, this essay related these root causes to the terrorism present in Bangladesh, identifying groups such as HUJI, JMB, and PBCP. After it was determined that terrorism in Bangladesh is home-grown and does not have external links, this paper analysed the efforts of the government to handle the terrorism situation. Government strategies were discussed, where the main limitation was the state's emphasis on a "hard" approach to counter-terrorism which has the negative effect of jeopardising the liberties that the government claims to be protecting. The argument proceeded by suggesting that even having an effective government and a healthy democracy, this was not enough to counter terrorism, and hence the need to allow civil society organisations to play their part in the counter-terrorism strategy. Civil society can help in the counter-terrorism strategy in several ways, but its main limitation was its relative ineffectiveness in Bangladesh. Of course, this is a symptom of the weakness of the Bangladesh government. However, the main point is that more is needed to tackle the root causes of terrorism, made clear by the British model. Britain has a healthy democracy and a vibrant civil society, but policy makers realised that it needed to engage local communities in its fight against terrorism. For this to work in Bangladesh requires the strengthening of local governments, to give them more autonomy from the national government, and more authority to resolve local situations without the state's interruptions. Though improving local government systems would take time, the benefits are huge for communities are best placed (far more than national governments and intelligence services) to monitor their own locales and report risks of terrorist incitements. Communities can also work together with local governments to strike at the root causes of terrorism, such as ensuring that madrasa education is modern and liberal, and aiding in pro-poor development.

Bangladesh has a long way to go before it can implement the necessary reforms which would make local governments strong and effective enough to engage fruitfully with local communities. Yet, the point is that Bangladesh is not a breeding ground for terrorism, but it has the *potential* to be so because of the extreme poverty, and numbers of unchecked madrasas in the country. Therefore, it would be wise to consider all the possible ways to counter this threat before it materialises, and along with the present government direct actions against terrorism, one must not discount the values of the “soft” approach to terrorism, one which is more effective at tackling the root causes of terrorism.

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*Munim Kumar Barai*

**POVERTY REDUCTION IN VIETNAM:  
LESSONS FOR BANGLADESH**

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**Abstract**

This paper explores the reasons behind Vietnam's success in reducing poverty, which has come down to 19.5 percent in 2004 from 58.1 percent in 1993. This success is seen as a manifestation of numerous measures including economic, legal and administrative policy reforms under *doi moi* that pushed the economy onto a higher growth trajectory. The reforms-led economic growth has largely remained pro-poor as could be seen by the distribution of per capita expenditure and income from 1995 to 2004 and the growth elasticity of poverty of 0.76 during 1993-2004, one of the highest among the developing countries. The role of agriculture is all too apparent in getting the poor out of the poverty line. At a diminished size from that of the 1980s and 1990s, agriculture still houses 56 percent of the national workforce and constitutes more than 20 percent of the GDP. Success of

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Vietnam in reducing poverty seems to have important lessons for a country like Bangladesh for drawing its own policies and strategies to attack poverty so that it can attain the millennium development goals it has set for itself in terms of poverty reduction.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Vietnamese government made poverty reduction a central goal in its economic management and the issue of poverty was a driving force behind *doi moi* or economic reforms initiated in the late 1980s. For the next one and a half decade, Vietnam's transition to sustained and rapid growth has importantly helped itself increase per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and has given an accelerated pace in the reduction of poverty. In the process, Vietnam is turning out to be a success story in making poverty alleviation a one-generation affair. The silverlining that distinguishes Vietnam from the rest of the developing countries which are trying to do similar is the success of economic measures that have led to a pro-poor growth.

Based on the expenditure approach of poverty measurement<sup>11</sup> and using a poverty line computed according to international standards, the success of Vietnam is remarkable. This is revealed by the data of four household surveys, viz. Vietnam Livings Standard Survey (VLSS) 1993, VLSS 1998, Vietnam Households and Livings Standard Survey (VHLSS) 2002 and VHLSS 2004. During the period of 1993-2004, poverty rate as measured by per capita consumption came down from 58.1 percent to 19.5 percent, a drop of almost 39-percentage point over the eleven years. The poverty rate in 2004 is one third of 1993 level, which is exceptional if it is benchmarked against a major UN's Millennium Development Goals of halving extreme poverty over a longer period from 1990 to 2015 (VASS, 2007).

At a parallel level, a remarkable progress has also been achieved in some of the associated social indicators, like net enrolment rate at all levels of education, access to electricity, clean water, sanitation, health facilities, health insurance coverage, possession of durable

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<sup>11</sup> Under this approach the threshold is based on the cost of a consumption basket which includes food and non-food items, with food spending being large enough to secure 2100 calories per day per person.

goods and so on. These variables and poverty have a complementary role to each other's improvement or aggravation.

The rapid and pro-poor pattern of growth is considered to be the main reasons behind Vietnam's impressive success in reducing poverty. The rate and pattern of growth could be explained by a number of factors, the market oriented economic reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s are on the top of these. Actually, most of the economic literature attributes that the remarkable economic growth was made largely possible by *doi moi* or renovation. The leadership of Vietnam intended to make a comprehensive economic, political, and social transformation through *doi moi*. *Doi moi* consisted of two successive reforms: the allocation of means of production to individual households, followed by economic liberalization and the opening up of the external sector. Encouragement of broad-based economic growth with policies that absorb and make productive use of labour was the strategic objective in the reform process. The other factors included in the explanation are the pro-poor growth pattern, pro-poor public spending and investment in infra-structure and greater geographic and occupational mobility (VASS, 2007). Possibly, time has come to look at the role of private sector development, foreign direct investment (FDI) and huge inflow of remittance in terms of both economic growth and poverty reduction in Vietnam.

The agriculture sector still plays a dominant role in the economy of Vietnam by supporting the bigger part of people with food and livelihood. In the reform process, the agriculture sector has experienced transformation in terms of production, consumption and trade. This seems to have affected the overall economic growth in general and poverty reduction of the people in particular. This very aspect of development is interesting from the viewpoint of Bangladesh when we find that some 74 percent of Vietnam's 84 million inhabitants still live in the countryside, and most of them are farmers. While it is predicted that there is plenty more scope for growth of agriculture in Vietnam, Bangladesh seems to be falling behind in this regard.

The paper has been devoted to achieving the following major objectives: (i) to identify different reform measures in the economy in general undertaken by Vietnam, (ii) to investigate into the factors

and embedded strategies in the renovation process that consequentially changed in economic growth and reduced poverty, (iii) to examine the developments in growth in agricultural production, consumption and trade and poverty reduction, and (iv) to identify some of the lessons that Vietnam can offer to countries like Bangladesh in regards to poverty reduction.

To achieve the objectives of the paper, primarily the analytical approach has been used in analysing different economic measures, data and figures. A time period of 1990 to 2006 has been covered for various description and analysis. While dealing with agriculture, ten agricultural products, viz. cashew nuts, coffee, ground nuts, fish, pepper, pig meat, rice, rubber, tea and vegetables have been mainly focused on to demonstrate their effect in the rise of agricultural production, per capita consumption and export income for a period of 1990 to 2006.

The remainder of the paper has been divided into five parts. While section two briefly depicts the picture of poverty including poverty rate, poverty gap, and food poverty and so on in Vietnam since 1993, section three examines the causes of remarkable success that Vietnam has achieved in reducing poverty, owing mainly to the *doi moi* led growth strategies. Section four deals with the role of agriculture of poverty reduction in Vietnam. The role has been analyzed in terms of production, consumption and export of some major agricultural products. Section five identifies some of the lessons Vietnam can offer to a developing country like Bangladesh. The paper ends with some concluding remarks in the sixth section.

## **2. STATE OF POVERTY: A TALE OF SWIFT GRADUATION**

Put in a theoretical perspective, poverty is a state of deprivation involving multiple dimensions, from limited income to vulnerability in the face of shocks to few possibilities to participate in collective decision making. The complexity of the issue makes poverty with no unique definition, and therefore no perfect indicator to measure its change over time. In the context of Vietnam, a variety of poverty and social development indicators are currently available. The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) uses a methodology based on household income. Households are deemed

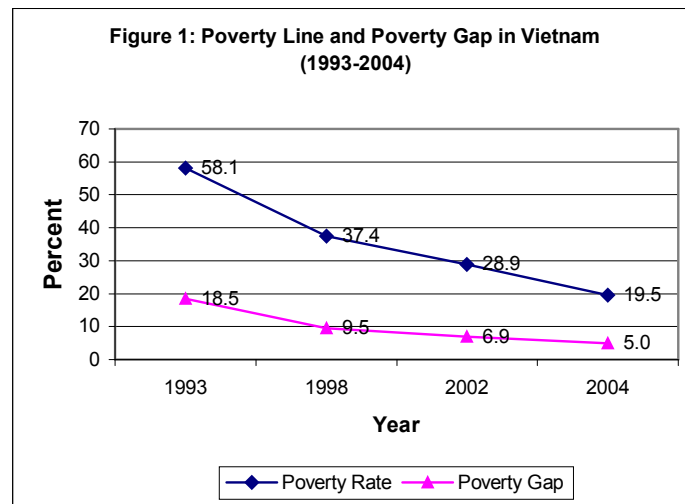
poor if their income per capita falls below some conventional threshold that varies between urban, rural and mountainous areas. Poverty rates are defined as the share of the population with incomes below those thresholds. The General Statistics Office (GSO) relies on both income and expenditures to compute a poverty rate. It defines a threshold based on the cost of a consumption basket, which includes food and non-food items, with food spending being large enough to secure 2100 calories per day per person. Households are considered poor when their income or expenditure level is not high enough to afford this consumption basket. The National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities (NCSSH) computes a Human Development Index (HDI) at the provincial level. The HDI measures a country's achievements in three aspects of human development: longevity, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Longevity is captured through life expectancy at birth, knowledge through a combination of the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratios, and the standard of living through the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (World Bank et al., 2003). In this paper, we follow the GSO accepted lines of poverty.

Figure 1 has been constructed to show rate of poverty and poverty gap existed in Vietnam between 1993 and 2004. As recently as 1993, 58.1 percent of the population lived in poverty, compared to 37.4 percent in 1998, 28.9 percent in 2002 and only 19.5 percent in 2004. This amounts to halving the share of poverty in less than a decade. Or, put differently, more than a third of the total population was lifted out of poverty in about eleven years. In terms of poverty gap measurement<sup>2</sup>, the gap is also declining over the same period: from 18.5 percent in 1993 to 5.0 in 2004. The measure reflects the depth of poverty as well as its incidence.

The point is there might be slight variation in precise figures if other criteria were used to define and measure poverty, but the accomplishment would certainly remain.

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<sup>2</sup> As we know, poverty gap is the mean distance of population falls below the poverty line, expressed as a percentage of the poverty line. The mean is taken over the entire population, counting the non-poor as having zero poverty gap.

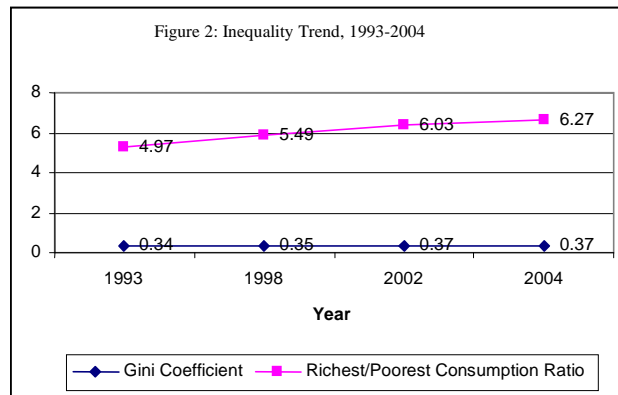


Source: Constructed, data from Appendix Table A1.

Further analysis brings out the following characteristics of poverty in Vietnam:

- 2.1 In all the measurements, viz., poverty rate, food poverty and poverty gap urban Vietnam has done much better than rural Vietnam in improving the poverty position (see Table A1 in the Appendix). This raises the possibility that the reforms related benefits like increase in job, income and education have benefited the urban poor more than the rural ones.
- 2.2 Among the communities, ethnic minorities have remained the most backward in terms of improving the poverty situation. According to VHLSS of 2004 data, there is slightly over ten million of non-Kinh, non-Chinese ethnic population in Vietnam. Though they are 12.6 percent of the total population, they constituted 39.3 percent of the poor population (VASS, 2007). This disparity seems to be growing. A thorough investigation is required to find out the causes of their wide laggardness in improving the economic condition.

- 2.3            There are regional disparities in poverty reduction, a feature that cannot go unnoticed. Of the eight regions in Vietnam - the North West, Central Midlands and North Central Coast are poor zones while the Red River delta and the South East zones are well off zones. In between lies the middle group regions that includes North East, the South Central Coast and the Mekong River Delta. It is not a coincidence that the ethnic minorities mostly live the first three zones which considered poor as per the poverty status.
- 2.4            The rate of poverty reduction has slowed down lately. There could be a number of reasons for this, the foremost being the law of diminishing return from the poverty oriented programmes because the beneficiaries of the programmes might have become 'tolerant' to such programmes. This needs to be investigated.
- 2.5            There is a relative rise of inequality in the Vietnamese society. During the 1993-2004 period, the Gini index for per capita expenditure has seen an overall rise from 0.34 to 0.35 in 1998, 0.37 in 2002 and to 0.37 in 2004. This is, an inequality that has been mainly driven by the increase in equality between rural and urban areas, although the latter has been losing its relative importance in overall inequality change towards the present time. In the meanwhile, the ratio in terms of per capita consumption between the richest and the poorest has widened from 4.97 times to 6.27 times (Thousand Dong 2023: 407 and 5475: 873) between 1993 and 2004 (VASS, 2007).



Sources: Constructed, data from Table A1 and VASS (2007).

This syndrome may tempt many to borrow the words of Friedman: "Communism was a great system for making people equally poor. ----- Capitalism made people unequally rich" (Friedman, 2006). Though the avowed policy of Vietnam is to create market socialism, the signals from emerging relative rise of inequality cannot be missed for further policy interventions.

### 3. DOI MOI-LED GROWTH STRATEGIES AND POVERTY REDUCTION

The success of poverty reduction in Vietnam is attributed to a number of strategies which were manifestations of *doi moi*, the political engineering that Vietnam initiated in the late 1980s. We need to deal briefly the circumstantial background that led to the acceptance of *doi moi* at that time.

The socialistic model of economy that Vietnam embraced soon after its victory and the two halves of the country got unified in 1975. But the model seemed to have failed to deliver the desired level of economic benefits to the nation together. A number of reasons might have played adversely for the non-fulfilment of its economic promise. These included lack of interest among peasants, especially those in the South where most of Vietnam's agricultural lands are situated, toward collectivization; the primitive infrastructural and material conditions for industrialization; the wartime situation; and the economic embargo imposed on Vietnam



by the United States. By the middle of the 1980s, Vietnam's worsening economic situations were further aggravated when foreign aid, especially Chinese economic aid, was significantly reduced (Le, 2005).

In response to these crises, the Vietnamese Communist Party, at the Sixth Party Congress held in December 1986, decided to carry out a far-reaching political and economic reform programme, commonly known as *doi moi*. The initial reforms under *doi moi* included the measures that we can divide into the following categories:

- **Industrial Sector Reforms:** Measures included decentralization of state economic management which allowed state industries some local autonomy, state and privately owned industries to deal directly with the foreign market for both import and export purposes, divestment of the state-owned enterprises, official sanctions for companies and private enterprises and so on.
- **Monetary Reforms:** Replacement of administrative measures by economic ones, including a market orientated monetary policy to control money supply and inflation, halt in credit to the budget, restrained overall growth of credit, etc.
- **Fiscal and Financial Reforms.** Reduction in the size of the military, other expenditure restraints combined with tax increases to bring the fiscal deficit down, decontrolling of prices for market mechanism to work, separation of state-owned commercial banks, raising interest rates to positive real levels and elimination of intersectoral differentials, permission to private and foreign banks, etc. These were undertaken to consolidate the stabilization programme.
- **External Sector Reform:** Adoption of an outward orientated policy in external economic relations; exchange rates to respond to the market, reduction and replacement of quantitative restrictions with tariffs, gradually access to foreign trade permits and a liberal foreign investment law to attract FDI.

- **Agricultural and Rural Reforms:** Largely dismantling of collective system, returning of agricultural land to family farming, passing the Land Law that formally gave land use rights to peasant households and freedom to buy inputs and market products.
- **Changes in Social Policies.** A number of forward looking programmes were initiated to deal with the transitional unemployment caused by the reform programme, including severance pay, retraining schemes, and soft loans for the small-scale private sector (World Bank, 1995).

As it turned out, these policies not only helped restore the economy but also turned it into a vibrant one. In fact, by the early 1990s Vietnam's economy became one of the fastest growing economies in the world. In 1996 Vietnam became a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, an economic integration that was unimaginable only a few years ago. Although Vietnam had not officially abandoned its economic system, the existing economic structure was radically altered. In fact, only a few years after the implementation of *doi moi*, many western economists had already classified Vietnam's economy as a market economy. Its joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2006 will further widen and deepen the marketization process of the economy and its economic integration with the rest of the world.

As we have pointed out, poverty reduction in Vietnam is largely seen as a consequence of successful implementation of *doi moi*. However, in broader perspective, the following strategies/factors could be identified to have played an important role in reducing poverty in Vietnam.

### **3.1. Reforms-Led Growth**

Between 1990 and 2006, Vietnam has, on an average, been able to achieve 7.5 percent growth per year, one of the highest among the developing countries. This has made it an economy of about \$61 billion in 2006 from a tiny one of about \$8 billion in 1990. During the period, the per capita GDP of the people of Vietnam has increased to \$722 from \$118, making a rise of more than 6 times in 17 years. Vietnam's transition to sustained and rapid growth has

importantly helped increase the size of the domestic market and national economy. This growth has led to the rise of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and has given an accelerated pace in improving position in most of the indicators of social development.

Both initial and subsequent reform measures seemed to have played a role in increasing growth rate in the economy. Thanks to the Resolution 10 (known among Vietnamese farmers as *Khoan 10* or the contracted system) and the Land Law of 1993, the production of agriculture sector boomed. Similarly, due to the Enterprise Law of 2000 and Law of Foreign investment, Vietnam has seen a dramatic rise in the registration of new local enterprises and foreign investment. The economic dynamism that has been generated in the private sector could be understood from the increase of active private enterprises since 2001. In 2006 Vietnam received investment proposal worth more than \$10 billion and actual inflow reached \$4.08 billion. The employment and income impacts of this economic vibrancy are obvious. The combined employment in the state, non-state and foreign invested sector (FIS) rose to 43.35 million in 2006 from 37.61 million in 2000.

### **3.2. Pro-Poor/Pro-People Growth**

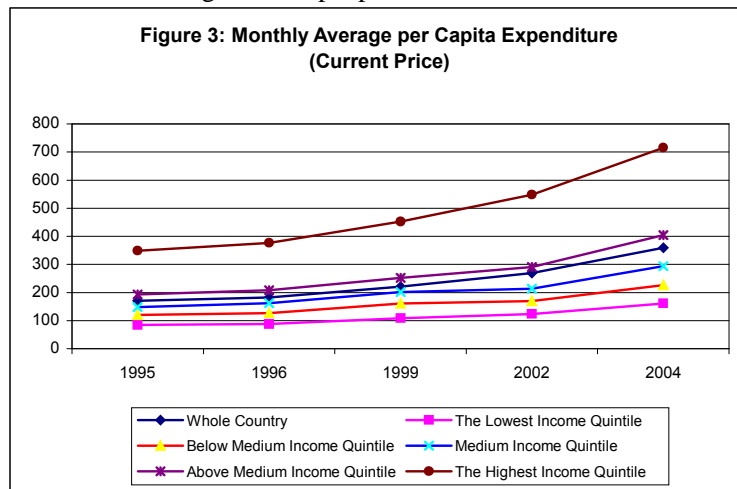
Poverty reduction has remained a major development policy concern in Vietnam and the pro-poor growth is considered to be the principal reason behind Vietnam's impressive success in reducing poverty. In turn, this focus on poverty reduction has generated interest in pro-poor growth. There are lots of intellectual and policy debates about the definition of pro-poor growth, and identifying one for Vietnam could be interesting.

In this context Hyun Son opines, "Poverty reduction depends on two factors: (i) growth and (ii) how the benefits of growth are distributed across the poor and non-poor. One major stream and indeed general definition of pro-poor growth is growth where poverty declines, irrespective of (i) or (ii) or both. Using this definition, growth will always be pro-poor whenever poverty falls" (Son, 2007). Vietnam's approach to poverty reduction may also be aligned to the general definition of pro-poor growth.

This is reinforced by the fact that the benefits of the relative higher economic growth in Vietnam have been distributed across the

poor and non-poor, rural and urban areas and between regions. A number of supportive figures could be produced in this regard. Between 1995 and 2004, average per capita income in all six trend lines, viz., national, lowest, below medium, medium, above medium and highest income quintiles has steadily increased. Though the amounts of increase for different quintiles are unequal, incomes in all these categories for the period simply have doubled.

The same has happened to the monthly average per capita expenditure also. From Figure 3, we can find the distribution of per capita average expenditure for national, rural, urban and the five quintiles of people divided as per the level of income or expenditure. There also we find that spending for consumption has increased for the income wise segments of people.



Source: Constructed, data from GSO (2007).

Though the rise of income and expenditure is a common phenomenon to all sections of the society, it has remained an unequal one. That means in both measures of income and consumption expenditures both the poor and non-poor have benefited, though the quantity of benefits is much larger for the highest income group than the lowest income people, thus raising the scope for growing inequality.

There are other measures through which the pro-poor nature of growth in Vietnam could be understood. These include the growth elasticity of poverty and also the counting of the percentage of people whose monthly average expenditure falls below the poverty line and the number of people who graduated above the line during 1993 to 2004. Putting focus on the growth elasticity of poverty in Vietnam, we find that the association between growth and poverty has remained very strong since 1993 to 2004. It was estimated at 0.95 for 1993-1998 and 1.32 for 1998-2002. Between 2002 and 2004 the relationship stood at as high as 2.63. A measure for the overall period of 1993-2004 shows that the growth elasticity of poverty was 0.76, which is considered to be highly pro-poor (VASS, 2007). So when these are the characteristics of growth, then it could be better termed as pro-people as well.

### **3.3. Public Investment in Infrastructure and Rural Development**

The linkage between development of different hard and soft infrastructure with rural focus may have an important role in reducing poverty. Vietnam has been investing a higher share of its annual budget for development of hard and soft infrastructure. In the Appendix Table A2, we have included share of three budget expenditure items, viz. development expenditure, education and training, and health. The consideration for inclusion of budget spending on education and health is simple – development of human capital is a must for high and sustainable economic development.

In 2006, the total share of these three heads stood to be more than half of the expenditure budget or 51.7 percent of the total. This shows a remarkable rise from their combined share of 34.5 percent in 1990. During the period, budget expenditures for both development and education and training rose consistently. It is important that the Vietnamese Government consistently pursues the 'education for all' policy, particularly universal primary education. As we can see, presently the government is spending about 16 percent or about 6 percent of GDP of the budget expenditure for education, which is much higher than average level of 3.8 percent in Asia. In that expenditure for education, spending on primary and lower secondary education reached 53 percent of the total (VASS, 2007). It is to be noted that public spending, particularly for primary education, is

progressive in the sense that poorer households receive larger share of the subsidy than richer households.

Since 1998, a substantial part of the development expenditure has been channelled to the national target programme for especially disadvantaged and remote communes (often referred to as Program 135) for investment in basic small scale infrastructure facilities like electrification of villages, development of roads usable by motorized vehicles, building schools and health clinics, small scale irrigation, market places, clean water supply and upgrading roads that link poor regions and poor communes with more developed centres. The effort is seen to have played a role in strengthening infrastructure and household facilities in many rural areas which resulted in positive changes in economic situation and the life of people have gradually improved. From 1999 to 2004, public investment of around Vietnamese Dong (VND) 8.9 trillion was disbursed for communes included on the list of disadvantaged communes. As per the VASS estimate, these communes managed to make operational more than 22,000 projects by the end of 2004. The Program report suggests that 90 percent disadvantaged communes now have access to electricity, a broadcasting station, primary school, nursery school and kindergarten, small scale irrigation, 97 percent have vehicle-passable roads to the commune centre, 100 percent communes have health clinics, and 100 percent districts have upper secondary schools (VASS, 2007). The irrigation systems and post offices have strongly developed in some regions. The ratio of working time in rural areas rose from 72.5 percent in 1996-2004 to 76.6 percent in 2001-2004 (Phat, 2006).

Because of increased vehicle ownership, even among the poor, and the dominance of household owned enterprises in transport services, rural roads can be expected to make a substantial contribution to economic activity at the local level, hence to poverty reduction. Results from econometric analysis of Household survey of VHLSS 2004 done by Le et al. indicate that the availability of rural roads to communes is one of the significant factors determining per capita expenditure in 2004 (Le et al., 2006). There are 8,213 markets in the country with the average of 1.1 per 10,000 people, or 0.8 per village.

The co-relationship between rural public spending and poverty reduction is visible from study conducted by Fan et al. (2003). They tried to measure the effects in numbers of poor people lifted out of poverty per billion VND spent. The most important information they provide refers to the ranking of poverty alleviation impacts across different types of spending. From this perspective, investing on rural roads has the largest payoffs. For every billion VND spent, 270 people would be lifted out of poverty. The impact of spending on education ranks second, as for every billion VND spent, 47 people would escape poverty (World Bank et al., 2003).

#### **3.4. Reorientation of Social Safety Net**

Targeting poor population with specific programmes under the coverage of social safety net has an important effect reducing poverty. Vietnam has a series of programmes that transfer resources to specific population groups in communes. What is common in these programmes is that they explicitly favour or compensate households or communes with specific characteristics. Some of these programmes have a deliberate poverty alleviation objective. Household-level benefits under the Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (HEPR) program and commune level investments under the so-called Program 135 fall into this category. Other social transfers included social insurance, social assistance and education fee exemption. There are also transfers aiming at mitigating adverse shocks, even if the beneficiaries are not poor to begin with, for job loss, paid for by the Social Safety Net Fund for redundant state owned enterprise (SOE) workers.

HEPR provides a nation-wide framework to coordinate and integrate efforts of various sectors at different levels. Some of its benefits are targeted to poor households and others to poor communes. For the former are the provisions of “poor household certificates” and “health insurance cards”. Both of them are given some entitlement to free medical treatment in government hospitals and clinics. A different component of the HEPR programme provides partial or full exemptions to school fees, and yet another provides access to subsidized loans. However, the coverage rate of these three components is low yet. In contrast, the education fee exemption programme for poor households and ethnic minorities has

a higher coverage rate. It reaches almost one seventh of all the poor, and a fifth of the foodpoor.

Looking at the health insurance coverage figures of 1998 and 2004 in Table A3 we find that a substantial improvement has taken place in all segments of the income group, particularly in the poorest and the near poorest groups. A most recent study by Hansen and Le carried out an incidence analysis of social transfers which include social insurance, social assistance and education fee exemptions using the VHLSS 2002 and 2004 surveys finds that the absolute value of the transfers mostly benefit the poorest quintile of the income group, and also the richest quintile. Results of their analysis indicate that social transfers had sizeable effects on the poverty levels in 2002 and 2004, provided significant protection against falling into poverty (Hansen and Le, 2006).

### **3.5. Geographic and Inter-Job Migration**

When it comes to the question of physical migration of the people – Vietnam is experiencing that in two ways. *Firstly*, some people are leaving the country for foreign lands in the quest of better jobs and higher standard of living. This constitutes the case of export of human being. *Secondly*, there is another group of people who are moving from one province to another, generally from the poorer to a richer one, within the national boundary in search of occupation they have experience in or entirely to a new field. From the first type of migration Vietnam is presently earning a substantial amount of forex remittance, the second one produces inter-provinces wealth transfer mostly in the form of VND. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, internal migration is proving more significant in reducing poverty in Vietnam as external migration benefits mostly the higher income group people. This is substantiated by the VASS study that by analysing the VHLSS 2004 finds that average overseas remittances per household for the poorest quintile (they can be classified as poor, given the poverty rate of 19.5 percent in 2004) was as low as VND 99,000 against VND 3,153,000 for the richest group (VASS, 2007).

In fact, internal migration is a common livelihood strategy for poor people in most of the developing countries. In case of Vietnam, inter-province migration has a pattern that poor people leave the



provinces with low GDP per capita, low HDI and high unemployment rates for the provinces with high GDP per capita, high HDI and low unemployment rates. This internal manoeuvre has both developmental and distributive effect of wealth as well as poverty reduction effect. A study found that 85 percent of the respondents said that there had been many people in their community working away from home and 36 percent of them said that migration helped substantially raise incomes of the recipient households (Thang, 2005).

### **3.6. Private Domestic and Foreign Investment**

The rise of quantity of private domestic and foreign investment in Vietnam's economy has started showing an increasing role in different socio-economic fields. Understandably, it is a bit difficult to figure out all the effects they might have on the economy as a whole, on the poverty reduction in particular, because they could be direct, indirect and multi-dimensional.

The Enterprise Law of 2000 led to the elimination of over one hundred business licenses that in turn reduced the registration time and cost for enterprises. Not to be surprised, the number of private enterprises registered every year has been increasing steadily ever since. The vibrancy this has generated in Vietnam's private sector could be understood from the fact that the number of active private enterprises since 2001 increased from 22,777 to 35,001 in 2005. The employment and income effects of this development and their impact on poverty should be a matter of thorough investigation.

The role of foreign investment in this regard is another issue that merits an examination. To show its importance we have constructed Table A4 taking the following economic variables, viz. share of GDP of the foreign invested sector, growth rate of industrial output value of FIS, its share of investment in the economy, share in employment providence and its overall share of trade including both exports and imports. Due to data constraints it has not been able to give picture for all of them for the same time period, but the available data in the respective areas could provide an idea on the role that foreign investments have had in the economy.

In 1990, the foreign invested sector constituted only 2.6 percent share of the GDP. This has been increased to 12.7 percent of the

\$60b plus economy in 2006. The share of FIS in terms of investment in the economy has nearly tripled in the dong in a period of 12 years from 1995 to 2006. The job market is the area where the FIS seems to have an increasing role when we find that in 2000 this sector employed only 226.8 thousand persons while the level of employment has grown to 700.4 thousand persons in 2006, marking a growth of more than 208 percent in seven years. Available data for 1995 to 2005 show that the FIS has consistently remained net exporter during the period. In 2005, the share of FIS was more than \$32 billion or about 47 percent of the total trade. This is a rise from 21.6 percent of the total trade in 1995.

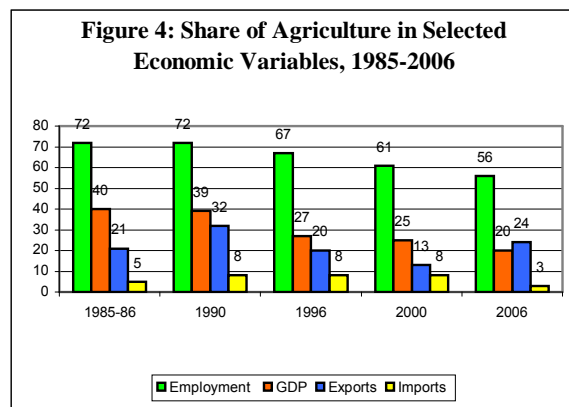
What are the direct and indirect linkage effects of private investment and FDI in reducing poverty in Vietnam? This seems to have remained a least explored area of research. But common sense economics indicates the overall effects of their level of involvement should have an interface with the reduction of poverty as well.

#### **4. ROLE OF AGRICULTURE**

As we know, growth response of the renovation measures was large enough to doubling Vietnam's GDP between 1991 and 2000. In the meantime production of agriculture sector boomed. Vietnam has progressed from a nation of chronic food shortages to one of the world's top three suppliers of rice, coffee, cashew nuts, pepper, rubber, etc. And its agri-products export list has become a longer one over time.

But it also needs to be pointed out that over the years Vietnam is showing a gradual shift from a primary sector to manufacturing and service sectors dominated economy. Interestingly, since 2003 manufacturing sector has emerged to be the largest sector in the economy. The distribution of GDP for 2006 shows that the shares of the agriculture, service and manufacturing sectors were 20.4, 38.0 and 41.6 percent respectively. This is not surprising, but the importance of agricultural sector has not totally diminished. This could be understood from the fact that even in 2006, this sector housed 55.7 percent of total employment, employing over 24 million people of Vietnam (GSO, 2006, 2007), indicating the relative importance of agriculture in their overall well-being.

We have constructed Figure 4 to show the relative position of the agricultural sector in the economy of Vietnam. When it comes to the trade of importance of agriculture in the overall export, its share has increased in the recent years and in 2006 it stood to be 24 percent making it a hugely net exporter of agricultural product.



Source: Constructed from data GSO (2006, 2007), World Bank (2003)  
 Note: Import data of agriculture for 2005 has been shown in 2006.

In the discussion on role of agriculture in poverty reduction we can identify the following channels through which agriculture can affect poverty: increased production-led consumption or calorie intake, income (returns to labour, assets and production) through domestic and international trade, provision of public goods (health, education etc) and security (capacity to mitigate risk and cope with shocks) (Conway, 2004). In most cases, however, analysis is conducted largely in terms of income poverty. But the relative merits of agri-exports and production for domestic consumption have received little attention.

#### 4.1. Production

Data for ten products viz., cashew nuts, coffee, groundnuts, maize, pepper, rice-paddy, rubber, sugarcane, tea, vegetables, fisheries (both catch and aquaculture), pig meat and poultry have been assembled for 1990 to 2006 to calculate the growth of total and

per capita level of agricultural production. They constitute the largest share of the total agricultural production in Vietnam.

As can be seen in Table A5 in the Appendix, agricultural development is largely due to the increase in crop output. During the period of our analysis, all of the major products have grown, but some of them have registered extraordinary growth in quantities. For example, production of cashew nuts grew from 23.7 thousand tonnes (tts) in 1992 to 235.4 tts in 2006 (990 percent rise), coffee from 92 tts to 853.5 tts between 1990 and 2006 (930 percent), maize from 671 tts to 3819.4 tts (570 percent) in the respective years. Production of other heavy weighted products among our selected group like rice (186 percent), sugar cane (290 percent), vegetables (236 percent in 2005), pig meat (344 percent) also registered growth. The combined production of these products was 30966 tts in 1990, 547780 tts in 1998 and 70987 in 2005. It was only in 2000 when the total production registered a decline from the previous year. Though production is growing since then, the growth seems to have substantially slowed down in these products in 2003, 2004 and 2005 as could be seen from the Table. This has happened because of the decrease or very slow growth of sugar cane and paddy. When it comes to the question of per capita production of the selected products, we also find a similar trend visible in the figures from 1990 to 2006. In quantitative figure, the capita/kg distribution of the products shows that while the production was 469 kg per person in 1990, the amount rose to 857 kg in 2005 (Table A6).

#### **4.2. Consumption**

Table A7 in the Appendix contains the growth of per capita calorie intake per day (Kcal/capita/day) products of cashew nuts, groundnuts, maize, rice, sugarcane, vegetables, freshwater fish, and marine fish and pig meat. It shows that a significant improvement has taken place in the consumption characteristics in Vietnam during the period of 1990 to 2005.

Rice is by far the most important staple in the Vietnamese diet. In 1990, out of total 1774 calorie that a person could take from all the products listed, rice accounted for 87 percent (1546 calorie) of the total per day. Pig meat, sugar and maize were the other three products in our basket that also supplied about 11 percent of the

total. The rest came from the others. But the consumption level of these products has over the years increased that matched the growth of these products as well. Interestingly, though calorie intake from these products has risen 1774 per day to 2046 between 1990 to 1999, or a rise of 272 per person per day (an annual average of 34 calorie), it has seen a quick rise to reach 2457 Kcal/capita/day in 2005, or an increase of 411 calorie in 6 years (annual average of 68.5 calorie).

### **4.3. Agricultural Trade**

Due to rapid growth in agricultural GDP of Vietnam over the 1990s as a result of the various measures in the 1980s and 1990s, Vietnam became a major factor in the world coffee, rice and rubber exports. Exports of pork, aquaculture seafood products, and some horticultural products increased substantially. We have seen a general increasing trend of domestic consumption in the major agricultural products, which means that there was an expansion of domestic demand for different agricultural commodities. Within 1985 to 2005, agricultural export revenues rose from around US\$ 100 million up to more than US\$ 4.467 billion. For the producer, there was an increase in income generation from the agricultural products in domestic markets as well. This could be seen from the producer's price index of agricultural, forestry and fishing product which, by taking 1995 as 100, rose to 118.3 in 2000, 126.2 in 2003 and 145.2 in 2005 (GSO, 2007). A study estimated that rural household's annual income for 1998 indicates that Vietnamese households do access off-farm income to a moderate extent. For an average rural household income of about US\$700, 47 percent of that income came from agriculture, 19 percent from non-farm enterprises, and 34 percent from wage and other income (Barichello, 2004).

We have constructed Table A8 in the Appendix to analyze contributions of the selected products in exports from 1990 to 2005. In 1990, in the export of agricultural products rice, fish, cashew nuts, rubber and coffee constituted to be major income earners in the total export of \$853 million of the selected products. Over the years their importance in Vietnamese exports has remained, though fishery has emerged to be top earner. As an individual export item, it crossed the value of rice in 1993 and in 2005 it accounted for more than 48 percent (\$ 2732.5 million of the total of \$ 5790.1 million) of the

earnings of our selected group. This was followed by coffee (\$847.9 million), rubber (\$787 million), rice (\$612.1 million) and so on. The combined earnings from these products have increased to \$2,196.0 million in 1995, \$3079.1 million in 2000 and to \$ 5790.1 million in 2005.

An estimate of per capita export income from these products shows that it increased from \$12.92 in 1990, to \$30.50, \$39.66 and \$68.47 in 1995, 2000 and 2005 respectively. That is, between 1990 and 2005, per capita export incomes from these agricultural products have grown about 530 percent. Putting the fact a bit differently, if we consider the export value from these products in 1990 as 100, then it has risen to 306.9 in 2000 and 529.8 in 2005.

So the impacts of the growth in production, consumption and trade of various agriculture products in reduction of poverty can not be missed. In a separate study, the author of this paper has found that production of the selected agricultural products, their consumption, and export value of the products and development expenditure including expenditure for education and health care can explain 99.4 percent of changes in poverty in Vietnam (Barai, 2007).

## **5. SUCCESS OF POLICY ISSUES IN THE COMPARATIVE SETTING**

This is an interesting area in the context of discussion on poverty reduction in Vietnam. The International Development Agency (IDA), an organ of the World Bank, makes a comprehensive assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of policy issues of a country through its Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). A high CPIA is in principle associated with potentially better economic performance, which in turn could help reduce the poverty situation in a country.

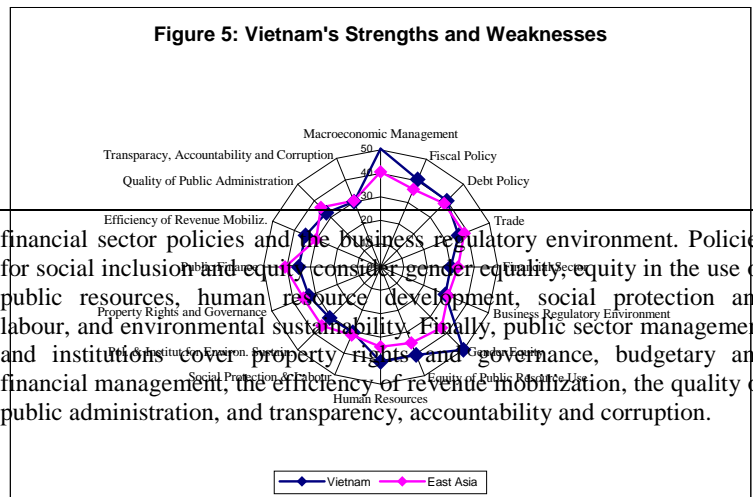
The CPIA index groups 20 indicators into 4 broad categories: economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and public sector management, and institutions. Each of these four areas is disaggregated into a series of more specific indicators.<sup>3</sup> Countries are rated on their current status in each

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<sup>3</sup> Macroeconomic management includes macroeconomic stability, fiscal policy and debt policy. Structural reform refers to trade integration,

of these performance criteria, with scores from 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest). This index is updated annually.

When considered on an indicator-by-indicator basis, the resulting ratings help identify a country's strengths and weaknesses. When taken together, under the form of an aggregate rating, they provide information on the country's relative position in the world. Disaggregated CPIA ratings suggest Vietnam's main strengths are in macroeconomic management and in fiscal policies. Public financial management gets relatively high ratings too. But it still has important weaknesses. One of them is related to structural reform: for trade policies, the financial sector and the regulatory environment for businesses. Vietnam's other weakness concerns the institutional area, with the ratings on the efficiency of revenue mobilization, on transparency, accountability and corruption, and on social protection, being below the average for other East Asian countries (World Bank et al., 2005).



financial sector policies and the business regulatory environment. Policies for social inclusion and equity consist gender equality, equity in the use of public resources, human resource development, social protection and labour, and environmental sustainability. Finally, public sector management and institutions cover property rights and governance, budgetary and financial management, the efficiency of revenue mobilization, the quality of public administration, and transparency, accountability and corruption.

Source: World Bank et al. (2005).

Although these indicators seem to have more relevance in assessing the investment environment in a country, some of them are very much indicative of the existing social condition and its management. In the context of Vietnam, we find that it has a higher rating in the social areas, including gender equality, the equity in the use of public resources and the quality of its human resources. Combined with a better macroeconomic management, the advantage in social development might have played an important role in reducing poverty at a faster rate in Vietnam.

## **6. LESSONS FOR BANGLADESH**

Bangladesh is still considered to be one of the world's poorest and least developed nations despite sustained national and international efforts to improve its economic and demographic prospects. Like all of them, Bangladesh also suffers from the problems of lack of economic opportunity, low human capabilities, low level of securities and lack of economic, social and political empowerment of the poor. Poverty in Bangladesh has a genesis here as well. Therefore, a convenient starting point for a strategy of poverty reduction would be to unbundle the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. Consequently, it would call for sub-strategies to address these problems. Successive governments in Bangladesh have accorded priority to reducing poverty and have been trying to draw strategies under different plans.

The poverty reduction objective in Bangladesh had been pursued initially under five Five-Year Plans from 1975 to 2002. These plans had the aim of promoting economic growth, reducing poverty,



developing human resources, generating productive employment, ensuring food self-sufficiency, developing infrastructure and strengthening the technological base. But it has thereafter formulated a newer policy umbrella called the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that sets out four main courses of action to achieve poverty reduction:

- enhancing pro-poor growth
- boosting critical sectors for pro-poor growth
- devising effective safety nets and targeted programmes
- ensuring human development

Particular attention is being paid to agriculture and the rural non-farm sector as the two main drivers of increased productivity.

A critical examination suggests that the national PRSP is a rich diagnostic document which contains a cogent set of strategic interventions and practical roadmaps towards its implementation. Admittedly, the document suffers from some inadequacies, but these are not binding constraints for realizing its potential, up to a certain degree. Rather, one would argue that the fate of Bangladesh PRSP will be finally defined by the depth of its *political ownership* in the country, and the strength of the *partnership commitments* of the international development partners (Bhattacharya, 2005).

In the context of the Five Year Plans and PRSP, we can have a brief look on the progress that Bangladesh has made in reducing poverty under them. Thanks to steady economic growth from 1991 to 2000, the overall poverty level fell by 9 per cent: in rural areas, it decreased from 61.2 per cent in 1991 to 53 per cent in 2000. This is in the context that about three-fourths of the total population in the country still live in rural areas. The *Economic Review of Bangladesh 2007* gives the statistics that there were still 40.0 percent people living below the poverty line in 2005, down from 46.2 percent in 1999 (MOF, 2007). This estimate is based on the calorie intake of a person per day.

Further analysis of the poverty position in Bangladesh brings out the fact that though the population living below the poverty line declined by one percentage point a year in the 1990s and later, this is not enough to achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs) of halving the poor by 2015, a UNDP study of 2003 said. "The

reduction of poverty that took place in the 1990s -- at the rate of about one percentage point per year -- was certainly modest by the standards of East and South-East Asia in the last few decades," the study said, urging policy-makers to support growth in non-tradable sector. The report found most of the incremental growth in the 1990s originating from what economists call the 'non-tradable' sectors, mainly services, construction and small-scale industry, a fact confirmed by the changing composition of the labour force -- from farm activities to 'non-farm' activities. The driving forces behind this growth were acceleration in crop production, readymade garment industry and workers' remittances. Crop was by far the biggest driving force (UNDP, 2003).

The UNDP's Human Development Report of 2004 confirmed that Bangladesh has graduated to the "medium human development" league. It is one of the few countries in the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group to attain this status. This graduation was the result of the country's achievements in several areas of social and economic development. The theme of social progress provided the much-needed antidote to the syndrome of aid-fatigue typified by what Hirschman (1991) termed as the "rhetoric of futility". Set against the early trial of the "test case of development" Bangladesh's recent performance appears to be a re-discovery for many (Sen and Hulme, 2006).

The *Labour Force Statistics 1999-2000* estimated that there was a 60.3 million-strong labour force in the country. This has surely increased further by this time. While, service sector has emerged to be the single largest contributor to the GDP constituting about 50 percent, the agriculture remains the third most important sector of the nation's economy accounting for about 21 percent of the gross domestic product. It provides employment for 60.9 percent of the work force and cultivation of rice is the single most important activity in the economy in terms of the employment generation. So in drawing the poverty reduction strategies, giving more emphasis on the rural economic segment, particularly on agriculture and allied activities, becomes an imperative for the policy makers.

By any standard, success of Vietnam in poverty reduction is simply remarkable and the relevance of its experience, both for rural and urban poverty reduction, for the developing countries is quite

apparent. To Bangladesh, it can offer a number of lessons to attack the number one enemy of a large part of the population. Let us list some of them in the following ways:

- 6.1 To begin with, ownership on a piece of cultivable land can make a big difference of one being a poor or non-poor. Leasing the land under government possession/control (khas land) among the landless and marginal farmers could be the first step. There should be a mechanism to check that the leased land does not change hand/transferred immediately after distribution.

Though redistribution of land in Vietnam does not fall in the comparable economic setting of Bangladesh, it could be a pointer. Giving private ownership on land is considered to have triggered the first biggest impetus for agricultural productivity in Vietnam. This very change was strong enough to bring dynamism and energy among the farmers who have tried to turn every inch of land into "an inch of gold" (Vietnamnews, 2005).

The PRSP 2005 has at least 23 references on khas land, but it seems to have not come out with a definite road map and the benefits of redistribution policy (GOB, 2005). In the present circumstances, Bangladesh requires a land reform policy to bring a first real change in the agriculture production system.

- 6.2 To ensure that those who have got the land leased can cultivate and harvest it, necessary support services have to be developed and distributed through some cooperatives of the newly land owners. The support services should include fund, seedlings, tilling equipments, and fertilizer and irrigation facilities.
- 6.3 Target-oriented specific programmes have to be initiated for rural infrastructure development. This includes construction of road, bridges, irrigation project, rural electrification, and market development. The PRSP 2005 seems to favour a *status quo* in the number of the infrastructural facilities and go for deepening them. There is no doubt that the facilities need to be deepened, but putting a freeze on the number may not be a very well opted decision, as Bangladesh still has a low per capita infrastructural density which also serves as a bottleneck

for development. For the construction of roads, care should be taken that they go through the centre of the villages' market places and useable for vehicles for all the seasons. A broadcasting system needs to be developed through which information sharing and dissemination of agriculture related information could be done among the stakeholders.

- 6.4 Human resource development requires investment in soft infrastructure creation for education and public health care. This is the long term process and needs consistent investment commitment for a longer period of time. Even in the changed economic circumstances, it was important that the Vietnamese Government consistently pursues the 'education for all' policy, particularly universal primary education with higher budget expenditure for education. This has played an important role in making Vietnam a nation with about 95 percent literacy rate. The domino effect of such higher literacy in the development of a country could be immense. In Bangladesh public spending, particularly for primary education, should be made progressive in the sense that needy households receive larger share of the subsidy than richer households. The universalization of education up to secondary level can be considered seriously. Education encouragement benefits should also be extended to poor male students.
- 6.5 Achieving higher growth and ensuring that growth remains pro-poor has to be made a major objective of the budgets. Targeted intervention plans to boost income and consumption expenditure of the poor need urgent attention as this will help reduce social inequality which is increasing at a faster rate in Bangladesh. Delivering micro-credit through government financial institutions at a reduced cost could be an alternative than to leaving it mostly for the non-government organizations (NGOs) which are criticised for their much higher interest rate and even harsher methods of credit recollection. This increases the overall economic and social costs of the borrowers who are mostly the poor and vulnerable people of the society.
- 6.6 In Vietnam, there is no ceiling for investment amount and for an investment amount of below VND 300 billion (about US\$ 1.8 billion) except in the conditional sector

could be registered with the provincial administrative body. Article 46 of the Law on Foreign Investment 2000 makes it mandatory that the appraisal time for an investment proposal should take no longer than 45 days for issuing an investment certificate (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2000). With a much higher level of political and policy stability, Vietnam is getting the reward of the law in terms of drawing foreign FDI. An appraisal of performance of Bangladesh in managing investment offers is very poor as could be seen by the handling of some of the big investment proposals in recent times. An investment friendly environment has to be created so that both domestic and foreign investors can invest to create more production and employment avenues. This will bring economic vibrancy needed to push growth up in the country and the poor are benefited from the trickle down effect.

- 6.7 As an economy with dependence of the major segment of population on agriculture, the sector should be managed more efficiently. Running of the irrigation projects, distribution of fertilizer, diesel, electricity in recent years are marked by sheer incompetence. Resent quick rise of prices of most of the food items in the national and international markets makes it imperative to give more focus on the sector. This becomes more important in the apprehension that much of the improvement in poverty condition may again move back due to impending huge food shortage in the country. So the importance of agriculture in reducing poverty by way of more production, consumption and export earnings has to be reemphasised with supportive measures to help the farmers and producers.
- 6.8 Last, but not the least, the role of good governance of the different economic, political and social policies becomes vital in the short and long run. Improvement in the management of all these policies has much more importance in the context of Bangladesh. Vietnam seems to have done much better in many areas, even in comparison with some of the newly industrializing countries in its neighbourhood, largely because of the political stability it has been enjoying since 1975.

As pointed out earlier, poverty is a multi-dimensional, complex problem. Its reduction, therefore, requires a multi-dimensional strategy. For Bangladesh, such a strategy should include measures to manage better the macroeconomy, accelerate growth, improve human resource, provide safety nets to reduce the vulnerability of the poor, and empower them. Sound micro- and macro-economic policies, stronger institutions and better governance are the key to address the dimensions of poverty more effectively. To win its war on enemy called poverty it will take strong political leadership, prudent policy measures and continuation of commitment.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The success of *doi moi* and the subsequent reforms has turned Vietnam into a land of promises with higher growth, bigger FDI inflows and much less people with the burden of poverty. It have been able to do that by ensuring the benefits of growth to the poor by channeling a large sum of the state budget for rural soft and hard infrastructural development and bringing more people under different social safety schemes. It has also derived the benefits of higher protection on its agriculture sector over a longer period of time by being a late joiner of the WTO. But the delay in joining the WTO seems not to have impacted the growth of private sector that has boomed from the early 1990s and has started showing a greater role in the economy. In fact, only a few years after the implementation of *doi moi*, many Western economists had already classified Vietnam's economy as a market economy.

The role of agriculture in fighting poverty has been very important in Vietnam. This has happened through the increased production, consumption and export of all the major agricultural commodities. Vietnam has emerged to be a major net exporting country of many of the agricultural products.

At the moment, the emerging features of the poverty reduction need to be carefully analyzed and addressed with appropriate intervention measures, particularly to reduce poverty among the ethnic minorities. The role of the government should be instrumental as the actions of other non-governmental organizations may not be effective as they have a minimum presence in the country.

While it is true that Vietnam was a socialist state at the time of its transformation, many of its economic and political characteristics were similar to those of many developing countries, such as the nationalized natural resources, the large public sector, the predominant role of agriculture, and so on. So, the economic transformation in Vietnam may offer valuable lessons to many developing countries like Bangladesh.

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## Appendix

**Table A1:**  
**Poverty Rates and the Poverty Gap (in percent)**

	1993	1998	2002	2004*
<b>Poverty Rate</b>	58.1	37.4	28.9	19.5
Urban	25.1	9.2	6.6	3.6
Rural	66.4	45.5	35.6	25.0
Kinh and Chinese	53.9	31.1	23.1	14.0
Ethnic minorities	86.4	75.2	69.3	61.0
<b>Food poverty</b>	24.9	15.0	9.9	6.9
Urban	7.9	2.5	1.9	3.3
Rural	29.1	18.6	13.6	8.1
Kinh and Chinese	20.8	10.6	6.5	n.a
Ethnic minorities	52.0	41.8	41.5	n.a
<b>Poverty Gap</b>	18.5	9.5	6.9	5.0
Urban	6.4	1.7	1.3	0.7
Rural	21.5	11.8	8.7	6.0
Kinh and Chinese	16.0	7.1	4.7	3.0
Ethnic minorities	34.7	24.2	22.8	13.0
<b>Gini Index for Per Capita Expenditures</b>	0.34	0.35	0.37	0.37
Urban	0.35	0.34	0.35	0.33
Rural	0.28	0.27	0.28	0.30

Source: GSO (2004). World Bank et al. (2003), VASS (2007).

**Table A2:**  
**Share of Expenditure on Development Investment in the State Budget**  
**(As a percentage of the Total Budget)**

Year	Development Investment	Education and Training	Health Care	Total (1+2+3)	Science Tech and Environment
	1	2	3	4	5
1990	23.10	7.40	4.00	34.50	1.2
1991	17.70	9.30	5.30	32.30	0.9
1992	27.20	7.90	4.50	39.60	1.2
1993	25.90	5.40	4.10	35.40	1.3
1994	25.94	8.20	4.21	38.35	n.a
1995	22.87	8.53	4.36	35.76	n.a
1996	26.59	8.55	4.35	39.49	n.a
1997	24.96	11.17	3.89	40.02	n.a
1998	25.02	11.86	3.74	40.62	n.a
1999	30.94	10.77	3.25	44.96	n.a
2000	27.19	11.63	3.17	41.99	1.14
2001	31.00	11.89	3.24	46.13	1.25
2002	30.51	12.04	3.14	45.69	1.25
2003	32.91	12.63	2.96	48.50	1.02
2004	35.29	13.53	3.21	52.03	1.26
2005	31.71	16.04	4.74	52.49	1.15
2006	32.00	15.37	4.33	51.70	1.20

Sources: GSO (1994), GSO (2000) and GSO (2005) for data 1990-93, 1997-1999 and 2000-03 respectively; Ministry of Finance website for data 2004-2006, and IMF (1998),

**Table A3:  
Access to Targeted Benefits by Quintiles of People**

Sl#	Quintiles	1998	2004	
		Having Health Insurance	Having Health Insurance	Having Health Insurance plus Free Health Care Card
1	Poorest People	6.22	22.69	41.81
2	Near Poorest People	9.67	23.22	30.43
3	Middle People	13.59	26.15	31.37
4	Near Richest People	20.18	24.41	38.22
5	Richest People	28.99	44.12	46.40
6	Total	15.73	29.53	37.56

Source: VASS (2007).

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN NEPAL, 2006-07: AN  
ASSESSMENT

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**Abstract**

Following the successful anti-King agitation and the historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Nepal has experienced a number of political developments: ending of armed conflict; integrating the Maoists into mainstream politics; establishing an interim constitution, government and cabinet; abolition of monarchy and declaration of republic; and functioning of political parties, parliament and election commission. At the same time, Nepal has observed a set of political challenges: Maoist departure from the government; postponing the schedule of elections; ethnic and regional violence; demilitarisation of Maoists and their integration with the national army. These indicate that Nepal is on the way to democracy but there are obstacles to democratic governance. Against this backdrop, the present paper attempts to explore whether the political developments, despite challenges, are likely to lead Nepal towards a democratic political order.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Nepal has undergone considerable turmoil in its attempt to have a more open political system. The country has observed the struggle for political power among monarchy, coalition governments and the

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Maoists for a long time. The political situation in Nepal under monarchy was not smooth. Although democratic rule was achieved through a people's movement in 1990, Nepal faced armed conflict after the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) launched an insurgency in 1996. Such conflict continued for a decade, disrupting the democratic system severely. During this period, many initiatives were taken to resolve the armed conflict and strengthen democratic governance. Failure of the initiatives resulted in direct palace rule in Nepal. In effect, democracy was uncertain. Therefore, the political forces and the CPN-M became united for the first time and started anti-king agitation, which soon turned into a people's movement and later facilitated signing of the historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on November 21, 2006 between the Seven Party Alliance (SPA)<sup>12</sup> and the CPN-M.

Signing of the CPA has brought about a number of political developments in Nepal: ending armed conflict; integrating the Maoists into mainstream politics; establishing an interim constitution, government and cabinet; abolition of monarchy and declaration of republic; and functioning of political parties, parliament and election commission. At the same time, Nepal has observed a set of political challenges: Maoist departure from the government; postponing the schedule of elections; ethnic and regional violence; demilitarisation of the Maoists and their integration with the national army. These indicate that Nepal is on the way to democracy but there are obstacles to democratic governance. Against this backdrop, the present paper attempts to explore whether the political developments, despite challenges will lead Nepal towards a democratic political order. In this context, the paper raises a couple of pertinent questions: What have been the political developments in Nepal in the years 2006 and 2007? What are the challenges to democratisation in Nepal?

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<sup>12</sup> Nepali Congress, Nepali Congress (Democratic), Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (UML), Janamorcha Nepal, Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP), United Left Front (ULF) and Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) jointly formed the SPA on May 8, 2005 to assault autocratic monarchy and establish full-fledged democracy. See, Dev Raj Dahal, "Nepal's Difficult Transition to Democracy and Peace", available at: [www.nepaldemocracy.org/conflict\\_resolution/KBNepal2006.pdf](http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/conflict_resolution/KBNepal2006.pdf) , accessed on: March 7, 2007.

Apart from the introductory and concluding sections, the paper consists of three successive sections. In the second section a historical background of Nepal's political developments is given. Section three focuses on various political developments in Nepal in the years 2006 and 2007. The fourth section identifies challenges to democratisation and assesses the future of democracy in Nepal. The methodology of the paper is empirical and analytical in nature. Research materials from books, journals, newspapers, internet sources, etc. constitute the research documents of the authors.

## **2. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN NEPAL: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Nepal was an absolute monarchy for 237 years of modern history. Significant political developments started in the 1950s, when the country got rid of the century long Rana regime through a people's movement and put the King back to active throne.<sup>13</sup> This can be considered as the beginning of democracy in Nepal. This state of democracy continued only for a decade. Thereafter, Nepal witnessed a party-less absolute monarchy from the 1960s until the 1990s.<sup>14</sup> During this period, political freedom was suppressed by the state. Multi-ethnicity and diversity of the state was completely sidelined as few people gained immense authority and control over political power. As a result, significant number of people engaged themselves in furtive political parties and continued to struggle for democracy. In the 1980s, these political parties agitated for a multi-party democracy. It gained momentum with popular support. Nepal gained a multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy in the year 1990 without much bloodshed. The following fourteen years of transitional democracy faced an unstable journey and severe criticism. Some of the problems faced by the democracy of Nepal were political instability, misuse of power, state of lawlessness,

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<sup>13</sup> Trading along the path of Democracy, available at: [http://www.lysasia.org/expression\\_robin.php](http://www.lysasia.org/expression_robin.php), accessed on: December 16, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Party-less absolute monarchy legitimated the King as the only ruler, hence prohibiting party-politics. See, Richard Burghart, "The Political Culture of Panchayat Democracy", *Nepal in the Nineties*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, p. 63.

armed conflict, and occasional active role of the constitutional monarch.

The political situation critically worsened when a royal coup was staged on February 1, 2005. In protest, surprising secret negotiations between the Maoists and the mainstream political parties resulted in a 12-point agreement to dislodge monarchy.<sup>15</sup> The King rather pursued his own road map of multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy irrespective of the consensus.<sup>16</sup> The Nepalese polity was divided into two clear opposing forces – the King, on the one hand, and the opposing political parties, on the other. As a result, a pro-democracy protest was launched, where royalist administration abused human rights, announced curfew and ordered to shoot-at-sight. The protest therefore transferred into a people's movement. It resulted in the end of palace rule and reinstatement of parliament, and paved the way for the restoration of democratic system.

### **3. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN NEPAL IN 2006 and 2007**

The ending of successful anti-King agitation opened the possibility to resolve Nepal's deep-rooted political crisis and facilitate the democratic transition. The proclamation for revival of the House of Representatives on May 18, 2006 was a significant blow to Nepal's King because it effectively reduced monarchy to a figurehead status.<sup>17</sup> This resulted in a roadmap to the gradual signing of a ceasefire code of conduct, several understandings and eventual signing of the historic CPA to address Maoist insurgency and accelerate the process of democratic system.

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<sup>15</sup> The 12-point agreement was signed on November 22, 2005. In the agreement, the Maoists were committed to multi-party democracy while the SPA accepted Maoist demand for elections to a constituent assembly. See, Saba Javeed Janjua, "The role of free primary compulsory education policy for the political development in Nepal", *Strategic Studies*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, Spring 2006, p. 106.

<sup>16</sup> *Nepal News*, Nepal, December 3, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> [Dharma Adhikari](http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-protest/maocracy_4101.jsp), "Nepal: Monarchy vs. Democracy", available at: [http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-protest/maocracy\\_4101.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-protest/maocracy_4101.jsp), accessed on: December 28, 2006.

The outcome of the CPA brought about several political developments in Nepal. As a prior concern of democracy, a larger part of general Nepalese has expressed their views against monarchy and anticipated for a fully legitimate democratic government instead of current interim regime.<sup>18</sup> The mainstream political parties have been united. They have been working together to campaign for a republic. The former rebels have begun to surrender their arms, started to return all seized properties, and dissolved their parallel administrations to develop internal security and the rule of law. At the same time, the CPN-M has been formally registered with election commission as a mainstream political party. They have taken oath as members of parliament and joined the mainstream politics to restructure their party and increase its effectiveness in open politics, especially in the elections. In the process, even some of the smallest royalist parties, despite being excluded from the interim government, are finding themselves in broad alliance to strengthen the parliament, which is now functioning as a sovereign and supreme body to forge a legitimate political process and provide an impetus to the upcoming constituent assembly elections.<sup>19</sup>

There was no parliamentary election in Nepal since 1999. Such interval has reduced effectiveness of the election commission and disrupted the process of democratic consolidation. At present, the election commission with internal and international support has been playing an effective role across the country paving a way for free and fair elections. The commission has almost completed collection and compilation of renewed lists of voters, including citizenship

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<sup>18</sup>A prominent human rights watchdog called Informal Sector Service Centre has conducted an opinion poll in 56 districts and found that 87 per cent of the 17,000 people interrogated in 1022 places have demanded for a democratic republic, whereas 5 per cent has preferred a constitutional monarchy and 8 per cent has favoured a ceremonial monarch. Again, Ekantipur.com on December 2, 2006 has stated that 87 per cent of the public voice support for a democratic republican setup, while 13 per cent of people have said that a powerless king should be kept. See, Siddhi B. Ranjitkar, "President Gyanendra: A new post for the Nepalese King", *The Independent*, December 21, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Rashtriya Prajantantra Party (RPP) to launch nationwide campaign to change its policy, available at nepalnews.com, accessed on December 7, 2006.



distribution process. On the other hand, the international community and the development partners of Nepal have been assisting economically and technically to prepare a ground for constituent assembly elections.

The practice of centralisation of power is observed in both absolute monarchy and transitional democratic system in Nepal. This has flourished accumulation of power and discrimination in castes and races all over the country.<sup>20</sup> The present interim regime has firmly addressed the issue and declared to distribute power among the excluded groups and include more electoral constituencies based on population and geography. This initiative can be considered as the beginning of reducing discrimination against the marginalised groups to end the existing centralised and unitary state system and restructure it into an inclusive and progressive democratic system.

With an interim constitution, the wave of democratic movement now appears to effectively institutionalise democracy at all levels. Besides, approving new national anthem making no mention of King, establishing an interim cabinet, abolition of monarchy by the parliamentarians, and Maoist decision to rejoin the government have been considered as positive political developments. This has started to renew the political unity and opened the possibility to organise constituent assembly elections. But the problem is that no specific timeline has yet been given for the constituent assembly elections. Apart from this, integrating the people's liberation army with the national forces and changing the electoral system have been treated as the political challenges for the transition of democracy. This indicates that despite many political developments, still Nepal has to face numerous challenges to democratic governance.

#### **4. CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATISATION IN NEPAL: AN ASSESSMENT**

Democracy begins with excellent objectives in human governance with unquestionable intentions to do away with freedom from injustice and social exclusion. It is characterised as a system in which expectations are raised because people identify themselves

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<sup>20</sup> Sanjaya Serchan, *Democracy, Pluralism and Change: An Inquiry in the Nepalese Context*, Chyye Pahuppe, Kathmandu, 2001, p. 70.

with the polity.<sup>21</sup> Democracy by definition is a widely admired political system, but is perhaps the most difficult to earn and then maintain. Nepal, despite attaining many positive developments towards democracy, is facing several challenges on various fronts.

First, Nepal belongs to traditional and pluralistic society. For this, participation of different minority groups in governance and decision-making process becomes an important aspect. Few social groups exercise excessive domination in all-important spheres of national life. Many declarations have been made in the long political history of Nepal. But they are rarely implemented. This results in insufficient socio-political representation for the different regional groups of Nepal.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the question of regional rights becomes most crucial. Even after that, the political developments remain unclear about regional rights to self-determination and elimination of discrimination. Violence as well as instability is of prime concern in

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<sup>21</sup> Rajeev Ranjan Chaturvedy, "Democracy in Nepal: Issues and Challenges", available at: [www.sspconline.org/article\\_details.asp?artid=art112](http://www.sspconline.org/article_details.asp?artid=art112), accessed on: October 17, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> For example, the residents of Terai plains known as Madhesi in south-eastern Nepal are hardly represented in the national institutions of the state. Madhesi is the term by which Terai residents (excluding migrants from the hills) prefer to describe themselves, although it can also be used pejoratively. On the other hand, as with ethnic groups, the Maoists have tried several times to radicalise dalits who have certainly improved their ability to campaign for their interests and have forced the issue of their rights onto the political agenda. But their voice in the upper ranks of the political parties is still limited. The term dalits means literally the oppressed and is a new term for the (adopted from the Dalit movement in India) former 'untouchable' groups in Nepal. It signals their rejection of the hierarchically organised ritual pollution embedded in the caste system and focuses on what they see as the inherent lack of justice in Hindu society. See, Krishna Bhattachan, "Possible Ethnic Revolution or Insurgency in a Predatory Unitary Hindu State, Nepal", in Dhruva Kumar (ed.), *Domestic Conflict and Crisis of Governability in Nepal*, CNAS, Kathmandu, 2000, p. 159; See, On the Question of Representation: Yasso Kanti Bhattachan, "Consultation and Participation of Indigenous Peoples in Decision-making in Nepal", available at: [www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/egalite/itpp/activity/nepal/yasso.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/egalite/itpp/activity/nepal/yasso.pdf), accessed on: January 12, 2007.

the regions. Hence, it has become imperative that major reforms in the political institutions must be carried out in view of inclusion of marginalised ethnic groups proportionately in the political process. It is necessary to initiate radical reform in the state structures towards achieving a more equitable society and inclusive democracy. The state should address century old social problems like injustice, inequalities and discriminations based on class, caste, sex, ethnicity and geography.

Second, political parties are the backbone of multi-party democracy. In Nepal, the people have accused the leaders as well as political parties for constant violation of democratic norms and values. In this context, Maoist unceremonious departure on September 18, 2007 from the eight-party interim government demanding declaration of republic and elections through fully proportional representation is an example of that. Violation of democratic rules and abuses of power in the political parties are still fundamental political challenges which needs to be addressed to strengthen democratic practices in Nepal. The politicians need to take care of their own credibility and refrain from misunderstandings that caused earlier instability and hampered democracy. Similarly, the political parties must maintain the democratic principles to increase public trust.

Third, the question of electoral system has not yet been determined. The political alliances and the Maoists agreed earlier to hold elections with a mixed electoral system.<sup>23</sup> Currently, the Maoists have separated themselves from the agreement. It is thought that the mixed electoral system will not fulfil the expectations of the Maoists to have more seats in the constituent assembly. For this, they demanded that all of the CA's members have to be elected through proportional representation. On the contrary, the interim government

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<sup>23</sup> Mixed electoral system: 205 members will be elected on a first-past-the-post basis from the current parliamentary constituencies, 204 by proportional representation on the basis of parties' overall share of the vote and 16 distinguished individuals to be nominated as members by the interim cabinet, giving a total of 425 representatives. See, Comprehensive Peace Agreement, available at: <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/nepal/document/papers/peaceagreement.htm>, accessed on: November 25, 2006.

considers the demand as irreconcilable with the CPA and violation of the interim constitution and argues that changing of election system may take a long time and consequently render holding of the CA elections impossible.<sup>24</sup> Such issue results in split in the eight-party government, postponement of the CA elections and subsequently tensions for political stability and democracy in Nepal.<sup>25</sup> Without resolving the issue, endorsement of current electoral process will be difficult. In effect, the process of achieving multi-party democracy will be delayed. The government and the Maoists need to reach a consensus to create credible conditions for the CA elections. Similarly, the parliamentarians need to take necessary decisions consensually and announce immediately the date of CA elections.

Fourth, there is a possibility of split in the SPA if the CA elections become uncertain, which may witness immense political violence and create a chance of coup. King Gyanendra's unauthorised visit outside the palace to receive a highly symbolic blessing from the Kumari<sup>26</sup> is an example. The role of monarchy is another significant issue. The power and influence of monarchy over the Nepali people is undeniable. History demonstrates that democracy and the role of monarchy in Nepal have become contradictory and hostile to each other. As such the issue of

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<sup>24</sup> The peace agreement clearly declares that the fate of monarchy and the creation of republic will be determined by the first meeting of the CA through a simple majority vote. Similarly, the system of elections (mixed electoral) is resolved by the peace agreement. On the other hand, these two issues remain unchanged in the Article 159 (3) and Article 63 (3) respectively of the interim constitution. Even after two amendments to the interim constitution, the Maoists did not raise the issues. See, Ajai Sahni, "No Surprises Here", *South Asian Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6, No. 11, 24 September 2007.

<sup>25</sup> The elections were initially scheduled for June 2007. But the schedule was postponed after election officials sought more time for technical preparations and for the government to pass new election laws. On November 22, 2007 the date of elections was re-fixed. But unfortunately the new date was postponed because of Maoist departure from the government. See, Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, "Government-Maoist differences widen once again", *Probe*, November 30 – December 6, 2007, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> A young girl selected and worshipped as a living reincarnation of a powerful Hindu goddess.

monarchy must be addressed properly. This requires political unity and public awareness and enthusiastic support from the common people.

Fifth, a challenging aspect of democracy in Nepal is to decide the mode of devolution, demobilisation and decommissioning of Maoist cadre and reintegration of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) with the Nepalese Army (NA). The rebels want to be half of the new economised national force. The NA wants the Maoists entirely disarmed. As no agreement has been reached on how the NA will merge the PLA, the rebels may create instability again. On the other hand, demilitarisation of the Maoists is a worrying factor in the democratic consolidation. Starting of arms surrender and joining the interim arrangement to come into open and competitive multi-party politics is a significant development. But the challenging task is to get the Maoists to surrender their arms fully. The Maoists have to manage anger and frustration of its cadre and have to be kept controlled so that the CA elections take place in an atmosphere free of intimidation. Apart from this, democratisation of the NA is another important task to be tackled. The NA has to be dynamic to create a national consensus showing integrity and flexibility. In addition, it has to learn from the past weaknesses and avoiding blame and counter blame.

Sixth, there might be a role of international technical assistance and international rights organizations that would keep up pressure for accountability. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) does not mention any judicial or penal measures to enforce accountability.<sup>27</sup> The CPA states clearly that the Nepal police is the legitimate law-enforcing body and will be allowed to function without any hindrance. But the Maoists have not welcomed the re-establishment of the police posts. They have pressurised the police personnel throughout the country saying that they will not allow the re-establishment until the state local bodies have been formed. This indicates that they might try to negotiate each case individually with compensatory benefits and there could also be a challenge for maintaining the law and order situation.

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<sup>27</sup> See, "Nepal's Peace Agreement: Making It Work", *International Crisis Group Asian Report No. 126*, December 15, 2006, p. 31.

Seventh, one major criticism of the interim constitution is that it violates a principle of basic democracy, the separation of powers. Under the present system, the executive is in command of both the legislature and the judiciary. The Prime Minister plays a key role in the appointment of judges, and even swears in the chief justice of the Supreme Court. The suggestion that a three-or four-member council perform the functions of the head of state was ignored, and that role was also given to the Prime Minister. Additionally, the interim constitution does not have a provision for the removal of the Prime Minister by a house vote.<sup>28</sup> Some analysts claim that this move was engineered by the Maoists, who see themselves as the potential contenders for the prime ministerial position if the 85-year-old Girija Prasad Koirala decides to let go from the power. Indeed, Koirala himself has expressed concern in private and public over the supreme powers vested in his office by the interim constitution. Therefore, functioning of the interim constitution depends mainly on sufficient flexibility and willingness of leaders in polity.

Eighth, many of the key international donors in Nepal have invested heavily in ensuring the CA elections. Uncertainty in holding the elections may frustrate the donors and decrease credibility of the interim government. At the same time, extra budget for the elections may be lost. In effect, the overall economic situation of Nepal may be in a vulnerable position. Rising expectation of the people and the international community is also a serious challenge before the democratic advancement. The state has to implement a sustainable economic agenda that addresses widespread poverty and massive unemployment, severely skewed resource distribution patterns and centrally controlled planning and development. The civil society groups, political parties and media have a significant role to play in making certain sense of democratic values and behaviour amongst all the citizens.

Besides, Maoists' simultaneous practice of democratic system and the continuation of violence is an important challenge to democratic governance in Nepal. This results in general feeling of insecurity and anxiety for transition of democracy. Until the Maoists are loyal to the interim constitution and the historic peace agreement, and as long as their forces remain intact and state security sector unreformed, there is possibility for a rapid return to conflict.

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<sup>28</sup> Prashant Jha, *Himal Southasia*, February 2007, Vol. 22, No. 2, p. 53.

Elections will be uncertain if political understanding falls apart. This may spell a bleak future for democracy.

With the above stated challenges to democratic governance in Nepal, it would be too early to anticipate a well-functioning democracy. Democracy is a self-learning and self-correcting system that requires longer exercise as well as commitment and sincerity of people. The gradual outcomes of the 2006 April people's movement and the comprehensive peace agreement, against considerable odds, have brought about many political developments to form a new Nepal and strengthen the transition of democracy. However, the challenges to democratisation and the possible ways out to face them can be reviewed in the following table.

**Table: Political Developments, Challenges to Democratisation and Ways Out**

<b>Political Developments</b>	<b>Challenges to Democracy</b>	<b>Ways Out</b>
Political parties are treated as institutions of integration	Violation of democratic rules and abuses of power	Refrain from squabbles and maintain democratic principles.
Election commission is effective to organise elections	System of elections is yet to be determined.	Government and Maoists should reach an immediate consensus.
Parliament has started to function as sovereign and supreme body, and has declared Nepal a republic	Maoist departure from interim government	Ensuring Maoist rejoin as early as possible
Promulgation of interim constitution to institutionalise democracy	No separation of powers-legislative and judiciary- is made	Ensuring independence of judiciary and stimulating human rights commission.
Maoist Transformation into political mainstream	Participation in democratic system with continuation of violence	Be loyal to constitution, disarm Maoist, state security forces reformed
Declaration to reduce discrimination against marginalised groups	Several groups demand from different angles with frequent violence and divergent agendas.	Initiate radical reforms in political institutions and state structures. Pledges to be activated
General mass and Nepalese development partners want immediate legitimate practice of democracy	Delayed elections	Announce immediately date of elections.

*Source:* Compiled from various sources.

Political analysts point out that an interim arrangement is by definition meant to tackle an emergency situation. In such times, normal theories of political science may not necessarily fit in.<sup>29</sup> It is natural that as the CA elections is coming nearer, the competition for the political space at the ground political level will take on increasingly confrontational overtones. This may affect the unity between the topmost party echelons. The biggest challenge is to keep the already interrupted political process in track. In this context, the goal of restructuring the Nepali state is based on the CA elections. The alliances, debates, Maoist demands and issues around the polls will shape Nepal's democratic future.

Although there are some challenges to democratic governance in Nepal, political developments and ways out for facing the challenges presented in the table could be an indication of gradual functioning of democratic elements and reducing step by step traditional impediments of democratisation. The system of constituent assembly elections and PLA's integration are still the bone of contention among the political moderates of Nepal. Despite this, declaring Nepal as a republic and Maoist decision to rejoin the government to participate in the elections could be a step forward towards democratic transition.<sup>30</sup> However, recent political developments demonstrate that Nepal's democratic exercises have begun in rejuvenated manner. With international support, if the exercises continue smoothly, restoration of democracy is likely to be on the way.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In 1990, Nepal established multi-party democracy along with constitutional monarchy. Sixteen years later, Nepal once again revived democracy in 2006 through decreasing the power and role of monarchy. The earlier developments for democracy witnessed the breakdown of democratic institutions, excessive competition of power, wrong political orientation, lack of nationalism and crisis of

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Nepali political parties sign agreement paving way for election, available at:

[http://en.ce.cn/World/Asia-Pacific/200712/24/t20071224\\_14019350.shtml](http://en.ce.cn/World/Asia-Pacific/200712/24/t20071224_14019350.shtml), accessed on: December 24, 2007.



confidence.<sup>31</sup> On the contrary, the recent developments have revived smooth functioning of the political parties, parliament and the election commission; introduced an interim constitution addressed to develop the security and rule of law; started to decentralise the power structure; and ensured popular legitimacy, international involvement, united approach and awareness. These political developments indicate that Nepal is moving in the right direction. But still there are a number of challenges to democratic governance, such as finalising the system of constituent assembly elections, integration of the PLA with the NA, facing inconsistent ethnic demands, announcing the date of elections, etc.

Restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990 rarely witnessed stable political developments in Nepal. As recent political process is not yet fully consolidated, it is too early to make definitive predictions about democracy. It can only be reiterated that the political forces working within the current democratic framework cannot easily move away from it, because of very limited options available to them. This is likely to be an encouraging factor for the ongoing exercises. With recent changing trends, it would not be wrong to say that Nepal's political future would be optimistic in terms of a transition to democracy. The needs of the moment are: strengthening the capacity of the election commission; establishing the rule of law; stabilisation of the government authority over the bureaucracy; continuation of political consensus on interim constitution and an end to the culture of impunity; wisdom from leaders, commitments from political parties and tolerance from all strata of the society.

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<sup>31</sup> Lok Raj Baral, *Nepal: Problems of Governance*, Konark Publishers Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1993, p. 8.

*Narottam Gaan*

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND THREATS TO HUMAN SECURITY**

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### **Abstract**

Climate change, which has been on the fringe of human concern in the name of development based on fossil fuels and limitless consumption and inordinate life style, has been catapulted to the center stage of security concern being christened as human security. Climate change could exacerbate existing environmental crises such as drought, water scarcity and soil degradation, intensify land-use conflicts and trigger further environmentally-induced migration. Rising global temperatures will jeopardize the bases of many people's livelihoods, especially in the developing regions, increase vulnerability to poverty and social deprivation, and thus put human security at risk. Climate change, particularly in weak and fragile states with poorly performing institutions and systems of government, is also likely to overwhelm local capacities to adapt to changing environmental conditions and will reinforce the trend toward general instability, thus raising the need to put primacy on human security.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The debate over the direct connection between climate change and security harks back to the day security threats were outsourced to non-military and non-traditional elements. There are sceptics who maintain that climate factors will only marginally influence tomorrow's security environment, if at all. They point to significant natural fluctuations in climate patterns and short term cyclical phenomena like El Nino and the recently identified Pacific Decadal

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Oscillation, the causes of which are not fully understood and deciphered. In their opinion, even if global warming does take place, many of its effects may be localized, benign or favourable. While reductions in rainfall may lead to desertification or water shortages in some regions, others will derive dividends from increased rainfall and higher crop yields. Even where the fabric of the state is torn by environmentally induced conflicts, in all likelihood they will be localized and have negligible effects on existing world order. Sepulchral visions of starving millions from the South on their heels to edge their ways into the North in search of food are far fetched.

On the other hand, mainstream climate scientists and some international security specialists contend that the magnitude of expected climate change will be substantial and certainly beyond the societal and eco-system experience, exposing genuine and multiple risks to global security. The traditional concept of security presupposes that threats arising from outside the state are more dangerous to the state than those that arise within it. Non- military threats within states- such as poverty, social vulnerability, ecological devastations- are generally not perceived as concrete and tangible. Yet one could argue with equal plausibility that the wrong end of a smokestack can be as much of a security threat to humans as the barrel of a gun.

The late 1970s witnessed a spurt of intellectual fermentation resulting in a myriad of calls to redefine security in non- military terms that include rising poverty, rapid population growth, spread of infectious diseases, and environmental degradation. The realist understanding and definition of security was state centric connected with state secrecy, nuclear and military power. The realist framework of national security, as a function of the successful pursuit of interstate power competition through military means, continued right through the Cold War. According to Dalby, "Cold War versions of security have usually been understood in spatial terms as moves of exclusion and protection is a spatial exercise in distancing and boundary making".<sup>1</sup> This means in geopolitical parlance, the spatial limitation of Soviet political control. During the last half century, security has been primarily a matter of concern for states and their

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<sup>1</sup> S.Dalby, "American Security Discourse: The Persistence of Geopolitics," *Political Geography Quarterly*, 9, 1990, pp.171-88.

military alliances. The legitimacy of the governments is generally understood in terms of provision of internal security for the inhabitants residing within its territorial jurisdiction. Where stability of the regime has been held synonymous with national security, serious inroads into the realm of human rights and internal repression have been rationalized in the name of national security. Where political instability has been identified as threat, national security is understood as containing and limiting political change and legitimizing the status quo. Intensification of the Cold War climaxed in the proliferation of nuclear weapons and in the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative and Star wars merely exposed the paradox of security where the enhancement of nuclear power does not mean the enhancement of security to the people. The problems plaguing the entire humanity in terms of grinding poverty, burgeoning population growth, spread of diseases, scarcity of resources and environmental degradation could not be comprehended within the realist framework based on state centric military capability. Thus, the dominant realist paradigm to understand the current realities seems to be inadequate. It has "become an anachronism that has lost much of its explanatory and prescriptive power."<sup>2</sup>

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY: THE FIRST DIMENSION**

The state-centric and military perspective of security has lost both practical relevance and intellectual credibility in the context of a number of historic forces and events in the contemporary age. These include the end of cold war, global integration of national economies, erosion of national identities and cultures, the shift in priority from military rivalry to economic competition, and the diminishing role of state as the dominant actor in international politics. On the other hand, there have emerged diverse new issues-ranging from poverty to refugees crises, information privacy to cyber- terrorism, environmental problems to natural disasters – which requires non-state and non-military policies and strategies. These newly emerging security concerns have been characterized as non-traditional, and are now considered a major component of what

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<sup>2</sup> O.R.Holsti, "International Systems, Systems Change and Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History*, 15, 1991, p.94.

is christened as comprehensive security. Among these emergent problems replacing the threat of East-West ideological divide, military aggression and struggle for global preponderance is the global environmental crisis. It looms large in terms of global warming, sea level rise, acid rain, greenhouse effect, diminishing capacity of the agricultural system, depletion of earth's finite resources, punching holes in the ozone layer, and biodiversity loss. Simply put, the global agenda has expanded since the demise of Cold War, as has the need for urgent attention to these problems for solution. It is thus seen that "welfare not warfare, will shape the rules and global threats like ozone holes and pollution will dictate the agenda."<sup>3</sup> It is within this context that the environmental question has gained worldwide significance as a security issue. In fact, environmental security stands out as perhaps the most widely debated issue, especially due to its all-pervasive nature, cross national scope and inter- generational implications.<sup>4</sup>

While many of the past, present and future causes of conflict and war may seem to have little or no direct connection with the environment or resources, a strong argument can be made for linking certain resources and environmental problems with the prospects for political frictions and tensions, or even war and peace. At the centre of the ongoing debate is the assertion that resource scarcity and certain forms of environmental degradation are important factors contributing to political instability or violent conflict at the local, regional and interstate levels. There is a growing perception that local, regional and global environmental deficiencies or resource scarcities will increasingly produce conditions that may lead to conflict.<sup>5</sup>

This conceptual shift towards environmental security in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union and diminution of security threats associated with the Cold War, pitch forked into the

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<sup>3</sup> J. Joffe, "Entangled for ever", in C.W. Kegley Jr. and E.R. Wittkoff, eds., *The Future of American Foreign Policy* (N w York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), P.35.

<sup>4</sup> M. Shamsul Haque, "Non-Traditional Security and the Environment in North east Asia", *Work in Progress* Vol.16, No.3, Summer 2002, P.24.

<sup>5</sup> Peter H.Gleick, *World's Water: The Biennial Report on Fresh Water Resources* (Washington D.C.: California: Island Press, 1998), pp.105-106.

mainstream security debates urging the policymakers to cast about for a new security focus. Despite contentious debates within the field of environmental security, a wide variety of recent comments by senior diplomats and policy makers are symptomatic of the recognition that issues related to environmental security have ascended to the highest levels.

In 1987, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, stated:

[The World] is not secure in the direct meaning of the word when currents of poison flow along river channels, when poison rains pour down from the sky, when an atmosphere polluted with industrial and transport waste chokes cities and whole regions, when the development of atomic engineering is justified by unacceptable risks...The relationship between man and the environment has become menacing. Problems of ecological security affect all the rich and the poor.<sup>6</sup>

In November 1989, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom gave a speech to the United Nations General Assembly saying: While the conventional political dangers – the threat of global annihilation, the fact of regional war- appear to be receding, we have all recently become aware of another insidious danger. It is as menacing in its way as these more accustomed perils with which international diplomacy has concerned itself for centuries. It is the prospect of irretrievable damage to the atmosphere, to the oceans, to earth itself.<sup>7</sup>

In April 1997, the United States Secretary of State Ms Albright said:

Not so long ago, many believed that the pursuit of clean air, clean water, and healthy forests was a worthy goal, but not

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<sup>6</sup> M.Gorbachev, "Reality and guarantees for a secure world", *Moscow News*, No.39, 1987, p.3287.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Peter H.Gleick, *World's Water*, *op.cit.*, p.106.

part of our national security. Today environmental issues are part of the mainstream of American foreign Policy.<sup>8</sup>

It was in this backdrop of future non-military threats that a number of studies and research institutions undertook works to determine if and how environmental factors were related to the intra and inter state conflicts or violence that appeared to be surfacing around the globe.<sup>9</sup> These studies varied in their approach, their terminology, and their specific findings and consistent in their explanations suggested that environmental stress, operating through a set of intervening variables, could contribute to violent conflicts, and thus constituted a threat to national and international security. Furthering this argument that the mounting environmental problems and the associated issues need an attention with which the conventional outlook of national security appears to be incongruent, Jeremy Rifkin points out: “The environmental threats facing the planet are not simply the result of scientific miscalculation. Nor are they merely the consequences of ill-conceived management decisions. Ironically it is the notion of security upon which our entire modern worldview is based that has led us to the verge of ecocide... In less than a century the practice of geopolitics thus pushed the world to the brink of both nuclear Armageddon and environmental catastrophe forcing us to reconsider the basic assumption of security that animates the modern world view”.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, Lodgaard feels that “the concept of environmental security challenges established frames of mind and political conflicts. It conveys a message that environmental problems have a legitimate claim for status as military problems have.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Environmental Diplomacy: The Environment and U.S. Foreign Policy”, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.: 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Ted Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1993)

<sup>10</sup> J.Rifkin, *Biospheric Politics: A New Consciousness for a New Century* (New York: Crown, 1991), p.2.

<sup>11</sup> Sverre Lodgaard, “Environmental Conflict Resolution,” paper presented at the UNEP meeting on Environmental Conflict Resolution, Nairobi, 30 March 1990, p.18.

Another proponent of environmental security in the same vein opines:

...national security is not just about fighting forces and weaponry. It relates to watersheds, croplands, forests, genetic resources, climatic and other factors that rarely figure in the minds of military experts and political leaders, but increasingly deserve in their collectivity to rank along side military approaches as crucial to a nation's security.<sup>12</sup>

The growing significance of environmental security is quite evident in major international forums. Some well known examples include the UN Conference on Human Environment (1972), Ottawa Conference on Conservation and Development (1986), United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), World Summit for social Development (1995) and UN symposium on the Global Environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (1997). These conferences and symposia eventually resulted in various international conventions and protocols for environmental protection or security, such as the Vienna Convention for the protection of the Ozone Layer, the convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework convention on climate change, the convention to combat desertification, and the Kyoto protocol.<sup>13</sup> Harking back to as far as 1987, for example, The World Commission on Environmental Development (Brundtland Report), entitled 'Our common Future', stresses the factor of environmental degradation causing the violent relationship between states:

"Environmental stress is both a cause and effect of political tension and military conflict...nations have fought to assist or resist control over raw materials, energy supplies, land, river basin, sea passages and other key environmental resources. According to the

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<sup>12</sup> Norman Myers, "The Environmental Dimension to Security Issues", *The Environmentalist* Vol.6, Winter 1986, p.251.

<sup>13</sup> See M.Shamsul Haque, "The Fate of Sustainable Development Under the Neoliberal Regimes in Developing Countries", *International Political Science Review* 20/2 (1999), pp.199-222.



report, such conflicts are likely to increase as these resources became scarcer and competition for them will increase.”<sup>14</sup>

Environmental security as a concept encompassing non-military aspects was officially mentioned for the first time in the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development convened by the UN General Assembly in New York from 24 August to 11 September 1987. The final document adopted by consensus states:

Recently non-military threats to security have moved to the forefront of global concern. Underdevelopment and declining prospects for development as well as mismanagement and waste of resources, constitute challenges to security. The degradation of the environment presents a threat to sustainable development.... Mass poverty, illiteracy, diseases, squalor and malnutrition affecting a large proportion of world's population often become the cause of social strain, tension and strife.<sup>15</sup>

Two distinct features of environmental security are: First, the environmental causes of conflict, i.e. environmental factors behind potentially violent conflicts; Second, the impact of environmental degradation on overall political economy, health and life of the people. If environmental degradation or deficiencies create the conditions that render conflicts, act as multipliers that aggravate core causes of conflict<sup>16</sup> or act as a catalyst factor in creating conflicts, then environmental degradation or scarcity of resources becomes a national security issue.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> World Commission on Environment and development, *Our Common Future* (Brundtland Report (New York / London: Oxford University Press, 1987)) p.290.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Dietrich Fisher, *Nonmilitary Aspects of Security: A System's Approach*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament and Research (UNIDIR), (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company Ltd, 1993), p.10.

<sup>16</sup> Norman Myers, "The Environmental Dimension to Security Issues," *The Environmentalist* Vol.6, Winter 1986, p.253.

<sup>17</sup> Gareth Porter, "Environmental Security as National Security Issue", *Current History*, May 1995, p.218.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT: THE SECOND DIMENSION**

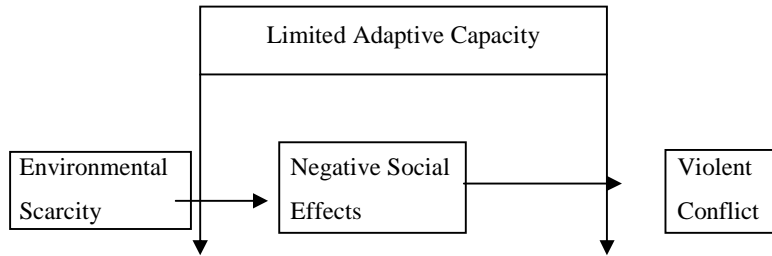
In spite of these criticisms, the most influential arguments in the field have concluded that environmental stress is linked to conflict indirectly, but significantly. While the precise character of the linkage varies from case to case, it is made possible environmental stress is supposed to overwhelm the adaptive capacity of some societies while simultaneously introducing and reinforcing forms of conflict and instability. While division and debate characterize the field of environmental security, there is a strong degree of theoretical consensus among researchers. The most prominent and dominant thread that runs through the entire environmental security literature is that the environmental stress simultaneously reduces adaptive capacity and engenders conflict.

The dominant paradigm in the environmental security literature harks back to writers like Thomas Malthus, but it has obtained its contemporarily influential formulation in the work of Thomas Homer Dixon and Toronto Group. From a myriad of empirical case studies conducted by them on Haiti, Chiapas, Gaza, Pakistan and Bangladesh – India, they concluded that environmental scarcity of renewable resources viz., water, forest, fisheries and cropland give rise to a number of deleterious social effects including economic decline, social segmentation and human migration – these social effects in interaction with other political, economic and social factors, can generate conflict and instability. Central to their model was the notion of supply of ingenuity gap or a disparity between the solutions required to cope with environmental scarcity and the human, social and institutional capital that could be mustered to provide these solutions. This ingenuity gap essentially undermines human adaptive responses. That means, according to their studies, resource scarcity and limited or inadequate adaptive capacity coalesce together to generate violent conflicts in various regions.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas F.Homer Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999); Thomas F.Homer Dixon and Jessica Blitt, *Evidences: Links Among Environment, Population, and Security* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998); Thomas F.Homer

### Dominant Paradigm



A theoretical representation is made in this figure<sup>19</sup> to understand the linkage between environmental stress and conflict. On theoretical ground it is criticized that even if resource scarcity plays a causal role in conflict, there are other more convincing explanations for conflict. Further, the prospects for adaptation, cooperation or resolution are not as completely bleak as is often presented. At the very prospects of an unlikely nuclear war, the fear of destructibility by the use of nuclear weapons has not any way diminished the universality of nuclear weapon as a main national security issue. It is that fear of destruction, which may have brought many nuclear powers to negotiating table for cooperation or disarmament. The resultant cooperation should not be cited to underrate the holistic perception of nuclear weapons as being a national security concern. Similarly, environmental scarcity of resources with its disastrous social effects may not be everywhere a direct cause of violent conflict, sometimes in combination with other factors, causes conflict. For example, sea level rise a consequence of global warming due to North's mindless pursuit of industrialization based on fossil fuel technology will affect low-lying areas such as

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Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases", *International Security*, Vol.19, 1994, pp.5-40.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas F. Homer Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*, P.7 and Daniel Esty et. al., "The State Failure Task Force Report: Phase II Findings", *Environmental Change and Security Project Report 5*, 1999, p.63; S.C. Lonergan, ed., *Environmental Change, Adaptation and Security*, (Boston: Kluwer, 1999); David Dessler, "Review of Environmental Scarcity and Violence", *Environmental Change and Security Project Report 5* (1999),pp.100-101.

Bangladesh below the sea level turning millions of them as refugees fleeing to Indian territories that is likely to exacerbate the already infested ethnic conflict in North-Eastern states. That it would not affect other countries does not in any way diminish the environmental causes of conflict not less than the universality of nuclear weapons as a security concern. The consequences of environmental scarcity of resources on political, economic and social life of a state or states may prompt states or nations to cooperate to avoid the negative effects of war on environment.

So the environmental co-operation syndrome as argued by some should not be overrated to diminish the role of environmental scarcity of resources causing conflict or violence. No nuclear war has ever been fought in this world after America's dropping of hydrogen bombs on Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the course of Second World War. This would be as preposterous to say that nuclear weapon lack the potential or prospects for conflict as to say that the environmental scarcity of resources lacks the potential for conflict as it has not resulted in conflict in some areas or has resulted in cooperation. Adoption means the involvement of all state apparatus, institutions, scientific community, even the social system and value structure including the affected to take steps that would obviate the negative effects of environmental scarcity. The poor developing countries may not have the economic and scientific wherewithal as argued by Dixon to cope with the situation. Even the developed countries will not find it a smooth sailing while responding to the environmental crisis. For example, in regard to stabilization of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere American steps to renege on its commitment agreed to at Kyoto were a capitulation to the petroleum, coal industrial lobby. What has threatened the world is the Western inordinate life style and pattern of development causing global warming, sea level rise and ozone layer depletion. To ensure environmental security what it requires is to make an overhaul of its pattern of life and development, which is not possible with strong protestations from high-class people. So Bush, American President caving in to the pressure of the industrial class justified his rejection of Kyoto protocol on the ground that countenancing the Kyoto

commitment would hamper its economy and life style of its people.<sup>20</sup> Environmental security means overhauling the entire economic development pattern and existing social values related to liberal capitalism that is not possible without politico-socio-economic disruption. So the potential for conflict lies as much in the environmental scarcity of resources as in the very remedies and adaptive measures – a part of fulfillment of environmental security.

In spite of the criticisms above, the main thrust of the studies showing the linkage between environment and conflict, remains paramount: the environmental scarcity operates through a set of intervening variables, contexts or ideational factors that directly cause conflict, and that environmental social effects and stress, as such outstrips attempts to cope with the crisis.

Another study undertaken by Swiss Peace Institute's Environment and Conflicts Project (ENCOP) was in the direction of what the Toronto group suggests. Gunther Bachler belonging to this group in his study used the term transformation by which he meant "the introduction of a heuristic concept in recording those interactions between the three levels – nature, human beings and the economy in a regional context-which have led to conflicts between human communities and will ...increasingly lead to such conflicts."<sup>21</sup>

Degradation is used in this context as an indicator of the degree of environmental transformation. In the words of Kates et al, "the biosphere has accumulated or is on its way to accumulating such a magnitude and variety of changes that it may be said to be transformed."<sup>22</sup> In other words, "transformation conflicts are caused

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<sup>20</sup> David L. Levy and Daniel Egan, "Capital Contests: National and Transnational Channels of Corporate Influence on the Climate Change Negotiations", *Politics and Society*, Vol.26, no.3, September 1998, pp.337-361. See also N.Gaan,"Politics of Governance of Global Climate Change: Not on Equity but on North's Interests", *India Quarterly* Vol. LVIII, no.4, October-December 2001,pp.89-112.

<sup>21</sup> Gunther Bachler, Conflict and Cooperation in the Light of Global Human- Ecological Transformation, ENCOP, *Occasional Paper* 9, October 1993,p.5.

<sup>22</sup> Robert W.kates and B.L. Turner II and William Clark, "The Great Transformation", In B.L. Turner II, and William C.Clark, Robert W.Kates,

by fundamental anthropogenic changes in the environmental media and by the interactions between the processes of change and their consequences in the eco-regional context.”<sup>23</sup>

Another authority Stephan Libiszewski belonging to ENCOP, making a distinction between traditional resource wars and environmental causes of conflict is of the view that an environmental conflict is a conflict caused by the environmental scarcity of a resource that means: caused by a human made disturbance of its normal regeneration rate. Environmental scarcity can result from the overuse of a renewable resource or from the overstrain of the ecosystem’s sink capacity, that is pollution. Both can reach the stage of destruction of space of living. Conflicts caused by physical, geopolitical or socio-economic resource scarcity are not environmental conflicts but traditional conflicts of resource distribution.<sup>24</sup>

As found in the Toronto Group’s research the ENCOP also walks on the same furrow that scarcity gives rise to conflict. Also it is alleged to be silent about human adaptation to resource scarcity. In these studies, it is mal- development, a condition similar to Homer Dixon’s ingenuity gap that undermines human responses and enhances conflicts.<sup>25</sup> Though the ENCOP model is more complex than the Toronto group’s general model, but the theoretical argument presented by both is very similar.<sup>26</sup>

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John F.Richards, Jessica T.Matthews, William B.Mayer, eds., *The Earth as Transformed by Human Action: Global and Regional Changes in the Biosphere over the Past 300 years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press with Clark University, 1990),p.1.

<sup>23</sup> Gunther Bachler, *Conflict and Cooperation, Ibid.* p.16.

<sup>24</sup> Stephan Libiszewski, What is an Environmental Conflict? ENCOP, *Occasional Paper no. I*, July 1992,p.6.

<sup>25</sup> Richard A. Matthew, Ted Gaulin, and Bryan McDonald, “The Elusive Quest: Linking Environmental Change and Conflict” submitted to Canadian Journal of Political Science, Revised Manuscript submitted; Dec 21, 2001, File Number: 01-12, p.7.

<sup>26</sup> See for details, Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts (ed.,) *Violent Environments* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp.15-24.

In a 1999 NATO pilot study this dominant environmental conflict paradigm was found in the line with the other studies.<sup>27</sup> According to this study, “[it] is not environmental stress in isolation that characterizes the nature of the conflict between groups but other factors”.<sup>28</sup> Here too political, economic and social factors intervene between environmental stress and conflict.

The State Failure Task Force (SFTF), another research group marking the same dominant paradigm as with the preceding studies, reiterates the causal weight of environmental stress through intervening variables.<sup>29</sup> While the researches did find that massive environmental damage in a short time frame could directly cause political collapse, the far more common scenario was that environmental stress operates through the intervening variable of quality of life to generate conflict.

Though highly critical of Toronto group, recent work by Gleditsch and de Soysa appears to have been co-opted by the dominant paradigm. According to their studies, resource scarcity, one component of a multifaceted development problem that they call “poverty” reduces agricultural production that in turn leads to conflict. That is, scarcity leads to a negative social outcome that becomes the proximate cause of conflict.<sup>30</sup> Beyond this however, the Gleditsch and de Soyasa model is similar to the Toronto Group in that there is little room for human adaptation to conditions of scarcity. Indeed, their key independent variable, poverty, is defined by a lack of social and human capital. “Like Homer Dixon’s ingenuity gap, Gleditsch and de Soyasa’s explanatory variable appears to lock in negative social outcomes, leaving little room for human adaptation.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Committee on the challenges of Modern Society, NATO, “Environment and Security in an International Context”, *NATO Report 232*, 1999.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p.22.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Esty et.al., “The State Failure Task Force Report: Phase II Findings”, *Environmental Change and Security Project Report 5*, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Ted Gaulin, “To Cultivate a New Model: Where do Soyasa and Gleditsch Fall Short”, *Environmental Change and Security Project Report 6*, 2000, pp. 104-107.

<sup>31</sup> Richard A. Matthew, et al., “*The Elusive Quest*”, op.cit, p.9.

There is some variation in these models and term presented by these research groups. But in each case the general theory linking resource scarcity and conflict is the same. Homer Dixon focuses on an “ingenuity gap”, ENCOP on “mal-development” and Gleditsch and de Soysa on “poverty”. Nevertheless, all these phrases describe a similar process- a limited capacity to respond to scarcity.

The model which is critical of all the above models adopted by Richard A Matthew et al finds flaws in current theory in environmental security on two counts. “First, it focuses on too short a time frame. Second, and relatively, it underestimates human adaptive capacity.”<sup>32</sup> They were averse to accepting the two extremes, Homer Dixon’s lack of adaptive capacity in the poor countries, and Julian Simon and Herman Kahn’s faith in the infinite capacity of individuals to adapt. To them, human adaptive capacity lies somewhere between these two extremes. Julian Simon writes, “there is no physical or economic reason why human resourcefulness and enterprise cannot forever continue to respond to impending shortages and existing problems with new expedients that, after an adjustment period, leave us better off than before the problem arose.”<sup>33</sup>

Homer Dixon responds to this saying, “while I acknowledge the extraordinary potential of human resourcefulness and enterprise, I nonetheless argue that some societies – especially poor societies – will not be able to supply the unprecedented amounts of ingenuity they will need to solve their emerging scarcity problems.”<sup>34</sup> This clearly demonstrates, Homer Dixon never maintains that all societies will not be able to cope with the situation. It is some poor societies because of various factors will be in dearth of required supply of ingenuity to adapt to the situation. This brings Homer Dixon closer to the position taken by Richard A. Matthew and his associates. If adaptation is a dynamic and continuous process, then there may be adoption failure in some and adoption success in others visited with trauma, travails and hardships. When such individual trauma, travails

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.25.

<sup>33</sup> Julian Simon, *The Ultimate Resources* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), p.345; and Julian Simon, *The Ultimate Resource 2* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996)

<sup>34</sup> Thomas F. Homer Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, p.114.



and ordeals while adapting to the environmental stress becomes a collective or group phenomena in a particular political context or in the face of growing incapability of state, the potential for violent conflict exists. Taking a departure from this, Matthew group holds that from a longer time perspective even if the adaptive failures through feedback will result in adaptive success, thus avoiding the prospects for environmental conflicts. Contrary to what Neo-Malthusians such as Paul Ehrlich, Robert Kaplan, and Thomas Homer Dixon contend, “adaptive mechanisms do not simply stall or become overwhelmed while levels of environmental stress continue to escalate.”<sup>35</sup> To quote Richard A Mathew further: “This is not to say that all forms of adaptation are socially desirable. Adaptation can mean people of the developing world going further and further into the hinterland to gather fuel, wood and water; parents sending their children to work in factories because of crop failure; and simple belt-tightening people eating less,”<sup>36</sup> or as happened in Kalahandi district of Orissa(India) people eating the dried up Kernel of ripen mangoes died while adapting to food scarcity, or people in these tribal areas of Orissa are forced to sell their children as bonded labourers as a mark of adaptation to the environmental scarcity of crop land and food. These latter examples are certainly unsettling and portent of potential for violent behaviour in an organized form depending on the nature of political system prevailing.

If, to use the language of Matthew, these starvation, death, or going without food, or half fed situations are the genuine form of adoption, then conflict arising out of these situations created by environmental scarcity in the form of collective or group behaviour or response can be a genuine version of adoption with a view to develop new legitimate and representative political authority and institution and new value structure that would reinvent the political-economic thinking which so far has contributed to environmental scarcity. As Walzer argues, conflict is a normal and important aspect of social development.<sup>37</sup> Then the portrayal of environmental crisis

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<sup>35</sup> Richard A. Mathew, et.al., *The Elusive Quest*, p.21.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p.16.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality* (Oxford: M.

as an environmental conflict paradigm from a broader perspective does not lose its significance or acceptability, as a theoretical framework as argued by Richard Matthew and his group. The conclusion that this group arrived at is not to deny the linkage between environmental scarcity and conflict but stresses on “longer term studies “that might provide deeper understanding of the ways in which concerns about environmental stress and degradation are relevant not only to the those concerned with international security, but also those worried about human rights, social justice and sustainable development.<sup>38</sup>

On the one side the economic deprivation, decreased agricultural production, health hazards, poverty, starvation or half fed or even death situation due to pollution and water scarcity- part of the adoptive success as propounded by Matthew – may cause indirect conflict in association with other factors as nuanced by Volker Boge<sup>39</sup> or Homer Dixon<sup>40</sup>. The other side is the situation of direct conflict or violence arising out of the environmental scarcity of resources - a case of adoptive failure. Hence the conflict emanates directly from the overuse and or pollution/destruction of a renewable natural resource. For example, if a downstream riparian threatens to go to war against an upstream riparian, because the latter pollutes river water so gravely that it cannot be used by the inhabitants of the downstream riparian, who are highly dependent on this water, then the environmental character of conflict is evident.<sup>41</sup> An array of evidences can be cited to show such threats of conflict over environmental scarcity of water all over the globe.<sup>42</sup> That in some

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Robertson, 1993); Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: A Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dami Press, 1994); and Michael Walzer, “*The politics of Rescuse*”, *Social Research* 62, 1995,pp.53-67.

<sup>38</sup> Richard A. Matthew, et.al, “*Elusive Quest*”, p.24.

<sup>39</sup> Volker Boge, “Proposal for an Analytical framework to grasp environmental conflict”, ENCOP, *Occasional Paper no. 1*, July 1992, Swiss Peace Foundation. P.5.

<sup>40</sup> Homer Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, op.cit.

<sup>41</sup> Volker Boge, *op.cit.*

<sup>42</sup> Peter H.Gleick, *World's Water: The Biennial Report on Fresh Water Resources* (Washington D.C.: Covels, California, Island Press, 1998); Haleh Hatami and Peter H.Gleick, “Chronology of Conflict over Water in the

cases it has led to cooperation to avoid war does not divest the environmental conflict of its theoretical appeal. Another example of direct violent conflict over environmental scarcity of resources like fish can be cited. The decline in fish catch due to environmental degradation all over the globe and in South Asian regions in particular could result in a series of violent conflict between Tamil Nadu fishermen of India, and Sri Lanka over fishing in waters of Kachchativu Island ceded by India to Sri Lanka as a gesture of friendship and good will in 1974.<sup>43</sup>

The two aspects of environmental scarcity induced situation in terms of adaptive failure and adaptive success can dovetail together into what is called environmental security in a broader sense. What is called as adaptive success at micro level along with adaptive failure in terms of poverty, food scarcity, health hazards or suffering due to environmental degradation at macro level, for example the impact of global warming due to western pattern of development based on fossil fuel industrialization and inordinate life style, poses challenges to redefine development and the vision of and approaches to life.

### **HUMAN SECURITY: THE THIRD DIMENSION**

The study on environment and security has evolved over the years: from an early primacy on incorporating environmental and its concomitant upshots into the “definition of security” to putting a new premium on how environmental degradation can be a cause or magnifier of violent conflict both intrastate and interstate. An emerging trend within this evolution of non military security threats

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Legends, Myths and History of the Ancient Middle East”, *Report of the Pacific Institutes of the Studies in Development, Environment, and Security*,” Oakland, California, October 1992; Helga Haftendorn, “Water and International Conflict”, *Third World Quarterly* vol.21, no.1, 2000, pp.51-68; Marq De Villiers, *Water Wars*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999) ; World in Transition: Ways towards Sustainable Management of Fresh Water Resources, *German Advisory Council on Global Change, Annual Report 1997* (Heidelberg: Springer – Verlag Berlin, 1999)

<sup>43</sup> N Gaan, Environmental Scarcity of Fish and Conflict: The Case of India and Sri Lanka over Kachchativu Waters”, *International Studies Notes* Vol-22, No.3, Fall 1997, pp.17-23.

has been a move toward greater emphasis on the concept of human security. Human security is not in opposition to the earlier trends of redefining security or accounting for the environmental roots of violent conflict. It is an offshoot of these two trends. In a broader sense, human security concerned with security of the people in non-military terms is nothing but an extension of environmental security. The very verbiage used to define the term security in these non-traditional and broader senses is today found not dissimilar to that used to understand and define human security.

Those analysts who have focused on explicating the environmental causes of violent conflict have also brought the debate closer to “the concept of human security [ which] offers a third perspective that allows us to move beyond conventional security thinking, appreciates both the local and global dimensions of the many insecurities experienced by real individuals and groups, and identifies useful ways of linking security and development policies.”<sup>44</sup>

While the concept of “human security” has earlier roots, its recent prominence emanates from the 1994 Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994). Its importance was further advanced by the report of the Commission on Global Governance (CGG, 1995). Both reports tried to shift the direction of the security discussion by focusing on issues of human life and human dignity rather than on weapons and territory.

Lorraine Elliott points out two dimensions of the human security paradigm: The first is that the concept of “human security” provides an antidote to the more conventional focus on states, borders and territorial integrity. The answer to the question “security for whom” is not the state but the individual and communities, which suggests that even when a state is secure from external threats or internal instabilities, security for its people is not guaranteed. Protecting individuals and communities from the consequences of environmental decline is therefore a security issue. The second

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<sup>44</sup> Geoffrey D. Dabelko, Mark Halle, Steve Lonergan and Richard Matthew, *State of the art review on environment, security and development co-operation*. Prepared for the Working Party on Development, Co-operation and Environment, OECD Development Assistance Committee, Paris. P.48.

dimension is that human insecurity (which includes equity, gender, human rights, and identity concerns) is a central factor in social tensions and political instabilities and conflicts that can... become a feature of state insecurity.... If peoples and communities are insecure economically, socially, politically, environmentally, state security can be fragile or uncertain. Environmental security becomes a distributive equity problem rather than one simply of market failure, externalities or zero sum calculations about access to resources and environmental services.<sup>45</sup>

The primacy of state security is strongly embedded in the notion of sovereignty. In its historic meaning, sovereignty implied the security of the sovereign, or “the Prince”. The emergence of democratic polity and the transfer of power to the “Citizen” question interestingly the very concept of security rooted in the sovereignty. With sovereignty now ensconcing in the citizenry rather than in the Prince, the notion of security must also be broadened to include the security of the people not the apparatus of the prince. Such a conceptual shift in understanding security does not mince in any way the importance of state security, but it does explicate the need to broaden the term. It is no longer sufficient to hold security of state as synonymous with security of people. Security in conventional parlance understood as synonymous with territorial exclusivity or Prince fails to give security to the individuals and communities. The inadequacy of state security and its brittle impregnability are no where felt so grotesquely than in the case of global climate change. Even the most powerful state well equipped with all modern and sophisticated weapons will come to its knees in the face of climate change affecting millions of people in both the developed and developing worlds. Environmental security and human security meet the same confluence where the need for sustainable development, and new environmental ethics emerging to redefine western pattern of development and its inordinate life style, meet together.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN SECURITY**

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<sup>45</sup> Lorraine Elliott, “Regional environmental security: Pursuing a non-traditional approach” In Andrew T.H. Tan and J.D. Kenneth Boutin (Eds), *Non-Traditional security issues in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Select Publishing, 2001),p.449.

The question as to how will the changing climate patterns affect inter-state relations, national and international security as well as the well-being and survival of humankind comes to the fore with the findings of scientists about the imminence and impending danger of climate change looming large on the entire humanity. On 6 April, 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the second part of its Fourth Assessment Report demonstrating that the poor of this planet are most likely to suffer the worst effects of climate change. Human security takes on a broader meaning when one considers basic needs for food, water and health – in short, livelihood and a place to live – the issues addressed in the Millennium Development Goals. Poor communities can be especially vulnerable, in particular those concentrated in high-risk areas. They tend to have more limited adaptive capacities, and are more dependent on climate-sensitive resources such as local water and food supplies.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, within the larger category of ‘the poor’ lies the frequently invisible (including within that IPCC summary document) group: women. Worldwide, seventy percent of those living below the poverty line are women<sup>47</sup> for whom climate change represents very specific threats to security. When the impacts of climate change are brought home, then women, in their roles as the primary managers of family, food, water and health, must deal very directly with the impacts.

While natural climate variations have existed for millennia, anthropogenic climate change has gradually emerged since the industrial revolution and especially after World War II. This has also been due to western pattern of development based on the availability of cheap fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) and the dramatic increase in its consumption first in the industrialized countries and now

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<sup>46</sup> Quotations from the IPCC rely on “Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Fourth Assessment Report Climate Change 2007: Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, *Summary for Policymakers*, 6 April 2007 <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM6avr07.pdf> .

<sup>47</sup> See: Ulrike Röhr (2006) “Gender and Climate Change,” *Tiempo* 59 (April): 3-7 <http://www.tiempocyberclimate.org/portal/archive/pdf/tiempo59high.pdf> .

increasingly also in the rapidly growing economies of the BRIC states (Brazil, Russia, India, China), especially of China and India.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE, SECURITY AND CONFLICTS**

Ben Wisner and others have established the linkages between climate change and conflict having implications on national and international security<sup>48</sup>. On 9 January 2004, David King, the UK Government's chief scientific adviser claimed that climate change is a far greater threat to the world than international terrorism. In February 2004, John Reid MP, then British Secretary of State for Defence and now Home Secretary, argued that climate change may spark conflict between nations. He forecast that violence and political conflict would become more likely in the next 20 to 30 years as climate change turned land into desert, melted ice fields and poisoned water supplies. He listed climate change alongside the major threats in future decades, including terrorism, demographic changes, and global energy demand. "As we look beyond the next decade, we see uncertainty growing; uncertainty about the geopolitical and human consequences of climate change. ...Impacts such as flooding, melting permafrost and desertification could lead to loss of agricultural land, poisoning of water supplies and destruction of economic infrastructure. ...More than 300 million people in Africa currently lack access to safe water; climate change will worsen this dire situation."<sup>49</sup> John Ashton, the UK Foreign Secretary's Special Representative for Climate Change, said at a conference on "Climate Change: The Global Security Impact", at the Royal United Services Institute on 24 January 2007: "There is every reason to believe that as the 21<sup>st</sup> century unfolds, the security

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<sup>48</sup> Ben Wisner and others, "Climate Change and Human Security" Simultaneously uploaded to Radix - Radical Interpretations of Disaster: <http://www.radixonline.org/cchs.html> & <http://www.radixonline.org/cchs.doc> ; Disaster Diplomacy: <http://www.disasterdiplomacy.org>; Peace Research and European Security Studies (AFES-PRESS): <http://www.afes-press.de/html/topical.html> .

<sup>49</sup> Ben Russell and Nigel Morris (2006) "Armed forces are put on standby to tackle threat of wars over water", *Independent*, 28 February <http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/article348196.ece> .

story will be bound together with climate change.”<sup>50</sup> “Climate change is a security issue because if we don't deal with it, people will die and states will fail,” Ashton concluded.

Ashton pointed out that defense and security planners must face a paradox when assessing their responses to the problem. Most security threats in today's world are amenable to some extent to a “hard power” or conventional reaction, he said, and demand will rise for such responses to climate change-related security problems. “But there is no hard power solution to climate change - you cannot force your neighbour to change its carbon emissions at the barrel of a gun.”<sup>51</sup>

Sir Crispin Tickell, the former UK Permanent Representative to the UN, highlighted the environmental factors behind societal collapse. Professor John Mitchell, the chief scientist at the UK Met Office, forecast that the coming decades will see a 30 per cent increase in severe drought. He added that Africa will experience increased desertification, water stress and disease.<sup>52</sup>

Besides the UK, other nations have begun to assess the security implication of climate change. In 2002, the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety published a commissioned report on climate change and conflicts raised the question whether climate change impacts can increase conflict potentials.<sup>53</sup> In spring 2004 an internal report by Randall and

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<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Ben Vogel (2007) “Climate change creates security challenge ‘more complex than Cold War’,” *Janes.com* [http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/misc/janes070130\\_1\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/misc/janes070130_1_n.shtml).

<sup>51</sup> Quoted by Chris Littlecott (2007) “Climate Change: The Global Security Impact” February <http://www.e3g.org/index.php/programmes/climate-articles/climate-change-the-global-security-impact/>.

<sup>52</sup> Sir Crispin Tickell (2003) “Risks of conflict: Population and Resource Pressure”, In: Hans Günter Brauch, P.H Liotta, Antonio Marquina, Rogers, Paul; Selim, Mohammed El-Sayed, eds. *Security and Environment in the Mediterranean. Conceptualising Security and Environmental Conflict*, pp. 13-18. Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace, vol. Springer: Berlin-Heidelberg.

<sup>53</sup> See: Hans Günter Brauch (2002) “Climate Change, Environmental Stress and Conflict,” In: Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, ed. *Climate Change and Conflict*, pp. 9-



Schwartz for the U.S. Department of Defense on the impact of Abrupt Climate Change on U.S. national security was leaked to the press.<sup>54</sup>

The British initiative during its Security Council Security Council presidency to put climate change on its agenda for 17 April 2007 has been the most recent attempt to “securitize” climate change in the context of geo-politics.<sup>55</sup>

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AS A THREAT AND CHALLENGE TO INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND HUMAN SECURITY**

Climate change poses many new threats and challenges to national security and international stability as well as to human security at other scales. The concept of human security was introduced first by UNDP in 1994<sup>56</sup> and then developed further in a report by the Human Security Commission, co-chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen, in its report *Human Security Now* (2003).<sup>57</sup> The environmental dimension of human security has been addressed by an international team working on Global Environmental Change

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112. Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety: Berlin

[http://www.afes-press.de/pdf/Brauch\\_ClimateChange\\_BMU.pdf](http://www.afes-press.de/pdf/Brauch_ClimateChange_BMU.pdf) .

<sup>54</sup> Hans Günter Brauch (2004) “Abrupt Climate Change and Conflicts: Security Implications from a European Perspective - Hobbesian vs. Grotian Analyses,” Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, 29 March

[http://www.afes-press.de/pdf/Brauch\\_ClimateChange.pdf](http://www.afes-press.de/pdf/Brauch_ClimateChange.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> See: “Press Conference by Security Council President, 4 April 2007” [http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs//2007/070404\\_Parry.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs//2007/070404_Parry.doc.htm) .

<sup>56</sup> UNDP (1994) *Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security*. UNDP: New York.

<sup>57</sup> On the narrow and broad definitions of ‘security’, see: Hans Günter Brauch: *Environment and Human Security*,” InterSecTions, 2/2005 (Bonn: UNU-EHS); at: <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/file.php?id=64>; and Hans Günter Brauch: *Threats, Challenges, Vulnerabilities and Risks in Environmental and Human Security*. Source 1/2005 (Bonn: UNU-EHS) <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/file.php?id=63> and Commission on Human Security (2003) *Human Security Now*. Commission on Human Security: New York

<http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/> .

and Human Security (GECHS) and in several studies by the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS).<sup>58</sup>

In February 1999, during its presidency of the United Nations Security Council, Canada, a founding member of the Human Security Network, put human security on the agenda by addressing the impact of armed conflicts on human beings.<sup>59</sup> In March 2005, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in his report *In Larger Freedom*,<sup>60</sup> wrote of human security in a broad sense. The issue was placed on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in the fall of 2005.

UNDP will take up the relationship between human development and climate change in its *Human Development Report 2007* (HDR), to be launched in November. Over 17 years, UNDP has incrementally developed a sensitive measure of human development (the human development index – HDI). The earlier studies have shown that the HDI correlates well with measures of disaster risk, such as UNDP's disaster risk index (DRI), especially for the less

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<sup>58</sup> For GECHS see <http://www.gechs.org/>; Janos Bogardi and Hans Guenter Brauch (2005) "Global Environmental Change: A Challenge for Human Security – Defining and conceptualising the environmental dimension of human security", In: Andreas Rechkemmer, ed. *UNEO – Towards an International Environment*, pp. 85-109. Nomos: Baden-Baden. GECHS will also be holding a conference on the mainstreaming of human security, *The International Conference on Human Security in Asia: Theory, Practice and Impacts* will be held in Bangkok, October 4-5 2007 <http://www.ids.polsci.chula.ac.th/humansecurity.htm>.

<sup>59</sup> Jürgen Dedring (2007) "Human Security and the UN Security Council", In: Hans Günter Brauch, John Grin, Czeslaw Mesjasz, Pal Dunay, Pal Chadha, Navnita Pal, Béchir Chourou, Ursula Oswald Spring, Ursula, P.H. Liotta, Patricia Kameri-Mbote, eds. (2007) *Globalisation and Environmental Challenges: Reconceptualising Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Chapter 48. Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace, vol. 3. Springer: Berlin (in press).

<sup>60</sup> Kofi Annan (2005) *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*. United Nations: New York <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/>.

developed countries.<sup>61</sup> Preliminary analysis for this year's HDR suggests that climate change poses major obstacles to progress in meeting MDGs and maintaining progress raising the HDI: "There is a clear and present danger that climate change will roll back human development for a large section of humanity, undermining international cooperation aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the process."<sup>62</sup>

Concerning the MDGs individually, UNDP states:<sup>63</sup>

...[C] limate change may pose a threat to food security through erratic rainfall patterns and decreasing crop yields, contributing to increased hunger. Furthermore, adverse climate change impacts on natural systems and resources, infrastructure, and labor productivity may lead to reduced economic growth, exacerbating poverty. These effects threaten the achievement of MDG 1. Loss of livelihood assets, displacement and migration may lead to reduced access to education opportunities, thus hampering the realization of MDG 2. Depletion of natural resources and decreasing agricultural productivity may place additional burdens on women's' health and reduce time for decision-making processes and income-generating activities, worsening gender equality and women's' empowerment (MDG 3). Increased incidence of vector-borne diseases, increases in heat-related mortality, and declining quantity and quality of drinking water will lead to adverse health effects threatening the achievement of MDGs 4,5,6 and 7. In general terms, the realization of MDG

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<sup>61</sup> UNDP (2004) *Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development*. Geneva: UNDP, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/lde/Global-Reports/UNDP%20Reducing%20Disaster%20Risk.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> UNDP (2007) *Human Development Reports* <http://hdr.undp.org/>; see also UNDP, UNEP, World Bank,

ADB, AfDB, GTZ, DFID, OECD, and EC (2003) *Poverty and Climate Change: Reducing the Vulnerability of the Poor through Adaptation*. World Bank: Washington <http://www.undp.org/climatechange/adap01.htm> .

<sup>63</sup> UNDP (2007) "Poverty Eradication, MDGs and Climate Change" <http://www.undp.org/climatechange/adap01.htm> .

7 may be jeopardized through climate change negatively impacting quality and productivity of natural resources and ecosystems, possibly irreversibly, threatening environmental sustainability. Climate change, a global phenomenon, calls for a collective response in the form of global partnerships (MDG 8 )

### **LINKAGES BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY**

Some effects of climate change are already evident and will become very clear in the human and climatic short run (2007-2020). These will increase and the others will manifest themselves in the medium term (2021-2050). In the long run (2051-2100), these will all be active and interacting strongly with other major trends: the end of the petroleum economy for many producing and consuming nations, possible financial and economic crisis, a larger population of humans, and a much more urbanized humanity – far in excess of the 50% now living in small to very large cities. All these processes will be accompanied by redistribution of population nationally and internationally.<sup>64</sup> Such redistributions typically have significant gender dimensions; for example, extreme event impacts can lead to male out migration in search of work, culminating in an increase in women-headed households – a group often considered particularly vulnerable.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> David Simon (2007), "Cities and Global Environmental Change: Exploring the Links," *The Geographical Journal* 173, 1 (March): 75-79 & see chapters 3 & 4 of Sir Nicholas Stern et al. (2007) *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change*. London: UK, Department of the Treasury [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent\\_reviews/stern\\_review\\_economicsclimate\\_change/stern\\_review\\_report.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economicsclimate_change/stern_review_report.cfm)

<sup>65</sup> Delaney and Shrader (2000) report the percentage of women-headed households more than doubled in both Honduras and Nicaragua following Hurricane Mitch in 1998. See: Patricia L. Delaney and Elizabeth Shrader (2000) "Gender and Post-Disaster Reconstruction: The Case of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras and Nicaragua", LCSPG/LAC Gender Team, *The World Bank, Decision Review Draft*, page 24 <http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/reviewdraft.doc> .

The linkages between climate change and security are complex in many ways. To begin with, climate change involves the interactions of many systems such as the atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere that are immensely complex in their own right. Thus, a recurrent theme in IPCC reports is the significance of thresholds and non-linearities. When human systems are added to the mix, complexity escalates.<sup>66</sup> Livelihood security and other aspects of human security interact with geo-strategic (or “hard”) security issues because of the national and regional upheavals that climate stress may put on livelihood systems already vulnerable and incapable of adapting.<sup>67</sup> World wide the rural and urban poor are already under stress, and for some groups such as women headed households in Africa, adaptation to climate-induced stress will be very difficult indeed. As Simon points out, climate change has both intermittent but increasingly frequent, extreme impacts (such as large storms and heat waves) and slow on-set, pervasive, cumulative effects (such as extinction of life forms and sea level rise).<sup>68</sup> Both kinds of effects may have a role in displacing human populations and disrupting their livelihoods. Some major climate changes may actually occur rapidly.

Some efforts by state actors to mitigate and adapt to climate change may also further stress weak and marginal sections of the population such as indigenous groups and ethnic minorities, increasing discontent and alienation. In particular, large scale water management and forestry projects in the past have displaced such groups,<sup>69</sup> and without safeguards are likely to do so as states expand

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<sup>66</sup> Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2006) *Our Human Planet: Summary for Decision Makers*, p. 6, Box 1.2, “Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Conceptual Framework”

<http://ma.caudillweb.com/en/Products.Global.Summary.aspx> .

<sup>67</sup> On the definition of “vulnerability” at the scale of household livelihoods and its linkage with macro-scale processes, see Ben Wisner, Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon, and Ian Davis (2004) *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People’s Vulnerability and Disaster*. 2nd Edition. Routledge: London.

<sup>68</sup> David Simon (2007) *Ibid*.

<sup>69</sup> Art Hansen and Anthony Oliver-Smith (1982) *Involuntary Migration and Resettlement: The Problems and Responses of Dislocated Peoples* Westview Press: Boulder, Co; World Commission on Dams (2000)

mega-projects as part of their national climate adaptation programs. One example is the new dams being built in Guatemala. Such intra-state tension and possible conflict over the distribution of winners and losers in climate adaptation may spillover into regional conflicts, on the basis of recent experience in Darfur. State actor adaptations may also weaken treaties such as regional water basin management and lead eventually to inter-state conflict. For example, Sudan's decision to build a new dam on the Nile could have that result.

One must also consider that the world around us in 2007 has in it a large number of weak and crisis-prone nation states.<sup>70</sup> It is not likely that such chronic instability will diminish (although details of the pattern may shift geographically) before severe impacts of climate change are felt. Humanitarian intervention in the crises that are likely will become more difficult and run the danger of exacerbating conflict, especially as civilian humanitarian and military relations become more interwoven.<sup>71</sup>

Figure 1 provides an overview of these complex interactions arranged on a time scale.

**Figure 1: Matrix of Possible Climate Change/Security Interactions over Time**

Direct	Indirect Consequences	Slow-
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“People and Large Dams: Social Performance,” In: *Dams and Development* <http://www.dams.org/docs/report/wcdch4.pdf> ; Chris de Wet, compiler (2002) *Improving Outcomes in Development-Induced Displacement and Resettlement* (DIDR) Projects. Oxford University, Refugee Studies Centre <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/rriimprovingoutcomes02.pdf> ; W. Courtland Robinson (2004) “Minimizing Development-Induced Displacement,” *Migration Information Source* <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=194> .

<sup>70</sup> See: Crisis States Programme, Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics: <http://www.crisisstates.com/News/seminars1.htm> .

<sup>71</sup> International Famine Program (2004) *Ambiguity and Change: Humanitarian NGOs Prepare for the Future*. A report prepared for: World Vision, CARE, Save US, Mercy Corps, Oxfam USA, Oxfam GB & Catholic Relief Services [http://famine.tufts.edu/pdf/ambiguity\\_and\\_change.pdf](http://famine.tufts.edu/pdf/ambiguity_and_change.pdf) .

	impact							onset
	Water	Food	Health	Mega-projects	Disasters	Bio-fuel	Sea level	
Short term (2007-2020)	Local conflict over water	Failure to meet MDGs	Failure to meet MDGs	Long history of development-induced displacement from 1950s	Nation states begin to lose credibility due to inability to prevent large disasters	Isolated food – fuel competition & price spikes	Small number of displacements	
Medium term (2021-2050)	Increased local & some international conflict over water	Significant displacement due to famine	Interacts with food production problems	Displacement of rural poor due to CDM & large scale dams & other state based mitigation & adaptation projects	Significant political unrest due to failure of DRR & inadequate recovery in many countries	Food-fuel competition increases & biodiversity erosion	Increasing displacement & national/international tension	
Long term (2051-2100)	Major international conflict over water	Major displacement & political upheaval	Major displacement due to epidemics	Major urban upheaval and other political fallout from mega-project displacement	Major upheaval with international implications due to unattended weather catastrophes	Major discontent due to food-fuel competition	Major international tensions due to population displacement	
	All of these processes strongly interact with each other							

Source: Ben Wisner and others, “Climate Change and Human Security” Simultaneously uploaded to Radix - Radical Interpretations of Disaster: <http://www.radixonline.org/cchs.html> & <http://www.radixonline.org/cchs.doc> ; Disaster Diplomacy: <http://www.disasterdiplomacy.org>; Peace Research and European Security Studies (AFES-PRESS): <http://www.afespress.de/html/topical.html> .

### CLIMATE-INDUCED CONFLICT CONSTELLATIONS

WBGU identifies four conflict constellations<sup>72</sup> in which critical developments can be anticipated as a result of climate change and which may occur with similar characteristics in different regions of the world. “Conflict constellations” are defined as typical causal linkages at the interface of environment and society, whose dynamic can lead to social destabilization and, in the end, to violence.

**Conflict Constellation “Climate-induced degradation of freshwater resources”**

More one billion (1.1 billion) people are currently without access to safe drinking water. The situation could worsen for hundreds of millions of people as climate change alters the variability of precipitation and the quantity of available water. At the same time, demand for water is increasing due to the world’s growing population and its mounting aspirations. This dynamic triggers distributional conflicts and poses major challenges to water management systems in the countries concerned. For example, regions which depend on melt water from mountain glaciers – which are at risk from climate change – will require new water management strategies and infrastructures, as well as political efforts to avert national or even trans-boundary conflicts over the distribution of increasingly scarce water resources. However, the countries which will suffer the greatest water stress are generally those which already lack the political and institutional framework necessary for the adaptation of water and crisis management systems. This could overstretch existing conflict resolution mechanisms, ultimately leading to destabilization and violence.

There is no dearth of evidence in the past to show as a population growth/ demand problem, water scarcity may, indeed, become a source of conflict and instability, but more as a function of supply.<sup>73</sup> International regimes such as the Nile Treaty are old,

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<sup>72</sup> German Advisory Council on Global Change – WBGU Secretariat Reichpietschufer 60-62, 8. OG D-10785 Berlin. The summary can be downloaded through the Internet from the website [http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu\\_jg2007\\_kurz\\_engl.html](http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_jg2007_kurz_engl.html).

<sup>73</sup> On the neo-Malthusian roots of “environmental conflict” discourse, see Elizabeth Hartmann (2003) *Strategic Scarcity: The Origins and Impact of Environmental Conflict Ideas*, PhD Thesis, Development Studies, London



inadequate, and fragile. Newer, more forward-looking treaty regimes, such as the Nile Basin Initiative, are still in their infancy and subject to similar divisive pressures despite the efforts of multilateral agencies like the World Bank. The other tensions and sources of instability discussed above could also place international water management and sharing agreements under pressure. Management of many of the world's 261 international rivers will face severe tests.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore; many coastal freshwater aquifers will suffer salinization as a result of sea level rise. In Africa alone: by 2020, between 75 to 250 million people are projected to be exposed to an increase of water stress due to climate change. If coupled with increased demand, this will adversely affect livelihoods and exacerbate water-related problems.<sup>75</sup>

A team at Keele University and the UK's Centre for Ecology and Hydrology has produced a water poverty index (WPI)<sup>76</sup>. Using the WPI they found that already in 2005 a large number of countries were suffering moderate, high, or severe stress. If this is the baseline situation, what will additional stress due to climate change do in many of these places?

### **Conflict Constellation “Climate-induced decline in food production”**

More than 850 million people worldwide are currently undernourished. This situation is likely to worsen in future as a result of climate change, as food insecurity in the lower latitudes, i.e. in

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School of Economics & Betsy Hartmann, “Degradation Narratives: Over-Simplifying the Link Between Population, Poverty and the Environment,” *IHDP Update, Newsletter of the International Human Dimensions Program on Global Environmental Change*, No. 4, 2002: 6-8 & Elizabeth Hartmann (1998) “Population, environment and security: a new trinity,” *Environment and Urbanization* 10,2: 113-127 -- summarized in <http://popdev.hampshire.edu/projects/dt/dt27.php> .

<sup>74</sup> Twin Basin, “International River Basins of the World”

<sup>75</sup> Quotations from the IPCC rely on “Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Fourth Assessment Report Climate Change 2007: Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Summary for Policymakers, 6 April 2007 <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM6avr07.pdf> . P.10.

<sup>76</sup> *Water Poverty Index*

<http://www.ceh.ac.uk/sections/ph/WaterPovertyIndex.html>

many developing countries, will increase with a temperature rise of just 2 °C (relative to the 1990 baseline). With global warming of 2–4 °C, a drop in agricultural productivity is anticipated worldwide. This trend will be substantially reinforced by desertification, soil salinization or water scarcity. In South Asia and North Africa, for example, the areas suitable for agriculture are already largely exploited. This may well trigger regional food crises and further undermine the economic performance of weak and unstable states, thereby encouraging or exacerbating destabilization, the collapse of social systems, and violent conflicts.

Food and livelihood pressure due to climate change will lead to populist and/or military coups in a number of countries. After the roll-out of macro-economic “structural adjustment” programmes in Africa in the 1980s, one witnessed junior officers in a number of militaries seizing power in the name of workers and peasants who suffered (e.g. in Burkina Faso). This will produce continuing instability in Africa, in particular. Between 1980 and 2001 there were 95 attempted coups in Africa -- 33 of them successful. Popular discontent over livelihood security was a contributing cause of many of these.<sup>77</sup> The same pressures as well as the “push” provided by conflict will cause considerable population movements and displacement both within countries and internationally.<sup>78</sup> That, in turn, will increase insecurity – a process that is already occurring. Effects in Africa may include the following:

Agricultural production, including access to food, in many African countries and regions is projected to be severely compromised by climate variability and change. The area suitable for agriculture, the length of growing seasons and the yield potential, particularly along the margins of semi-arid and arid areas, are

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<sup>77</sup> See: Patrick J. McGowan (2003) “African Military Coups d’Etat, 1956-2001: Frequency, Trends and Distribution..” *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41, 3: 339–370; at:

[http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FMOA%2FMOA41\\_03%2FS0022278X0300435Xa.pdf&code=aad776a39cf997c090aecae20ceafeb1](http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FMOA%2FMOA41_03%2FS0022278X0300435Xa.pdf&code=aad776a39cf997c090aecae20ceafeb1) .

<sup>78</sup> See: Spanish Environment Ministry (2006) *Conference on Desertification and Migration*. 25-27 October 2005, Almeria, Spain  
[http://www.sidym2006.org/eng/eng\\_ponencias\\_conclusiones.asp](http://www.sidym2006.org/eng/eng_ponencias_conclusiones.asp) .

expected to decrease. This would further adversely affect food security and exacerbate malnutrition in the continent. Local food supplies are projected to be negatively affected by decreasing fisheries resources in large lakes due to rising water temperatures, which may be exacerbated by continued over-fishing.<sup>79</sup>

Women are responsible for around 70 percent of household food production in sub-Saharan Africa, often on the basis of informal resource rights. Climate-induced changes in crop and livestock production could threaten those rights, as well as affect the gendered division of labor with negative effects on women's and men's incomes, livelihoods and household security.<sup>80</sup>

The climate-food connection will not only affect the poor. In some industrial and industrializing nations, as climate change creates new patterns of food production -- new exporting and new importing zones -- access to supplies and the energy to import them may become strategic concerns and lead to international conflict.

### **Conflict Constellation “Climate-induced increase in storm and flood disasters”**

Climate change is likely to result in further sea-level rise, more intensive storms and heavy precipitation. This will greatly increase the risk of natural disasters occurring in many cities and industrial regions in coastal zones. Those risks will be further amplified by deforestation along the upper reaches of rivers, land subsidence in large urban areas and the ever greater spatial concentration of populations and assets. Storm and flood disasters have already

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<sup>79</sup> Quotations from the IPCC rely on “Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Fourth Assessment Report Climate Change 2007: Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Summary for Policymakers, 6 April 2007 <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM6avr07.pdf> . P.10.

<sup>80</sup> CIDA (no date) *Gender Equality and Climate Change. Why consider gender equality when taking action on climate change?* Canadian International Development Agency [www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Climate%20change3/\\$file/Gender-2.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Climate%20change3/$file/Gender-2.pdf) .

contributed to conflict in the past, especially during phases of domestic political tension, e.g. in Central America, India and China. Conflicts are likely to occur more frequently in future, firstly because regions especially at risk from storm and flood disasters, such as Central America and Southern Africa, generally have weak economic and political capacities, making adaptation and crisis management much more difficult. Secondly, frequent storm and flood disasters along the densely populated east coasts of India and China could cause major damage and trigger and/or intensify migration processes that are difficult to control.

#### **Conflict Constellation “Environmentally-induced migration”**

Experience has shown that migration can greatly increase the likelihood of conflict in transit and target regions. It can be assumed that the number of environmental migrants will substantially rise in future due to the impacts of climate change. In developing countries in particular, the increase in drought, soil degradation and growing water scarcity in combination with high population growth, unstable institutions, poverty or a high level of dependency on agriculture means that there is a particularly significant risk of environmental migration occurring and increasing in scale. Most environmental migration is initially likely to occur within national borders. Trans-boundary environmental migration will mainly take the form of south-south migration, but Europe and North America must also expect substantially increased migratory pressure from regions most at risk from climate change. The question as to which states will have to bear the costs of environmentally-induced migration in future also contains conflict potential.

#### **Health-Climate-Livelihood-Conflict-Security**

Health impacts of climate change including epidemics and insect outbreaks will have a similar effect, also compounding food and livelihood crises. This is beginning, but it will accelerate in the medium term. As we have seen with SARS and avian influenza, disease does not respect national boundaries in a globalized world. Changing climate may bring many epidemiological surprises as vector habitats change, sometimes quite rapidly.

Projected climate change-related exposures are likely to affect the health status of millions of people, particularly those with low adaptive capacity, through:

- \* increases in malnutrition and consequent disorders, with implications for child growth and development;
- \* increased deaths, disease and injury due to heat waves, floods, storms, fires and droughts;
- \* the increased burden of diarrhoeal disease; the increased frequency of cardio-respiratory diseases due to higher concentrations of ground level ozone related to climate change; and, the altered spatial distribution of some infectious disease vectors.

Climate change is expected to have some mixed effects, such as the decrease or increase of the range and transmission potential of malaria in Africa<sup>81</sup>.

### **Mitigation-Adaptation-Inequity-Conflict-Security**

Adger *et al* raise the issue of “fairness” in adaptation to climate change.<sup>82</sup> Mega-projects conceived by nation states as solutions to climate change such as the planting of large scale forestry under the Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the building of more large dams and reservoirs, are beginning to displace other numbers of poor and marginal people, having effects on politics and stability similar to those mentioned above while negatively affecting biodiversity. In the medium term such mega-

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<sup>81</sup> Quotations from the IPCC rely on “Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Fourth Assessment Report Climate Change 2007: Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Summary for Policymakers, 6 April 2007 <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM6avr07.pdf> . P.9.

<sup>82</sup> Neil Adger, Jouni Paavola, Saleemul Huq, M.J. Mace, eds. (2006) *Fairness in Adaptation to Climate Change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; See also: Michael H. Glantz (1990) "On the Interactions between Climate and Society," *Population and Development Review* 16: 179-200 & Michael H Glantz and Dale Jamieson, co-convenors (2001) "Climate Ethics and Equity," *NCAR Working Group Web Page* (October) <http://www.ccb.ucar.edu/ethics/> .

project investments – already a major feature of rapid urban industrialization in China and India, the world’s two most populous countries – will grow rapidly as water shortages intensify. Already “an estimated 40–80 million people have been forcibly evicted from their lands to make way for dams.”<sup>83</sup>

The social and economic impacts of climate change focused mitigation projects have not yet been fully assessed. Skutsch, for example, highlights the absence of gender impact analysis of CDM projects.<sup>84</sup> The “clean, green” solution of nuclear energy so heavily promoted in the early years of this century and recently adopted as a climate change-fighting strategy by the EU and others has led to a planet-wide race to capture extractive rights and exploit uranium reserves. At this writing, the historically high value of uranium has led to violent conflict in the Congo and the renewed use of forced labor. The profound, degenerative human health consequences of working and living in a toxic and radioactive environment are only recently being understood. Epidemics of cancer and other radiogenic health problems now prevalent in areas that hosted the Cold War nuclear machine are certain to expand.<sup>85</sup> In addition, a new phase in the growth of nuclear power could exacerbate the problem of “leakage” of weapons grade material into the hands of non-state actors.

### **Food-Fuel Conflict and Human Security**

Large-scale investments in bio-fuels in the medium and long term as a substitute for green house gas-producing petro-based energy sources may have the perverse effect of taking considerable

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<sup>83</sup> International Rivers Network, “*About Rivers and Dams*” <http://www.irn.org/basics/ard/>.

<sup>84</sup> Margaret Skutch (2004), *CDM and LULUCF: what’s in it for women?* A note for the Gender and Climate Change Network, Technology and Sustainable Development TDG, University of Twente; at: <http://www.gencc.interconnection.org/skutsch2004.pdf>.

<sup>85</sup> Johnston, Barbara Rose (2007) *Half-lives & Half-truths: Confronting the Radioactive Legacies of the Cold War*. SAR Press: Santa Fe, NM.

land out of food production and diverting food grains, thus raising food prices and eroding biodiversity. The maize (corn) price in Mexico has already increased because of demand for grain by US ethanol plants, and protests have resulted.<sup>86</sup> If this occurs, then food and livelihood pressures will increase and the desperation of many rural and urban people will increase national and regional insecurity. Rapid expansion of sugar production in Brazil and Africa palm in Colombia, as energy feed stocks, have been a major source of displacement of small farmers from their lands. Also, recent research has shown the energy and carbon efficiency of biofuel production to be variable and often lower than with the burning of fossil fuels.<sup>87</sup>

#### **Disaster-Livelihood-Governance-Conflict-Security**

Also in the medium term livelihood security and hence the ability to govern will be undermined by the increasingly frequent occurrence of more and more mega-disasters such as those associated with hurricane Mitch (1998), the Orissa super-cyclone (1999), hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and tropical storm Stan (2005). Even now, the UN reports that over a million people are threatened by erratic weather in five southern African countries.<sup>88</sup> Such catastrophic weather events often produce cascades of secondary physical hazards such as landslides (as Nicaragua during Mitch or in Vargas, Venezuela in 1999) or downstream inundation when dams overflow or dam authorities release large volumes of water to safeguard large dams (as in Mozambique at present and in several recent years). They also trigger changes in social relations, including the exacerbation of unequal gender relations manifested in lack of

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<sup>86</sup> Brittany Sauser (2007) "Ethanol Demand Threatens Food Prices," *Technology Review* (13 February)

<http://www.technologyreview.com/Energy/18173/> .

<sup>87</sup> Jeffrey A McNeely (2006) "Bio-Fuels: Green Energy or Grim Reaper?" *The Green Room*, 2 September

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/5369284.stm> .

<sup>88</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) (5 April 2007) "Southern Africa: Extreme weather threatens over a million people" <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/SHES-6ZYQST?OpenDocument> .

land and property rights and the rise in sexual and gender based violence towards women and girls.<sup>89</sup> In urban industrial landscapes such as greater New Orleans, Manila, or Osaka, storms and flooding often bring further complications by damage done to factories, storage facilities, and pipelines. The resulting “natural-technological” (natech) hazards are very expensive to clean up and can have long term public health consequences.<sup>90</sup> Institutional systems for anticipating or even timely recognition of the “surprises” that natech hazards may present in the future are not yet been developed world wide. Where extreme weather events become more intense and/or more frequent, the economic and social costs of those events will increase, and these increases will be substantial in the areas most directly affected. Climate change impacts spread from directly impacted areas and sectors to other areas and sectors through extensive and complex linkages.<sup>91</sup>

Disasters, development, and conflict have been shown to have complex interactions with one another, quite apart from the additional stresses and management challenges likely to accompany increasingly variable weather and more extreme storms.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Maureen Fordham with Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu, Prema Gopalan and Kristina J Peterson (2006) “Please don’t raise gender now – we’re in an emergency!” *World Disasters Report 2006*, Chapter 6. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: Geneva <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2006/summaries.asp> .

<sup>90</sup> A.M. Cruz, L.J. Steinberg, A.L. Vetere-Arellano, J.P. Nordvik, and F. Pisano, (2004). *State of the Art in Natech (Natural Hazard Triggering Technological Disasters) in Europe*. DG Joint Research Centre, European Commission and United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Ispra, Italy.

<sup>91</sup> Quotations from the IPCC rely on “Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Fourth Assessment Report Climate Change 2007: Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Summary for Policymakers, 6 April 2007 <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM6avr07.pdf> . P.16.

**<sup>92</sup> Ben Wisner (2008) “The Interactions between Conflict and Natural Hazards in an Unstable, Globalizing World: Swords,**



### **Sea Level-Displacement-Security**

Finally, sea level rise in the long term and its collateral impacts on river flow and ocean discharge regimes will cause displacement of many millions of people currently living in coastal areas. For the small island nations of the world, especially the many cultural groups living on coral atolls, entire nations face complete submersion. A recent study calculates that around 634 million people are living less than 10m above sea level. The study notes that “of the more than 180 countries with populations in the low-elevation coastal zone, about 70 percent have urban areas of more than five million people that extend into it.” The authors then list Tokyo, Japan; New York, U.S.; Mumbai, India; Shanghai, China; Jakarta, Indonesia; and Dhaka, Bangladesh.<sup>93</sup> One could add other cities as well to the list, for example, Cartagena, Colombia; Lima, Peru; Buenos Aires,

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**Plowshares, Earthquakes, Floods, and Storms,” In: Hans Guenter Brauch, et al, eds. *Globalisation and Environmental Challenges: Reconceptualising Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Vol. II, Chapter 15. Springer-Verlag: Berlin (in press); See earlier version *Journal of Natural Disaster Science* (Kyoto, Japan)26,2 (2004): 63-72.**

**<http://www.drs.dpri.kyoto-u.ac.jp/jsnds/download.cgi?jsdn 26 2 3.pdf>**

<sup>93</sup> Thomas Wagner, (28 March 2007) “Major Cities Warned against Sea Level Rise” *Independent (South Africa) On Line* [http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set\\_id=1&click\\_id=31&art\\_id=nw20070328024424684C606123](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=31&art_id=nw20070328024424684C606123)

Argentina; and Recife and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. African exposure is high.

Nigerian scholars Ibe and Awosika state: “This coastal zone consists of four major basins which are bordered on the ocean side by low-lying coastlines which are sandy and muddy in some cases. General beach elevations range from 2-3 m above sea level.”<sup>94</sup> Most of Africa’s major cities are coastal, including Dakar, Senegal; Accra, Ghana; Lagos, Nigeria; Luanda, Angola; Cape Town and Durban, South Africa; Maputo, Mozambique; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and Mombasa, Kenya; and Mogadishu, Somalia. The cost of dislocation – which will include salinisation of coastal aquifers and other low-lying fresh water resources - and loss of infrastructure will be difficult for poor countries to bear, especially in Africa.<sup>95</sup> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change agrees.<sup>96</sup> Considerable political instability may result. Just considering Africa: Towards the end of the 21st century, projected sea-level rise will affect low-lying coastal areas with large populations. The cost of adaptation could amount to at least 5-10% of GDP. Mangroves and coral reefs are projected to be further degraded, with additional consequences for fisheries and tourism.<sup>97</sup>

Additional negative feedback can be anticipated as degradation of coastal wetland vegetation and coral reefs reduce or remove their protective influence in the face of storms.

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<sup>94</sup> A.C. Ibe and L.F. Awosika (1991) “Sea level rise impact on African coastal zones,” In: S.H. Ominde and C. Juma, eds., *A change in the weather: African perspectives on climate change*, 105-12. African Centre for Technology Studies: Nairobi, Kenya [Reprinted with permission by CIESIN <http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/docs/004-153/004-153.html>].

<sup>95</sup> Simon (2007) *Op. Cit.*

<sup>96</sup> IPCC (1997) “African Coastal Zones”, in: *IPCC Special Report on The Regional Impacts of Climate Change: An Assessment of Vulnerability* <http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc/regional/030.htm>.

<sup>97</sup> Quotations from the IPCC rely on “Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Fourth Assessment Report Climate Change 2007: Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Summary for Policymakers, 6 April 2007 <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM6avr07.pdf> . P.10

## **SIX THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL STABILITY AND SECURITY**

In the light of current knowledge about the social impacts of climate change, WBGU identifies the following six key threats to international security and stability that will arise if climate change mitigation fails<sup>98</sup>:

### **1. Possible increase in the number of weak and fragile states as a result of climate change**

Weak and fragile states have inadequate capacities to guarantee the core functions of the state, notably the state's monopoly on the use of force, and therefore already pose a major challenge for the international community. So far, however, the international community has failed to summon the political will or provide the necessary financial resources to support the long-term stabilization of these countries. Moreover, the impacts of unabated climate change would hit these countries especially hard, further limiting and eventually over-stretching their problem-solving capacities. Conflict constellations may also be mutually reinforcing, e.g. if they extend beyond the directly affected region through environmental migration and thus destabilize other neighbouring states. This could ultimately lead to the emergence of "failing sub-regions" consisting of several simultaneously overstretched states, creating "black holes" in world politics that are characterized by the collapse of law and public order, i.e. the pillars of security and stability. It is uncertain at present whether, against the backdrop of more intensive climate impacts, the international community would be able to curb this erosion process effectively.

### **2. Risks for global economic development**

Climate change will alter the conditions for regional production processes and supply infrastructures. Regional water scarcity will impede the development of irrigated agriculture and other water-intensive sectors. Drought and soil degradation will result in a drop

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<sup>98</sup> German Advisory Council on Global Change - WBGU Secretariat Reichpietschufer 60 - 62, 8. OG D -10785 Berlin. The summary can be downloaded through the Internet from the website [http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu\\_jg2007\\_kurz\\_engl.html](http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_jg2007_kurz_engl.html)

in agricultural yields. More frequent extreme events such as storms and flooding put industrial sites and the transport, supply and production infrastructures in coastal regions at risk, forcing companies to relocate or close production sites. Depending on the type and intensity of the climate impacts, this could have a significant and adverse effect on the global economy. Unabated climate change is likely to result in substantially reduced rates of growth. This will increasingly limit the economic scope, at national and international level, to address the urgent challenges associated with the Millennium Development Goals.

### **3. Risks of growing international distributional conflicts between the main drivers of climate change and those most affected**

Climate change is mainly caused by the industrialized and newly industrializing countries. The major differences in the per capita emissions of industrialized and developing/newly industrializing countries are increasingly regarded as an “equity gap”, especially as the rising costs of climate change are mainly being borne by the developing countries. The greater the damage and the burden of adaptation in the South, the more intensive the distributional conflicts between the main drivers of climate change and those most affected will become. The worst affected countries are likely to invoke the “polluter pays” principle, so international controversy over a global compensation regime for climate change will probably intensify. Beside today’s industrialized countries, the major ascendant economies whose emissions are increasing substantially, notably China but also India and Brazil, for example, will also be called to account by the developing countries in future. A key line of conflict in global politics in the 21st century would therefore divide not only the industrialized and the developing countries, but also the rapidly growing newly industrializing countries and the poorer developing countries. The international community is ill-prepared at present for this type of distributional conflict.

### **4. The risk to human rights and the industrialized countries’ legitimacy as global governance actors**

Unabated climate change could threaten livelihoods, erode human security and thus contribute to the violation of human rights.

Against the backdrop of rising temperatures, growing awareness of social climate impacts and inadequate climate change mitigation efforts, the CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting industrialized countries and, in future, buoyant economies such as China could increasingly be accused of knowingly causing human rights violations, or at least doing so in de facto terms. The international human rights discourse in the United Nations is therefore also likely to focus in the future on the threat that climate impacts pose to human rights. Unabated climate change could thus plunge the industrialized countries in particular into crises of legitimacy and limit their international scope for action.

### **5. Triggering and intensification of migration**

Migration is already a major and largely unresolved international policy challenge. Climate change and its social impacts will affect growing numbers of people, so the number of migration hotspots around the world will increase. The associated conflict potential is considerable, especially as “environmental migrants” are currently not provided for in international law. Disputes over compensation payments and the financing of systems to manage refugee crises will increase. In line with the “polluter pays” principle, the industrialized countries will have to face up to their responsibilities. If global temperatures continue to rise unabated, migration could become one of the major fields of conflict in international politics in future.

### **6. Over-stretching of classic security policy**

The future social impacts of unabated climate change are unlikely to trigger “classic” inter-state wars; instead, they will probably lead to an increase in destabilization processes and state failure with diffuse conflict structures and security threats in politically and economically overstretched states and societies. The specific conflict constellations, the failure of disaster management systems after extreme weather events and increasing environmental migration will be almost impossible to manage without support from police and military capacities, and therefore pose a challenge to classic security policy. In this context, a well-functioning cooperation between development and security policy will be crucial, as civilian conflict management and reconstruction assistance are reliant on a minimum level of security. At the same time, the largely

unsuccessful operations by highly equipped military contingents which have aimed to stabilize and bring peace to weak and fragile states since the 1990s show that “classic” security policy’s capacities to act are limited. A climate-induced increase in the number of weak and fragile states or even the destabilization of entire sub-regions would therefore overstretch conventional security policy.

### **OVER-STRETCHING THE CAPACITIES OF THE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM**

The greater the scale of climate change, the greater the probability that in the coming decades, climate-induced conflict constellations will impact not only on individual countries or sub-regions but also on the global governance system as a whole. These new global risk potentials can only be countered by policies that aim to manage global change. Every one of the six threats to international stability and security, outlined above, is itself hard to manage. The inter-action between these threats intensifies the challenges for international politics. It is almost inconceivable that in the coming years, a global governance system could emerge with the capacity to respond effectively to the conflict constellations identified by WBGU. Against the backdrop of globalization, unabated climate change is likely to over-stretch the capacities of a still insufficient global governance system.

As the climate-induced security risks of the 21st century have their own specific characteristics, they will be difficult to mitigate through classic military interventions. Instead, an intelligent and well-crafted global governance strategy to mitigate these new security risks would initially consist of an effective climate policy, which would then evolve into a core element of preventive security policy in the coming decades. The more climate change advances, the more important adaptation strategies in the affected countries will become and these must be supported by international development policy. At international level, the focus will be on global diplomacy to contain climate-induced conflicts, as well as on the development of compensation mechanisms for those affected by climate change, global migration policy, and measures to stabilize the world

economy. The opportunities to establish a well-functioning global governance architecture will narrow as global temperatures rise, revealing a vicious circle: climate change can only be combated effectively through international cooperation, but with advancing climate change, the basis for constructive multilateralism will diminish. Climate change thus poses a challenge to international security, but classic, military-based security policy will be unable to make any major contributions to resolving the impending climate crises<sup>99</sup>.

### **The Link between Carrying Capacity and Warfare**

Today, carrying capacity, which is the ability for the Earth and its natural ecosystems including social, economic, and cultural systems to support the finite number of people on the planet, is being challenged around the world. As predicted, abrupt climate change is likely to stretch carrying capacity well beyond its already precarious limits. As abrupt climate change lowers the world's carrying capacity aggressive wars are likely to be fought over food, water, and energy. Steven LeBlanc, Harvard archaeologist and author of a new book called *Carrying Capacity*, describes the relationship between carrying capacity and warfare. Drawing on abundant archaeological and ethnological data, he argues that historically humans conducted organized warfare for a variety of reasons, including warfare over resources and environment. Humans fight when they outstrip the carrying capacity of their natural environment<sup>100</sup>. Peace occurs when carrying capacity goes up. But such peaceful periods are short-lived because population quickly rises to once again push against carrying capacity, and warfare resumes. Indeed, over the millennia most societies define themselves according to their ability to conduct war, and warrior culture becomes deeply ingrained. With carrying capacity lowered by abrupt climate change, humanity would revert to its norm of constant battles for diminishing resources, which the battles themselves would further reduce even beyond the climatic effects. Once again warfare would define human life. As famine, disease, and weather-related disasters strike due to the abrupt climate

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Peter Schwartz and Doug Randall, *An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for the United States National Security*, October 2003.

change, many countries' needs will exceed their carrying capacity. This will create a sense of desperation, which is likely to lead to offensive aggression in order to reclaim balance<sup>101</sup>.

### CONCLUSION

Premised on Newtonian and Cartesian epistemology, the western political and economic thinking employed science to the ends of human beings- a commodious and luxurious life. Not only that, it borrowed the insights of science to view nature as the lifeless other to be exploited for the attainment of these ends. This resulted in defining development based on fossil fuel technology and industrialization, which destroyed the nature with ramifying consequences upon the entire mankind. The result of following the western pattern of development since the beginning of industrialization has been the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere with the devastating consequences as noted above. The more a country is industrialized and considered developed, the more greenhouse gases it has emitted to the atmosphere. On this account, the industrialized North through its centuries of progress on this development trajectory has usurped the resources of the atmosphere at the cost of the developing and underdeveloped countries, and polluted the atmosphere. As the rich industrialized countries have unilaterally and inequitably messed up the atmosphere, they have squarely the historic responsibility of disabusing it of the debris. This is the argument put forth in the climate change debate by developing countries in response to American attempt at bringing the former into the task. Today, the debate remains hanging on a crucial contradiction between the principle of inequity the North has been practising since the industrial revolution - the uncontested access to the atmosphere denying the same to the South and at the cost of nature and future generations - and the preaching of equity principle and meaningful participation to the South on the question of cleansing the atmosphere.

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<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*



The governments of rich countries have set the wrong targets to tackle climate change using outdated science. A paper published in 2006 by climatologist Malte Meinshausen suggests that if greenhouse gases reach a concentration of 550 parts per million (ppm) carbon dioxide equivalent, there is a 63-99 per cent chance that global warming will exceed two degrees. At 475 parts per million the average likelihood is 64 per cent. Only if concentrations are stabilized at 400 parts per million or below is there a low chance that temperatures will rise by more than two degrees. The IPCC draft report contains similar figures. A concentration of 510 ppm gives a 33 per cent chance of preventing more than two degrees of warming. A concentration of 590 ppm gives a ten per cent chance. The current level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is 459 ppm. To give a high chance to humanity of preventing dangerous climate change, what is needed is a programme so drastic that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere end up below the current concentrations. But no government has set itself this task. The EU and Swedish government have established the world's most stringent target, which is 550ppm. It is of carbon dioxide alone. But this target gives the human beings a near certainty of an extra 2 degrees C. When other greenhouse gases are included, this translates into 666ppm, carbon dioxide equivalent. According to last autumn's Stern report on the economics of climate change, at 650 ppm, there is a 60-95 per cent chance of 3 degrees C of warming.

In his book *Heat*, George Monbiot estimated that to avoid two degrees of warming a global emission cut of 60 per cent per capita between now and 2030 is highly required. This translates into an 87 per cent cut in the U.K. A recent paper in the journal of Climate Change emphasizes that the sensitivity of global temperatures to greenhouse gas concentrations remains uncertain. But using the average figure, to obtain a 50 per cent chance of preventing more than 2 degrees C of warming requires a global cut of 80 per cent by 2050. This is a cut in total emissions, not in emissions per head. If the population were to rise from 6 billion to 9 billion between now and then, an 87 per cent cut in global emissions per person. If carbon emissions are to be distributed equally, the greater cut must be made by the biggest polluters: rich nations like the US and other western countries. The U.K's emissions per capita would need to fall by 91 per cent. But the rich countries appear to quietly have abandoned

their aim of preventing dangerous climate change, condemning millions to death. What the IPCC report shows is that the time is to stop treating climate change as an urgent issue. The nations of the world have to start treating it as an international emergency. Since the United States contributes about 25% of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, its own policy could make a large difference.

Global climate change is different from other environmental problems. First, emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other trace gases are almost irreversible; more precisely, their residence time in the atmosphere is measured in centuries. Most environmental problems are mitigated promptly or unfairly short order when the source is cleaned up, as with water pollution, acid rain or sulfur dioxide emissions. Here, reducing emissions today is very valuable to humanity in the distant future. Second, the scale of the externality is truly global; greenhouse gases travel around the world in a few days. This means that the nation-state and its subsidiaries, the typical loci for internalization of externalities, are limited in their remedial ability. The poor countries appear to be most vulnerable to the dangerous climate change, mostly a doing of the rich.

Coming to the very root of the crisis, Science provided the ontological foundation to Political Science to look at the nature and the poor who do not have the wherewithal to have a commodious living as "the other" to be exploited or harnessed for one's end. The entire Earth was looked down upon as a compendium of lifeless raw materials to cater to the materialistic ends of those humans who are propertied or rational in the words of English philosopher Locke, because they have property. To attainment of these goals- wealth production and commodious living by the wealthy few believing in exorbitant consumption and inordinate life style as quintessential of development, the entire Earth has been subjugated and robbed of its bounties at the cost of nature, other humans, non-human living and future generations. That everybody is a self-sufficing and aggrandizing part disjointed from the whole has resulted in a mechanical view of the universe. The concept of development based on this paradigm has been the development of one against the other. Woven into this paradigm was the concept of security, which was the security of one or one group, or one state against the other. Today, the devastating consequences of climate change and its

pervasiveness, impacting the very survival of entire humanity, have spurred the traditional security planners into thinking anew what so far they have defined as development and established frame of mind about security in terms of disjointed parts and others as mere objectivities not as inter subjectivities. A profound affirmation of this is found in Eastern insight epitomized in the Indian Upanishads: “The entire universe is like a family” [ Basudheiba kutumbakam]. No man is like an island. Everybody is the inseparable whole. In more mundane terms, as the rich countries and wealthy people have enjoyed, usurped, and destroyed the atmosphere at the cost of the other (humans, nature, living and non-living, and the future generations), they must not only come forward to cut down their consumption, rethink their lifestyle and pattern of development, and follow exemplarily new environmental ethics but also help, support and promote the rest of the world in adapting to the changing planetary system. Martin Parry, a climate scientist with the United Kingdom’s Met Office, said destructive changes in temperature, rainfall and agriculture were now forecast to occur several decades earlier than thought. Vulnerable people, such as the old and poor, would be worst affected, and world leaders had not yet accepted that their countries would have to adapt to the likely consequences. Co-chairman of the IPCC working group, Professor Parry said: “We are all used to talking about these impacts coming in the lifetimes of our children and grand children. Now we know that it is us.” He added that politicians had wasted a decade by focusing only on ways to cut emissions, and had only recently woken up to the need to adapt. “Mitigation has got all the attention, but we cannot mitigate out of this problem. We now have a choice between a future with a damaged world or a severely damaged world.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Quoted by David Adam, “How climate change will affect the world”, Guardian Newspapers in *The Hindu*, 20 September 2007.