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## **UNIT 11 HUMAN SECURITY\***

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### **11.0 OBJECTIVES**

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In this Unit, you will be reading about human security. After going through this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- The concept of human security;
- Difference between human security and traditional security; and
- Interdependent nature of human rights, human development and human security

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### **11.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Conflicts are an inherent part of human nature. Conflicts can be settled by adhering to peace at any cost. Peace cannot be achieved unless use of violence is shunned to settle conflicts and non-violence is observed. The term non-violence should be understood not as an absence of physical injury but as an active force of love towards one and all - including human beings, animals and plants. While conflicts destroy the harmonious fabric of human society, peace brings them together. Conflict divides people, peace unites them. If human beings are to live a peaceful and harmonious life, the first requisite is the absence of conflict that leads to a secure and peaceful life. Violence perpetuates disharmony, peace brings tolerance, love and amity. In today's parlance, human security is what defines a peaceful life – an environment devoid of conflict, stress and negativity. Human Security is an emerging pattern for understanding worldwide susceptibilities wherein the notion of traditional security is challenged and given as an alternative concept of human security; it is considered as a primary condition for ensuring national, regional and global security.

The concept of human security and its evolution is a consequence of developments of a post-Cold War, multi-disciplinary understanding of security involving a

number of research areas, including development studies, international relations, strategic studies and human rights. The report of the United Nations Development Programme (1994) *Human Development Report* is considered as one of the thought-provoking publication in the field of human security. The Report emphasized two important concepts – freedom from want and freedom from fear for all. These two concepts are like two pillars that elevate the sacredness of the concept of human security.

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## 11.2 DEFINING HUMAN SECURITY: UNDP DEFINITION

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Dr. Mahbub Ul Haq was the first to draw global attention to the concept of human security in the United Nations Development Programme's 1994 *Human Development Report*. It was discussed in the UN's 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen (Denmark). The UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report's definition of human security says that the scope of global security should be expanded to include threats in seven areas as of importance.

*Political Security:* Political security is concerned with the fact whether people live in a society that honours their basic human rights. As per the report by Amnesty International, some of the violations include political repression, systematic torture, ill treatment, disappearance in most of the countries. Human rights violations are often the consequence of political unrest. In many cases, the state itself has been identified as the violator of human rights by repressing individuals and groups; the state is also found to exercise control over free flow of ideas and information.

*Economic Security:* Economic security means an assurance of basic income for an individual who, by productive work or labour or in whatever profession or work one may get into, earns a livelihood. It is important to note that only about a quarter of the world's people or a minuscule percentage of people are presently economically secure. Most of the developing countries are struggling with provision of employment to their citizens. It is also not confined to developing countries but also in developed countries as well. Also, most of the governments try to come to power by assuring its people the benefits of employment. Often, unemployment problems had led to clashes among people of different states/provinces and have even led to massive violence and untoward incidents.

*Health Security:* Health Security is one of the most vital components of any policy as forwarded by governments. It aims to assure protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles. In developing countries, the major causes of death are infectious and parasitic diseases, which kill millions of people annually. In developed countries too, health care has become an important aspect of public life and many of these nations are even facing a shortage of medical staff. According to the United Nations, in both developing and developed countries, threats to health security are usually greater for poor people in rural areas, and particularly among women and children. Absence of healthy diet, malnutrition and insufficient supply of medicine, clean water and food aggravate the situation.

*Food Security:* Food security requires that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food. As per the report of the United Nations, it is not the overall availability of food that poses a challenge but an improper and

poor distribution of food and a lack of purchasing power to some extent. While importing of food items remained a constant feature in the past among many countries, ever since food security as a basic right has gained prominence, it is being addressed at both national and international levels. Food security is also closely related to economic security wherein the purchasing power often determines the quality of the food taken.

*Environmental Security:* it is relatively a new addition to the rights as assured by the national and international organizations and governments. It aims to protect people from both the short and long-term ravages of nature, man-made disasters, and deterioration and depletion of the natural environment and resources. Some of the major concerns of both the national and international organizations related to environmental security are air and water pollution, lack of clean water, and access to safe environmental standards. In industrial countries, one of the major threats is air pollution. Global warming and climate change, caused by the emission of greenhouse gases, is another environmental security issue.

*Individual and Community Security:* Individual security aims to protect people from physical violence, be it from the state or any other external state/forces, from violent individuals, groups, state and sub-state actors; protection includes safety from domestic abuse, or from predatory adults. It also aims to protect people from small to heinous crimes and violent activities. Community security aims to protect people from the loss of general relationships, ideals and from social, sectarian, religious and ethnic violence. Communities that are smaller in number, minorities, ethnic groups, etc., are particularly vulnerable to violence and its effects. About half of the world's states have come across one or other forms of inter-ethnic strife.

Most of the UNDP's seven categories of threats would receive adequate global attention and resources due to constant monitoring and policy formulations. This has led to an important development in the sense that two significant concepts emerged out of these initiatives for human security. One, is the "*Freedom from Fear*" and the other "*Freedom from Want*". The UNDP 1994 report has reiterated that human security requires attention to both *freedom from fear* and *freedom from want*. In course of time, there have been variations in this because questions have been raised as to what kind of threats people face, the part of the world they come from and the state's initiatives to ensure security for them. Further, the mechanisms for responding to these threats have varied widely and these have also been contemplated thoroughly by the authorities concerned.

*(i) Freedom from Fear:* This school seeks to limit the practice of Human Security in protecting individuals from violent conflicts while recognising that these violent threats are strongly associated with poverty, lack of state capacity and other forms of inequities. This approach argues that limiting the focus to violence is a realistic and manageable approach towards Human Security. Emergency assistance, conflict prevention and resolution, peace-building are the main concerns of this approach.

*(ii) Freedom from Want:* This school advocates a holistic approach in achieving human security and argues that the threat agenda should be broadened to include hunger, disease and natural disasters because they are inseparable concepts in addressing the root of human insecurity and they kill far more people than war, genocide and terrorism combined. Different from "*Freedom from Fear*", it expands the focus beyond violence with emphasis on development and security goals.

### 11.2.1 Security as a State/National Concept

In original, the concept of security to individual or groups in a state was based on the concept of territorial sovereignty. The moment, there was violation in this, it was considered as a breach of security and the traditional methods of protection for people through arms was taken up. Human security, therefore, was secured by ensuring state/national security. This would hold the sovereignty of the nation as a supreme characteristic of state protection. This means protection of people living within territorial boundaries and also the protection of boundaries of the state from external aggression. Territorial integrity therefore was the prime concern. The more secure, one's boundaries are from external threats, the more secure a nation is. The responsibility of protection of national security/state security or people security was that of the government's in general. It is supposed to invest finances and human resources to secure the state. When sovereignty is guaranteed and enforced, the state security including sovereignty is automatically ensured.

### 11.2.2 Shift to 'People-centered' Concept

The concern for human security rose from the consequent losses of people and nations in the frequent wars that shook the world in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. International organizations that subsequently came up brought this concern forward and reiterated their commitment to secure people and nations henceforth. "The Second World War and subsequent deliberations in various UN-based conferences brought out the limitations of state or national sovereignty-based security and the need for protecting people's lives". This concept turned the focus on rights and security of people. This led the United Nations General Assembly to adopt the 'Universal Declaration on Human Rights' that called for safeguarding the rights of the people and protecting them in various ways to ensure a good life for the people. This Declaration was adopted on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1948 and categorically states at the end of its Preamble that the United Nations General Assembly:

Proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the people's of territories under their jurisdiction.

Further, The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1993 states clearly that (Part 1, Para 1) (Human Rights, 1994, p.194):

The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirms the solemn commitment of all states to fulfill their obligations to promote universal respect for, and observance and protection of, all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, other instruments relating to human rights, and international law. The universal nature of these rights and freedoms is beyond question.

In this framework, enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights is essential for the full achievement of the purposes of the United Nations.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings; their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of the governments.

It goes to the credit of then president of the United States of America, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in his address to the Nation in 1941 outlined four essential freedoms stating that “we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

‘The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want – which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings that will secure to every nation a healthy peace-time life for its inhabitants – everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear, which translated in into world terms means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such thorough fashion that no nation would be able to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour – anywhere in the world.” (p.41, Human Rights, 1994).

President Roosevelt wanted these to be achieved not in a distant millennium. This vision “is a definite basis for a world attainable in our own time and generation.” (p.41, Human Rights,1994).

This clearly demonstrates that the end of the world wars led to a significant development and concern for human rights and security. To this day, this security is often discussed as the most valuable contribution of mankind towards each other for a safer and better world.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

4) Explain the concept of human security as described in the 1994 *Human Development Report*.

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## 11.3 HUMAN SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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In the sphere of Human Rights, a well-known subject since the formation of the international organizations, the discussion mostly on how the rights of the human beings should be ensured by the state irrespective of class or any other difference. While the concept of a good life also has been included in the sphere of human rights, the policies by the governments around the world centred on how each and every aspect of human life has to be protected and safeguarded. Out of this emerged the concepts of human development and more recently, the concept of human security. The national governments, international organizations and also the world economic organizations are also taking active part in prescribing a safe and fulfilled life for one and all throughout the world. Development does not mean only economic development. It includes social, political, cultural and environmental aspects of human life as well. The inclusion of the non-economic aspects has gained more attention of the world and therefore the concepts of human rights, human development and human security have become much integrated concepts. This, in a way, ensures a balanced development in society and also ensures the inclusion of all while formulating policies for the welfare of the people.

The international financial institutions are also actively involved in promoting this initiative as it secures a better life for people. In fact, some of the terms and conditions while disbursing loans are centred on human rights and the standards of living a nation is trying to provide for its citizens. More and more issues are closely intertwined with these concepts like rehabilitation of affected people in the natural and man-made disasters, non-exploitation of labour, prohibition of child labour and safety standards ensured for the employees and so on. The focus is mainly on seeking the assistance of developmental agencies in planning and influencing an additional holistic development that guarantees human security. The aim is to protect the vulnerable segments of the society and promote human security. The development and security initiatives are to be reflected in the policies as initiated by the agencies and governments concerned.

### 11.3.1 Modern Concept of Human Security

Security, traditionally, meant the absence of threat from external aggression and protection of territorial boundaries of a nation. Security was something that eluded the world till the wars lasted. An initiative at the international level was taken to give fillip to the concept of security worldwide. But the beginning of the Cold War that lasted till the 1990s changed the concept of security. There was an element of insecurity in the world with different nations aligning with the US and erstwhile USSR. While the Cold War ended in 1990s, it gave rise to new issues and concerns around the world. The world was free from bloc politics but what really bothered the nations was development that was relegated to the background during the previous years.

An initiative was taken by nations that intended to focus more on human development and human rights as the harbingers of security. Thus the emergence of Human Security as an important element of human life came into prominence. The traditional concept of security did not encompass all the aspects of human life. Nowhere was the social or cultural aspect taken into consideration while

formulating policies. Therefore, in order to include all – the poor, the needy, the marginalized, the disabled and so on – the concept of human right and development expanded to new proportions. It was comprehended that the human rights approach should be reinforced with welfare measures and security of the people should be realized through this. The need of the hour was people-centred security that was absolutely essential for national, regional and global stability. Therefore the concept included many disciplines that are directly concerned with each other and intermingled with astuteness. These included a fusion of concepts of human security encompassing development studies, strategic studies, human rights, economics and international relations. The UNDP's 1994 *Human Development Report* (HDR 1994) was a landmark that brought forth the need for human security to fight global insecurities that troubled people all over the world for a long time.

The HDR 1994 has brought out few significant points which are summarized as below:

- i) It mentioned the idea of sustainable human development wherein people feel protected at all times.
- ii) It categorically mentioned that the conflicts which are likely to emerge in future should be confined to the disputing parties and not to be spilled into others.
- iii) It should address the main concerns of the parties which may even include deep socio-economic disparities and deprivation.
- iv) Security should mean development and not armed action that could be avoided at all costs.
- v) Security should mean safeguards in areas such as income security, health security, natural environment security and security from petty and serious crimes and so on.

Sabina Alkire, a noted expert on economic and development studies, describes the objective of human security as important to “safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way consistent with long-term human fulfillment.” Her work deserves to be cited in full in this context as she explains the concept of human security with a detailed emphasis. Human security maintains: (i) the joint focus on both poverty and violence; (ii) its ‘people-centered’ nature; (iii) multi-dimensionality; (iv) cultural and pervasive threats to the vital core of peoples’ lives; and (v) the objective of human security be specified and translated into operational policies and projects by principled procedures.

Below is further elaboration of the concept of human security:

- 1) Human security aims to safeguarding human lives from the threat of violent conflicts, diseases and so forth through appropriate institutions and thus institutionalizes protection. The focus is more on human beings than on threat. Human security seeks to envelop some aspects of human life like building capabilities among people to satisfy their basic needs.
- 2) Human security is ‘people-centered’ and the development initiatives associated with human welfare. It means human security should be provided irrespective of age, religion, gender, nationality etc.

- 3) Human security focuses on human lives and their protection from simple to critical threats. Simple threats that include basic insecurity that troubles people on a daily basis or critical threats that affect basic functions of human life.
- 4) Human security aims at human fulfilment through governance, participation, capacity building and so forth for both short and long terms.
- 5) Human security is a global concept and encompasses regions and countries across the globe. It is not just the individuals but also communities should live in collective peace and security and contribute immensely towards the same.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 2

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Briefly describe the relationship between human security, human rights and human development.

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## **11.4 VARIED DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SECURITY**

So far, we have studied about the concept and emergence of human security. It stands for one of the best ways to achieve a contented life for human beings from all angles. Some of its varied dimensions are given as under:

- 1) Human security is a collective issue. It is not restricted to few dimensions of security for example, territorial security. It is much beyond the territorial issues and seeks a quality life of individuals all over the world. It is concerned with economic aspects as much as cultural areas.
- 2) It has an interlinking dimension of the issues. For example, economic insecurity can lead to crimes related to it; malnutrition can lead to long-term and disastrous health effects on individuals. Therefore, its integral approach can never be ignored.
- 3) Human security is a people-centered concept. The very aim of this concept is to increase awareness and also work towards a safe and secure life of individuals as well as communities as a whole.
- 4) Human security is one such concept wherein the issues of concern can be identified and solved at an early stage. For example, identifying disturbed/affected areas and working from an early stage so as to prevent further damage is an important task.



- 5) Human security is an all encompassing concept. It concerns nations-developed and developing; people-rich and poor; issues-from sustaining culture to tackling crimes. Intervention can be one of the effective methods to ensuring a secure life.

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## 11.5 HUMAN SECURITY AND TRADITIONAL SECURITY

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Human security and traditional security are often compared to understand the main objectives and aims.

- 1) Traditional security deals with the security of national territory and its people. Human security deals with people’s security both individual and collective in other spheres different from territorial security.
- 2) Traditional security focus is on the territorial integration and safeguarding of physical boundaries of a state. Nevertheless, both are interdependent concepts. Only when there is no physical threat of aggression, does a state can concentrate on achieving human security goals for its citizens.
- 3) Human security has more to do with economic, social and environmental, food and other related issues. Traditional security aims to uphold national sovereignty; human security and its objectives centre on individual’s/ community’s development for a better life.
- 4) Traditional security is state-oriented subject. Human security is people-oriented arena.
- 5) The threats dealt by traditional security include external aggression and protection of people from enemies. Human security deals with threats like environmental degradation, pollution, diseases, crimes etc.
- 6) Traditional security and related aspects are solely in the purview of the state. Only the government makes for a decisive role. Human security and the related issues are dealt by individuals, communities, non-governmental, local and international communities and organizations.
- 7) The aim of both traditional and human security is same- protection of people from all kinds of insecurities. Both are interdependent concepts and argue for a strong system wherein people’s welfare stands as the ultimate aim.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.  
ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Describe the difference between human security and traditional security.  
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## 11.6 LET US SUM UP

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The concept of human security and its evolution is a consequence of developments of a post-Cold War, multi-disciplinary understanding of security involving a number of research areas, including development studies, international relations, strategic studies and human rights. The report of the United Nations Development Programme (1994) Human Development Report is considered as one of the thought-provoking publication in the field of human security. The Report emphasized two important concepts- freedom from want and freedom from fear for all. These two concepts are like two pillars that elevate the sacredness of the concept of human security. Most of the UNDP's seven categories of threats would receive adequate global attention and resources due to constant monitoring and policy formulations. This has led to an important development in the sense that two significant concepts emerged out of these initiatives for human security. One, is the "Freedom from Fear" and the other "Freedom from Want". The UNDP 1994 report has reiterated that human security requires attention to both *freedom from fear* and *freedom from want*. In course of time, there have been variations in this because questions have been risen as to what kind of threats people face, the part of the world they come from and the state's initiatives to ensure security for them. Further, the mechanisms for responding to these threats have varied widely and these have also been contemplated thoroughly by the authorities concerned. The concern for human security rose from the consequent losses of people and nations in the frequent wars that shook the world in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. International organizations that subsequently came up brought this concern forward and reiterated their commitment to secure people and nation's security and safety.

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## 11.7 SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

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## 10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer should include following
  - Human security as defined in the UNDP Report of 1994

**Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

- 1) Your answer should include following.
  - the linkage between human security, human rights and human development.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

- 1) Your answer should include following.
  - Human security as against the idea of traditional state security

