

South Asia Human Security Series

# Human Security Index for South Asia

Exploring Relevant Issues

Abdur Rob Khan  
A. K. M. Abdus Sabur

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Bangladesh Institute of  
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## ***South Asia Human Security Series***

**South Asia Human Security Series** is the product of a three-year regional collaborative research project titled, *Human Security in South Asia: Discourse, Practice and Policy Proposition* conducted by BIISS under the aegis of the Ford Foundation, New Delhi, 2003-06. The aim of the project has been to provide an understanding of the prevailing discourses and practices on human security in South Asia as well as to generate inputs for policy making at regional and national levels. Five individual country papers on Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and five thematic areas: (a) Constructing a Human Security Index for South Asia; (b) Violence, Terrorism and Human Security; (c) Ethnicity and Human Security; (d) Gender and Human Security; (e) Marginalisation and Human Security – were covered. The outcome is the present series.

## ***The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)***

**The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)** is an autonomous research organisation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh. The Institute was founded in 1978 to undertake research and promote deliberation on foreign policy, security and development. The Institute publishes regularly a quarterly Journal, *BIISS Journal*, organises seminars/conferences and undertakes research projects. More about the Institute at: [www.biiss.org](http://www.biiss.org)

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## *Abbreviations*

ALARD	Association for Land Reform and Development
ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections
ASK	Ain O Salish Kendra
BIISS	Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
BIPA	Bangladesh Indigenous and Hill People's Association for Advancement
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust
CCHRB	Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh
CEP	Centro de Estudios Públicos
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIFP	Country Indicator for Foreign Policy
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FLACSO	Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences
G8	Group of eight rich countries of the world
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HGI	Humane Governance Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
HRC	Human Rights Council



HSN	Human Security Network
ICES	International Centre for Ethnic Studies
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IDRC	Canadian International Development Research Centre
IDSS	Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies
IHS	Individual Human Security
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCS	Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies
IRS	Institute of Regional Studies
JIIA	Japan Institute of International Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIAS	Netaji Institute of Asian Studies
NTS	Non-Traditional Security
OHSI	Objective Human Security Index
OMCT	World Organisation against Torture
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PBC	Peace-Building Commission
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
SAFHR	South Asian Forum for Human Rights
SEHD	Society for Environment and Human Development
SHSI	Subjective Human Security Index
UBINIG	Unnayan Bikalper Niti Nirdharani Gobesana
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WISCOMP	Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace
YIHS	Years of Individual Human Security

## *Preface*

The security of the individual and people, as against the security of the state, has emerged as the prime concern of all analysts and practitioners dealing with human security. The whole gamut of security needs of the individual and people is encapsulated into two fundamental concerns: 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear'. While both concerns are important, analysts continue to disagree on whether preference should be given to 'freedom from want' or 'freedom from fear'. Depending on the answer, human security analysts are divided into two camps. A third approach, however, makes attempts to synthesise the two views. Thus, by now, a process of intense debate regarding human security and pertinent issues among disparate schools of thoughts has been initiated. In the process, a sizable body of literature on human security has been created. However, the articulation of a succinct theoretical conception on the subject is far from being complete and discussions on some of the pertinent issues have just begun.

The practical application of the concept of human security, in different forms, has already covered greater length than conceptual and theoretical discourses. A pertinent question arises in this context: why to construct a human security index for South Asia? In the process of justifying the case for the construction of a human security index, considerable attention has been paid by academia as well as practitioners in the field to questions like, why do we need a human security index and what use do we have for such an index? Whether and how far a human security index would facilitate our quest for acquiring scientific knowledge in related fields? Will such an index be a tool in formulating/implementing appropriate policy towards the prevailing challenges in the field of human security? Attempts have been made in the book to satisfy these and a host of other pertinent queries.

In positivist social sciences—that have the goal of determining causal and correlative relationship—measurement is seen as an

essential exercise. It may be pointed out that the world has become accustomed to the use of measures and composite indices since the UN first introduced the Human Development Index (HDI) in 1993. This was followed by Human Poverty Index (HPI) introduced by the UN in 1997, Corruption Perception Index (CPI) introduced by the Transparency International in 1995, Humane Governance Index (HGI) introduced by Mahbub ul Haq Centre and others. Thus, a human security index would also promote public understanding, engagement and support of human security, and uphold its underlying imperatives.

We proposed a framework that will lead to the creation of two sets of reports for South Asia—an Annual Human Security Report and a Human Security Index. The annual report will give a systematic but descriptive picture of different categories and indicators of human security in the context of South Asia while the human security index will present a synthesised and customised version of the data base. A single set of categories and indicators of insecurity could be used for this purpose. In what follows, the framework of the annual human security report and the methodology of constructing human security index for South Asia are outlined. Finally, the need for undertaking efforts to produce an annual report as well as construct a human security index on South Asia was underscored with a sense of urgency. If the book generates new interests among concerned professionals and practitioners, and invigorates their pursuit on the subject, we would consider our efforts a meaningful exercise.

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