# Human Security Index for South Asia

Exploring Relevant Issues

Abdur Rob Khan A. K. M. Abdus Sabur

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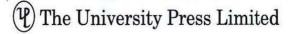
## Human Security Index for South Asia

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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)

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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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