
**Infectious Diseases Emerging as a Non-Traditional Security Threat for Pakistan's
National Security After 9/11**

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Abstract

In International politics, human security is a new phenomenon, which deals with the issues of governance and human rights. In political terms, the recent transformation of attention from traditional security to Non-traditional security is a matter of distress for the international community. The linkage between national security and infectious diseases as a non-traditional security imperative is comparatively a new phenomenon in Pakistan. Infectious diseases have become a fact of life in Pakistan, which poses a serious threat to national security. In the preceding years, Pakistan has suffered from different contagious diseases like Dengue, Congo fever, Polio, and recently Coronavirus. To overcome this non-traditional security threat requires an integrated and coordinated approach from the governmental and non-governmental institutions to address the health security issues holistically. The paper examines the effects of the outbreaks of these infectious diseases in Pakistan as a non-traditional security issue that poses a serious threat to its national security.

Keywords: Human Security, Non-Traditional Security, Infectious Diseases, Corona Virus

Introduction

After September 11, 2001, environmental degradation, globalization, climate change, and infectious diseases pooled to open a new perspective of security that is human security. At the turn of the 21st century, national security is heavily dependent on the hard power phenomenon. It takes into account the non-traditional security issues to make sure the widespread national security. (Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI), 2018) The attention shifted from a military perspective, which led the global security outlook to non-traditional issues, with the much-enhanced role of new variables like Health Security, Environmental Security, Economic Security, and other societal forces. The non-conventional security approach emphasis on non-military security concerns. They are mostly global in nature and can be characterized in terms of economics, political and social means. (Raazia, 2015) However, the health sector in each state plays a crucial role in fostering economic growth. Better health standards indirectly boost the impact of human development and rates of economic growth which enhanced the state's financial resources. In the current scenario, the emerging healthcare issues including transmittable syndromes have drawn worldwide attention specifically in the third world states, countries like Pakistan in South Asia. Earlier the security and health-related issues hold a distinct realm but in the current scenario, the imperative blend between health and national security issues has been accredited by the policymakers in developed and also in the developing world.

In the last few years, there has been an upsurge in non-conventional security issues to the national security of Pakistan consistently, such as transmissible syndromes. In this context, a few line of actions to this particular non-traditional security issue that, could cause a threat to the state's security, like political instability, economic meltdown, mutilation on health infrastructure, and the increased rates of mortality. Mirza A.A. Baig argues that "the structure and function of the contemporary healthcare arrangements in Pakistan is far below international criteria and ranked at 122 out of 190 states in terms of healthcare standards."(Baig, 2019) Moreover, the emerging contagious

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syndromes are a burden on the local economy and can distress the environmental and socio-economic issues of the state. Furthermore, in a state of denial for few years, the international community and particularly in recent times, Pakistan recognized the potentials threats coming from these infectious diseases as a serious issue of national security. Primarily, this study focuses on the effects of these health security issues on the national security of Pakistan and that how the emerging link between infectious diseases and Pakistan's national security has been perceived. Furthermore, this research also shed a light on current status and capacity to deal with the issue like outbreaks and pandemics of infectious diseases which pose a real threat to its national security.

Theoretical Perspective

The approach of human security is to protect the individuals from traditional and non-traditional security challenges such as prevention from infectious diseases and poverty are imminent threats to the state's security. According to the UNO Human Development Report, redefined the concept of security as "people everywhere, in rich nations and in poor. The threats to their security may differ-hunger and disease in poor nations and drugs and crime in rich nations-but these threats are real and growing. Some threats are indeed common to all nations-job insecurity and environmental threats" (Human Development Report, 1994). Furthermore, Mahbub ul Haq defined Human security must be regarded as "universal, global and indivisible" (Haq, 1995). The traditional approach of linkage between infectious diseases and security often concentrated on the effects of health on traditional security, like to protect the military from the infectious diseases in the 20th century. The connection between disease and warfare is as old as the conflict itself and that's why the traditional approach focused on the threat of disease dispersion across the boundaries. In recent times, global attention has recently been paid to this vital issue that how infectious diseases affect the international community and state's national security.

Research Methodology

The research is based on a qualitative method and descriptive in nature that revolves around the basic concept of non-traditional security issues, whether is a state-centric or non-state entity. However, the non-traditional security issues description is further linked with a holistic approach to solve these emerging issues. However, for this purpose, data from books and journal articles are analyzed under the content analysis technique. The content analysis technique is generally acknowledged for qualitative study methods. "Content Analysis is an investigative method for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the context of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004). This research technique is helpful to understand the meaningful analysis from the secondary sources and to evaluate the wide range of data systematically. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the state's security apparatus by doing a content analysis investigation and to scrutinize that how military and civil society give input to the national security structures. (Surwandono Surwandono, 2016)

Infectious Diseases emerging as a Health & Non-Traditional Security Issue in Pakistan after 9/11. Andrew T. Price-Smith argued that, "the antiquity of human social orders is full with evidence that altered in the symmetry among the humans and their microbial predators can lead to substantial social deterioration and subsequent changes." (Price-Smith, 2002). Furthermore, Syed Javed Khurshid discussed that, "there are some eight emerging diseases mentioned by WHO, but very few cases are reported. In some cases, the origin is known and some are not known (basically these were detected in Africa, 2 in Asia,1 in China and 1 in South Africa)"(Khurshid, 2019). Pakistan is among the fastest-growing populous country in the world.

The emergence of infectious viruses as a nonconventional threat can be a troublesome state of affairs for developing countries like Pakistan especially after 9/11. The main reason behind the emergence of this non-traditional health security issue is due to flaws in the primary healthcare setups and in this connection, the environmental conditions and outbreaks always find a way in the local inhabitants. The intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are envisaging that the nation-state is under threat for many epidemics in the coming years due to lack of primary health care, the nonexistence of public health facilities, and more importantly, lack of public awareness about these issues. In the past few years, it has faced many catastrophes like floods, earthquakes, and specifically the Afghan refugee's problems and the locally displaced people due to the fight against terrorism after September 11, 2001. Over the past almost two decades, the diversion of public funds to address this eminent non-traditional security threat create a major hurdle to take care of the primary

health sector in the country. There are the following few important infectious disease, which created a serious concern about health security issues that linked to national security in Pakistan.

Polio is an Infectious Syndrome

The majority of the world states get rid of the virus except the few third world countries in which Pakistan is included. According to the UNO's specialized agency the WHO, Pakistan is one of only two residual countries in the world with ongoing wild poliovirus transmission, along with Afghanistan. (Pakistan, Polio Eradication Initiative, n.d.) This Polio Virus is found in contaminated water; through which it can be transmitted to the population. Pakistan is still struggling to overcome this infectious disease due to lack of a political will and more importantly the religious misconceptions about this disease. To address this, issue every government tries to start the vaccination campaign with the help of Intergovernmental organizations like United Nations Organizations but due to discontinuity in policies and weak healthcare setups created apprehensions for further progress. In this regard, "the Japanese government provided \$4.5 million grant aid for procurement of 22.9 million doses of oral polio vaccine, thereby assisting Pakistan to reach over 20 million under-five children during immunization drives planned from December 2019 to November 2020" (Japan to provide \$4.5m aid for polio eradication, 2019). Furthermore, the lack of political will to eradicate this menace can create a threat to national security in upcoming years. However, it is hoped that future governmental initiatives can eradicate this menace from the country.

Dengue Virus as a Contagious Disease

Dengue illness is also categorized as an embryonic infectious disease in Pakistan. The virus has also badly affected the global community, with thousands of death per year. However, this infectious disease is reported recurrently in the monsoon season, which provides a conducive environment for the virus to cause fever. This virus initially hit Pakistan in the decade of 1980s and it was first noted in 1994 and considered common to Pakistan and its neighboring countries (Ali Talha Khalil, 2017). But later on in 2013 & 2014, again the outbreak created an emergency-like situation particularly in Punjab and Sindh with several deaths. To overcome this virus, it is expected that the government should support the health sector to develop vaccinations to prevent people from dengue virus with the cost-effectiveness.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Syndrome

These infectious diseases not only impact the public health sector but also affect the economies and political systems of the unitary actors of the international system for a certain period. Coronaviruses emerged as a global biothreat to the international community in the 21st century. The human coronavirus history is traced back to the decade of 1960s by infected the human respiratory system. However, the recent outbreak of new coronavirus also known as Covid-19 affected the international community at large. The WHO confirmed this outbreak as an epidemic as it has spread almost all over the globe. Pakistan is also affected by this outbreak, which causes a huge loss to its health security, economy and also compromised its security interests in the wake of the work delayed in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. In this regard, Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal argued that the spread of SARS-CoV-2 could cause panic in the Pakistani society due to weak emergency response systems specifically the health system. In that particular environment, the fear and panic could prompt unrest among the people and the government should prepare for a law and order emergency (Jaspal, 2020). To overcome this outbreak, that facilities need to be developed and strengthen the public health sector to eliminate this infectious disease from the country.

Socio-Political problems in containing these communicable syndromes

Pakistan has faced many social problems to address this non-traditional security threat, which cause a huge loss to its social fabric from the last few decades. There are few social and political issues, like terrorism, internally displaced persons, poverty, and religious misconceptions are considered to be a challenge to counter infectious diseases.

The non-traditional security threat like terrorism affect Pakistan's political, economic, and social fabric for almost two decades. The non-state actor's activities created hurdles to health care setups in the affected areas of the country. To overcome infectious diseases like polio, measles, dengue virus, and currently the coronavirus (Covid-19) and other outbreaks in the conflict zone areas became impossible due to the adverse security situations. More importantly, the non-state actors are targeting the vaccination teams pose a serious threat to eradicate the viral diseases from these affected areas.

Another social issue in containing these transmittable viruses are the internally displaced persons and Afghan Refugee from the Soviet-Afghan War in the 1980s and after 9/11 also poses a security threat. Pakistan is one of the largest countries to have a huge burden of refugees and internally displaced persons due to the Afghan War and terrorism-affected areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. According to the UNO High Commissioner for Refugees, "that more than 3.8 million refugees have been repatriated to Afghanistan since 2002" (Latif, 2020). These people are vulnerable to these infectious diseases due to the congested environment that facilitates the transmission of these viruses to people who are living in refugee camps. To address these issues the government machinery should develop a certain kind of mechanism to control these diseases from the affected areas.

Poverty is another social issue that contributes to proliferate the viral diseases in the country. The majority of the population in Pakistan is living under miserable conditions like unhygienic food and water which are prone to viral diseases at large. The COVID-19 is estimated to have far-reaching adverse effect on Pakistan's economy and the poverty line might get doubled going up to 125 million from existing figure of 50 to 60 million" (Haider, 2020). Due to the poor conditions of the masses, they don't have much economic access to hospitals and medications. The issue of poverty is very much linked to the state's security apparatus because due to the scarcity of economic resources, the masses cannot have some better social standards to overcome these epidemics.

Religious misapprehensions are also another hurdle to contain the infectious diseases in the country. Predominantly, the Polio vaccination campaigns are badly affected due to the misconception that these vaccines have some harmful agents by the religious preachers. However, to overcome the issue of these infectious outbreaks, religious scholars should play a constructive role to eradicate the menace from the country.

Concrete Steps to address these non-traditional security Concerns

Pakistan has faced a serious threat from infectious ailments due to their poor structure and function of the healthcare system and a lack of political will. It has a low public health standard as compare to the rest of the world. It adopted a Disease early warning system with the assistance of the World Health Organization to tackle the issue of contagious viruses, but unfortunately, that was not executed at the local level because the local government system in Pakistan is not up to the mark to handle these issues. The current outbreak of coronavirus in the country raises concerns about the preparedness of the health sector to contain this pandemic. To address these issues, the government should discuss the core health issues through the stakeholders and adopt a uniform kind of policy to eradicate these syndromes, and also empower the local government structure to tackle these pandemics smoothly. Moreover, the government should allocate a sufficient budget, especially to address these imminent issues, and also to maintain public health standards to overcome these viral diseases.

Essential Recommendations for Combat against Infectious Diseases

The above discussion manifests that, Pakistan is vulnerable to infectious diseases and from biothreat. Therefore, dealing with better defensive measures is important for her. Unfortunately, the development of indigenous vaccines is far behind the growing number of infectious diseases. The government should develop an effective surveillance system that connects with the local, national and international health system. It should also invest in the production of vaccines to prevent the masses in the time of crises. The government should strengthen its institutional response capacities at all levels. It should also improve the public health infrastructure to identify the unusual outbreaks of infectious diseases at an early stage. In this context, the government should be enhancing the capabilities of hospitals are essential countermeasures. Furthermore, the federal government had a better option to designate medical centers, which gathered the information to determine the communicable disease effect and to countermeasure it with a strong response.

Conclusion

In the contemporary era, health security has gain prominence in the majority of the nation-state system. The increasing interdependence in international politics dictates the states to cooperate among themselves on emerging public health issues, like currently the infectious diseases. It can easily transfer through pathogen agents. In this regard, international collaboration is required for augmenting the biosecurity of the state. Furthermore, the only way to deal with these non-traditional security threats, an integrated and strategic approach, which includes both military and non-military capabilities are necessary to address these issues. In Pakistan, the lack of healthcare structure has

resulted in a reservoir for infectious diseases like Polio, Dengue virus, currently the Covid-19 from the family of coronaviruses. In the current circumstances, it may not have the capability to tackle these serious problems like coronavirus. In this need of the hour, the international community's efforts are required to eradicate the emerging infectious disease. A well-planned and integrated effort is required to deal with the threat of infectious syndromes.

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