



The Complex Interplay between Food Insecurity and Conflict in Balochistan: A Non-Traditional Security Perspective

Tayyaba Razzaq

Research Associate- NUST Institute of Policy Studies

Email: researchassociate.nips@nust.edu.pk

Introduction

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and least developed region, has been at the epicenter of numerous hostilities for decades. Balochistan has frequently been evaluated from the standpoint of traditional security. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the connection between non-traditional security challenges, specifically food shortages, and Balochistan's unrest. Non-traditional security risks include climate change, poverty, economic instability, and food insecurity, all of which have a substantial impact on the security of a nation and its people.

The paper suggests that the dangers of food insecurity grow amid economic turbulence, resulting in racial and ethnic conflicts, among other sorts of conflicts, as communities compete for food supplies. The research investigates in greater detail the effects of inadequate infrastructure, an unstable environment, and the local class system on food security. The results indicate that the national food security plan should be strengthened by expanding coordination in research and technology especially in agriculture, increasing investment in research and development, and enhancing human resources and human capital.

Investing in education and skills training, empowering women, and eliminating rural-urban inequities are among the key policy actions that can prevent residents from experiencing food insecurity. In addition, the study argues that food insecurity could be mitigated by improving nutrition programs and diversifying food systems. The research report also assesses the needs, vulnerabilities, and capability of the human security framework in Balochistan, as well as the impact of threats and their interrelationships with different aspects of human security.

Hence, the research encapsulates that Balochistan's conflicts should be studied through a non-traditional security lens that includes food security and other non-traditional security problems. The study highlights the need for an integrated approach to address the various facets of food security and offers policy approaches that can aid in combating food poverty and its link to violence in Balochistan. The purpose of this study is to contribute to a more comprehensive knowledge of the Balochistan conflict and its contributing aspects.

Conflict and alternative forms of security can be considered as two sides of the same coin. The conventional view of security emphasizes the deployment of military might to guard against threats to the state and its citizens. Unconventional forms of safety may become more in demand during times of war. The breakdown of social order and the proliferation of non-traditional security risks are two potential outcomes of armed conflict. As an alternative to conventional approaches to security, non-traditional security (NTS) emphasizes other factors, such as economic and social stability, as well as military and strategic protection. Environmental, health, population, and economic hazards are just a few examples of the non-military security concerns that NTS investigates. Security threats often interact with one another in complex ways, thus it's crucial to use a comprehensive strategy that factors in states, international organizations, and non-state actors, as advocated for by NTS. In addition, NTS stresses the significance of understanding the connections between security and progress and working to eliminate the underlying

causes of insecurity. The mission of NTS is to expand beyond traditional security concerns to include the broader issues of economic, political, and social instability.

On the other hand, violence can also be sparked by "non-traditional security threats." The Syrian civil war, for instance, was exacerbated by a lengthy drought and the ensuing competition over water supplies, demonstrating how climate change as a hazard can lead to conflict over scarce resources.

The connection between war and alternative forms of safety is nuanced and ever evolving. There is a two-way street where war can enhance the risk of terrorist attacks and other forms of non-traditional security threat, and terrorist attacks can spark war. To solve these problems, we need integrated approaches that take into account both classic and non-traditional security risks, as well as the interplay between them.

Conflict also creates an unsafe atmosphere for people to live in. As social order breaks down as a result of war, people often have less of what they need to live healthy, productive lives: food, shelter, education, and healthcare. Communities can be made more susceptible to environmental degradation, pandemics, and international crime as a result of an increase in displacement and damage of infrastructure caused by conflict.

Moreover, hostile actors can employ non-traditional security threats as an instrument of conflict. Cyberattacks, as well as the use of biological weapons, are two examples of how conflict is progressively shifting online. These unconventional dangers can be employed to weaken an enemy and escalate hostilities.

Overall, war and alternative forms of safety go hand in hand. Intensified conflict can enhance the prevalence of non-traditional security concerns, and vice versa. That's why it's crucial to comprehend the interplay between the two and devise comprehensive plans to counteract conventional and unconventional security dangers.

A comprehensive approach that takes into account both classic and non-traditional security threats is necessary if we are to solve these problems successfully. Efforts in this direction could include making changes to the way nations interact with one another to

meet non-traditional security concerns and creating new methods of resolving conflicts to stop them from escalating. Access to basic human rights for conflict-affected populations is also crucial for mitigating the risk of non-traditional security concerns.

Understanding Non-Traditional Security Challenges in Conflict Zones: A General Overview

Conflict and non-traditional security are a subfield of international relations concerned with the causes and effects of violent conflict, as well as its prevention and mitigation. It also investigates the security threats posed by environmental, economic, social, and political factors, which are sometimes disregarded in traditional security studies. As such, it encompasses a vast array of themes, including civil conflicts, pandemics, refugee flows, and climate change.

The security dangers generated by conflict and non-traditional security issues frequently overlap and have the ability to aggravate one another. For instance, environmental deterioration can raise the likelihood of conflicts over finite resources, whereas conflicts themselves can exacerbate environmental degradation. Likewise, economic imbalances and social injustice can lead to discontent and violence, and violence can further impede economic and social progress.

Complex and multidimensional, the roots of conflict and non-traditional security challenges are frequently rooted in underlying power and resource disparities. Inequalities can be caused by structural causes such as poverty, political marginalization, and prejudice, or by the deliberate actions of powerful players.

In response to these obstacles, numerous techniques have been created to lower the likelihood of conflict and alleviate the effects of non-traditional security concerns. These methods encompass both preventive and reactive measures, including conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and development, as well as peacekeeping missions and humanitarian aid.

More than 13 million people call the province of Balochistan their home in Pakistan. Baloch, Pashtun, Brahvi, Hazara, and Sindhi are just a few of the ethnic groups that make up the country. The province is one of Pakistan's poorest, despite its size and resources. Food insecurity is a serious issue, and poverty is pervasive.

The violence in the Balochistan region has made food insecurity worse, although the problem has been around for a long time. The sparked period of instability and violence has yet to abate as there is regional unrest in Balochistan as they feel marginalized. Increase in poverty and food insecurity have resulted from the displacement and internal of people, loss of infrastructure, and disruption of economic activity.

Poverty, violence, and a lack of access to resources are the primary drivers of food insecurity in Balochistan. Most of the population is poor, making poverty a serious issue. The violence has made the situation even worse by disrupting economic activities and limiting people's access to essential resources. Many residents in the area also lack access to basic necessities like food, clean water, and medical care, all of which add to the crisis.

Balochistan's food shortage has far-reaching consequences. As a result, rates of hunger, disease, and lack of access to quality education have all increased. Children who suffer from stunting and wasting due to malnutrition are at a higher risk of developing mental and physical health problems later in life. Increased poverty is a direct result of food insecurity since more people are struggling to get by.

Food insecurity is a problem in Balochistan, and the government there has taken measures to combat it. Subsidizing agricultural inputs, expanding access to markets, and distributing emergency food supplies are all examples of these measures. The government has also established a number of programs to encourage economic growth and job creation, which have contributed to the decline of poverty and the expansion of opportunities.

Balochistan still has a serious problem with food insecurity, notwithstanding these efforts. Because of the ongoing violence and tribal divisions in the region, it has been

difficult to roll out these initiatives, and many people still lack the means to buy food and other necessities. Balochistan's administration and the international community must therefore maintain their cooperation in order to resolve the problem. Improving availability of resources, expanding employment possibilities, and helping those in need will take time. Only then will food insecurity in the region be resolved.

Understanding Balochistan's Food Insecurity through the Lens of Social Identity Theory

In the early 1970s, social psychologists Tajfel developed Social Identity Theory (SIT), a psychological theory. This theory explains how individuals establish social identities depending on their group affiliations and how these identities impact behavior. SIT is founded on the premise that individuals have a need to belong to and feel accepted and appreciated by social groups. It also predicts that individuals will strive to preserve a positive self-image by associating with groups with positive features and avoiding organizations with bad traits.

SIT asserts that a person's social identity is determined by their membership in particular social groupings. By a process of categorization and comparison, this identity is constructed. People evaluate their own group in respect to other groups by comparing and contrasting them. By this process, individuals build an identity based on shared features with the community and frequently reject those that are not shared.

SIT is beneficial for investigating how individuals create identities in connection to their group and how these identities impact their behavior. SIT may be used, for instance, to investigate how individuals in a conflict setting may create identities in opposition to one another. This can be used to investigate how food insufficiency may impact the behavior of individuals in a conflict context, and how this behavior may impact the conflict itself.

The following study has studied the relationship between food insecurity and conflict from a SIT standpoint:

Skitka and Mullen explored the effect of moral conviction on the persistence of attitudes. The authors hypothesized that moral conviction – defined as a feeling of assurance regarding one's moral judgements – can inspire individuals to maintain their positions notwithstanding the presence of strong counterarguments. Three experiments were done in order to evaluate this idea. In the first experiment, participants rated the degree to which they agreed with a contentious statement before reading opposing viewpoints. Those who initially held a higher moral conviction were more likely to keep it, according to the findings. This result was repeated in two further tests employing distinct moral conviction measures.

The findings of Skitka and Mullen's study indicate that moral conviction might strengthen one's attitudes, making them more resistant to change. This discovery has significant implications for both understanding the nature of attitude change and creating strategies to decrease the influence of extreme attitudes. For example, treatments that address moral conviction, such as those that promote critical thinking, may be effective in lowering the persistence of extreme opinions.

In addition, they discovered that moral conviction is a potent incentive for attitude maintenance. The researchers studied the role of moral conviction in the setting of an attitude-change intervention in their second experiment. Participants were randomized randomly to either a control or intervention group. The intervention group was instructed to consider the contested statement critically and balance the benefits and cons of their perspective. Those with originally strong moral conviction were less likely to change their opinions in response to the intervention, according to the findings.

These findings indicate that moral conviction can be a formidable obstacle to attitude transformation. This discovery has implications for therapies that seek to alter extreme attitudes, such as prejudice and discrimination. To be effective, interventions must be targeted to meet people's moral convictions regarding their attitudes if they possess such convictions. For instance, treatments may need to include helping individuals recognize the complexities of the issue and encouraging them to review their beliefs critically.

Issues Fueling the Problem of Food Insecurity in Balochistan

Poverty-Induced Constraints on Accessing Food Resources

A restricted access to food resources is also a result of poverty. The high level of poverty in Balochistan is one of the primary contributors to the region's food insecurity. The region is characterized by poor incomes, a lack of employment possibilities, and restricted access to food supplies. Because of this, families and households are forced to make challenging choices between purchasing food and other necessities, such as clothing and a place to live.

Lack of Knowledge Contributing to Poor Dietary Practices

Unhealthy eating practices are a result of a lack of awareness. Another element that adds to the issue of food insecurity in Balochistan is a lack of understanding regarding how to properly nourish oneself. Inadequate dietary practices are widespread due to restricted access to nutrient-dense foods and a general lack of understanding regarding how to maintain a balanced diet.

The Consequences of Inadequate Food Storage and Preservation for Food Security

Insufficient methods of food storage and preservation. Food is frequently thrown away or goes bad because there are not enough suitable storage facilities and inadequate methods of food preservation. Because of this, households are forced to buy more food than they are able to consume, which places additional strain on their financial resources.

Poor infrastructure and transportation

Inadequate infrastructure and transportation. Because of the inadequate infrastructure and restricted transportation options, it is difficult to gain access to available food supplies. This is especially true in more rural regions, where there are fewer options for shopping, including fewer markets, shops, and supermarkets.

Low productivity and total dependence on live stocks

Poor agricultural productivity Another factor that adds to the lack of access to sufficient food in Balochistan is the region's low agricultural output as there are only old ways for crop production and the entire earnings mostly depend on livestock. It is difficult for farmers to produce enough food to meet the demands of the people since irrigation systems are insufficient and they do not have adequate access to technology.

Non-Traditional Security Challenges in Balochistan: Results and Discussion of the Relationship between Conflict and Food Insecurity

Considering Balochistan's conflict and Food security following strategies must be implemented.

Lack of Agricultural Development and dependence on livestock

Livestock is a vital part of Balochistan's economy, contributing 55% of Agriculture value added, 11.4% of National GDP of Pakistan and over 47% of the province's economy. However, due to the province's geographical features, only 28% of its rangelands are suitable for livestock production, leading to seasonal migration of nomadic and semi-nomadic graziers in search of feed for their livestock, primarily sheep and goats. Although some parts of the north-eastern highlands support 76% of the livestock, the southern plains have the poorest ranges, supporting only 24% of the livestock population. The province is home to many valuable livestock breeds, each with its own unique characteristics and socioeconomic importance in poverty reduction and food security.

According to recent studies, over 2.5 billion people, or 86 percent of the rural population in emerging countries, is directly reliant on the agricultural industry (DFID, 2005, Bank, 2008, International Finance Cooperation, 2010). Farmers still make up the majority of the population in many third world countries, and the money they make from farming allows them to take care of their health and pay for their children's education (Timmer, 2005, Sachs, 2006, Bank, 2008, Global Hunger Index, 2010). Agriculture that is flourishing

not only boosts worker productivity but also helps improve wages and, in the long run, eradicates extreme poverty.

Studies conducted in a number of developing nations, including Pakistan, have shown that extension services have been unable to effectively improve the farmers' technical skills, disseminate technology and information (i.e., market, business, available opportunities and potential), and access rain-fed areas. This is primarily attributable to a lack of resources, such as an inadequate budget, inadequate transportation facilities, geographically vast and scattered areas, and utmost inaccessibility.

Farmer Field Schools

It is necessary that the government of Balochistan, along with the federal government, must rethink their decision to construct location-specific extension initiatives. This would necessitate, among other things, the supply of an adequate number of highly qualified extension officials, especially field-level agents who would be effectively able to comprehend and handle production limits that are specific to the place in question. For there to be a sufficient number of skilled extension officials readily available, there needs to be a significant shift in the content of academic curricula and training courses, as well as the introduction of farmer field schools. These sorts of alterations, both to the curricula and to the training courses, could be made in order to take into account the location-specific variations in production potential and limits. Changes need to be made to the outdated policy that requires farmers to visit extension agents in order to increase farmers' access to extension services, particularly in rural areas where there is limited access to public transportation.

Medicinal plants of Balochistan

There aren't too many natural antifungal medications, and the ones that are out there are extremely pricey to buy. Because of this, plants in Balochistan have the potential to be utilized in the production of antifungal medications that are both affordable and effective. The extract of *Hymenocrater sessilifolius* demonstrated high efficacy against *Escherichia*

coli, *Bacillus subtilis*, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in addition to showing good activity against *Candida albicans*.

Plants used for medicinal purposes are relied upon by around 80% of the world's population for meeting their fundamental healthcare requirements. People in the Pakistani province of Balochistan have been employing over 400 different species of medicinal plants as part of their traditional folk medicine for millennia (Tareen et al., 2002, Zaidi and Crow, 2005). The authenticity of these plants was verified by Dr. Rasool Bakhsh Tareen, and voucher specimens were stored at the herbarium of the Department of Botany at the University of Balochistan. It is hypothesized that these plants have constituents that may have applications in contemporary medical practice. *Grewia erythraea* is used to treat cough, cold, and other respiratory ailments; it has been discovered to contain a wide variety of fatty acids and keto alcohols.

The antibacterial and antifungal properties of these plants are the key reasons why members of the local community make use of them. It is possible that these plants contain some novel antibiotics, antifungal, or anticancer drugs that could be effective in the treatment of diseases; however, further research is required to identify the active compound and determine its mode of action prior to the development of a drug from these plants.

Way Forward

Uncovering the Root Causes

Food security is an essential aspect of human security. The table lists the most prevalent causes and effects of food insecurity in Balochistan. Globally, market instability and climate change are the primary factors of rising living expenses, especially for food. A further global cause of food insecurity is discrimination. At the regional level, chronic poverty, nutritional insufficiency, and the decline of the agricultural sector, as well as weak regional integration, border tensions between Pakistan and India, contribute to food insecurity as India is known for fueling conflicts in Balochistan. Food insecurity is

also caused by disparities between provinces, diversion of public finances for private use, military activity, and decreasing rainfall at the national level.

Impact of threats and their interrelation on different components of human security

Second step shows that food insecurity in Balochistan, Pakistan, poses a serious threat to human security. The rising rate of inflation has diminished the purchasing power of households, resulting in insufficient food supplies. In addition, drought-like circumstances have badly hampered food production, causing cereals and animals to be priced at a premium. Balochistan's reliance on Punjab and Sindh for food supplies has led to price inflation, hoarding, and market manipulation. Hence, children and adults suffer from physical disability and hunger, resulting in a decline in learning and production. However, the problem has been exacerbated by the rising demand for healthcare and inadequate storage facilities. This has revealed the unequal distribution of wealth, which influences groups, communities, and non-state institutions. To preserve human security, the Balochistan administration must take proper measures to minimize this problem.

Human Security framework for needs/vulnerabilities and capacity analysis

Third steps take us towards the nexus of vulnerabilities and capacity building. The growing availability of food from other provinces and the need for equitable food distribution are two of these obstacles. In addition, improved water restoration management and preventative measures against agricultural diseases and locust attacks are required. Food insecurity in children is a health concern because it impedes their physical, mental, and emotional development. In addition, families in need of finances for food may reduce expenditures on school fees and resources, so adding to the underdevelopment of the Balochistan education system. Balochistan also need proper nutrition, as 70% of youngsters and 25% of pregnant women suffer from anemia. Another issue is the gender gap among female farmers, which is characterized by low birth

weights and disorders induced by poor nutrition during pregnancy. Third, there is a need for capacity building in the region, which is currently inadequate.

Protection and empowerment framework

Fourth step is towards protection, as many protections are in place to combat food insecurity, including the National Plan for Food Security developed by the National Food Security and Research Division (NFSS), which focuses on boosting food production, improving access to food, and assuring food safety. In addition, strengthening nutrition-focused programming and enhancing the efficacy of expanding nutrition efforts are crucial to addressing food poverty. Efforts are required to strengthen scientific and technological achievements, increase research and development spending to attract international investment, and foster collaboration among local governments, corporate leaders, research institutions, and capital providers in order to tackle food insecurity. Changing the focus of government policy, encouraging food system diversity for dietary and nutritional improvement, and strengthening vulnerable groups such as women, sharecroppers, tenants, and disadvantaged populations in Balochistan are also required to tackle food insecurity.

Building protection and empowerment strategies

Last step is to focus on key areas, the provincial administration of Balochistan must establish clear goals and objectives to combat food insecurity and malnutrition. One of the main areas is the protection component, which strives to strengthen or develop measures of protection for vulnerable populations. In addition to recognizing the significance of individual and community capacities in achieving empowerment, the government tries to strengthen or cultivate these capacities. In terms of specific goals, the government must intend to combat poverty, hunger, and malnutrition through boosting sustainable food production and profitable agriculture. In addition, the government must also intend to improve food production in the province and provide assistance to individuals who are food insecure through the National Food Security Program. The

government should recognize the significance of natural resource utilization and seeks to encourage ecologically friendly and safe food production. Additional goals include shifting the focus of public sector policy away from a few strategically important crops, raising earnings and employment, and empowering women and vulnerable groups in Balochistan, including as sharecroppers, tenants, and marginalized populations.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, it is important to understand that human security is a multidimensional term that covers food security, economic security, health security, and political security, among others. In Balochistan, food insecurity is a severe danger to human security, as the majority of the population struggles to obtain enough food to support themselves and their families. 63% of households in the province are food insecure, while 46% of children suffer from stunted growth and 18% from wasting as a result of malnutrition, according to quantitative statistics. Many global, regional, and national variables, including market instability, climate change, poverty, insufficient regional integration, border concerns, and military actions, contribute to food insecurity in Balochistan. The interdependence of these dangers has had a substantial impact on several aspects of human security, including the influence on organizations, communities, and non-state institutions. To address the issue of food insecurity in Balochistan, the government must take the necessary steps, such as providing assistance to farmers especially in the agricultural advancement, enhancing infrastructure, investing in education and technical skill development, and fostering regional unity. Also, policies that are effective and sustainable must be enacted to ensure that the fundamental requirements of the population are satisfied, and human security is maintained. It is essential to prioritize human security in Balochistan, and other places facing comparable issues, so that the population is safeguarded from attacks and can flourish in a safe and secure environment.