Human Security: Theoretical and Analytical Contours

The structure and dynamics of the 'modern' international political system along with its constituent elements have changed profoundly in the course of the last fifty years. These changes have influenced our perceptions and understanding of the role and the character of the state. The shift of emphasis in the evolving security discourse from the 'national security concept' to the human security approach is directly related to these changed perceptions. At the same time, widespread instances of the near collapse of states experiencing 'complex emergencies' due to internal socio-political conflicts in many regions in the world have compelled a wider spectrum of security communities to theoretically reconfigure the security problematic in line with internal developments. In this backdrop, and as a point of departure to the examination of the evolution of the security discourse associated with Sri Lanka, this chapter intends to lay out necessary theoretical and analytical contours relating to human security discourse, by tracing the evolution of the national security concept in the discipline of Security Studies.

2.1 THE STATE AND SECURITY

The origins of the present concept of security can be traced back to the formation of the modern sovereign state as the constituent element of international political order. The international political context in which states have been operating may be characterised as anarchic because states are sovereign and there is no supra-state authority to control the international system. The underlying principle of the present international system is the recognition that the state is the supreme power within its boundaries. The mutual respect for each other's sovereignty is generally regarded as the constituent principle of the system. Non-intervention in each other's internal affairs is accepted as a general rule of the game. In view of the fact that war played a key role in the formation of states and the demarcation of its spatial limits,
security remains a main concern of the state. Since the time of the emergence of political order based on sovereign states, security remained exclusively within the domain of state power and its prerogative. Accordingly, security has been "understood and practiced with reference to the needs and interests of states." Rooted firmly in power politics, security is the key to the survival of the state in an anarchic international environment. This fact explains why the concept of security has traditionally been related to states rather than to people. Security within the state, i.e., internal security, is taken for granted and the state is considered the source of security and it is from the state that the individual can seek its security.

Though the genealogy of the basic elements of the present construct of security can be traced back to the origins of the modern state system, as a separate academic discipline, International Security Studies developed with the readings of security in American centres of learning in the context of Cold War politics. Indeed, the Cold War parentage of the 'new' academic discipline of International Security Studies must not be overestimated too. Contributions of some scholars during the inter-war period really laid the foundation for the development of Security Studies as a separate discipline. During this period, and as pointed out by David Baldwin, "international relations scholars believed that democracy, international understanding arbitration, national self-determination, disarmament, and collective security were the most important ways to promote international peace and security." Because Security Studies concentrated mainly on the study of the nature and causes of war and conditions of peace, contributions such as Study of War by Quincy Wright, published in 1942, is considered pioneering in shaping the discipline. It is important to note that the separate academic discipline of International Security Studies developed only after the Second World War, though some of the themes addressed by the new discipline had been dealt with earlier by other disciplines.

2.2 THE NATIONAL SECURITY PARADIGM

After 1945, and during the era of Cold War politics, academic discourse on security was broadly confined to the construction of the concept of

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'National Security'. The shape and direction of Security Studies in its formative phase after 1945 was determined in the Cold War period in line with contributions made by some U.S. centres of learning and research that worked closely with the US policy-making process. During this period, the 'National Security' paradigm, the theoretical parameters of which were marked by Realism, dominated the field of Security Studies. Accordingly, the security of the state in an anarchic international environment was the focal concern of national security. Security was defined as the protection of the territorial integrity of the state vis-à-vis threats originating from external sources. The internal security of the state was taken for granted. If there was any cause of concern, it was dealt under the internal law and order problematic. In conventional national security analysis, security was nothing but the politico-military security of the state; 'hard' military strategic security took precedence over the 'soft' economic dimension of security. During the Cold War the discipline mainly concentrated on analysing the central military strategic balance of the superpowers and their defense strategies. The concerns relating to the prevention of a nuclear war between the superpowers constituted the core of international security studies at this time.

2.3 DECONSTRUCTION OF TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

The pedantic rigidity of the traditional military-political understanding of security that prevailed in Security Studies during the early Cold War period gradually began to thaw with the proliferation of different types of peace and security predicaments in the post-colonial state. In addition, the progress of detente between superpowers and stabilisation of the Cold War balance of power created an environment in which it became possible to bring the limitations of the conventional national security paradigm based on the realist approach to the focus. In this context, three main shortcomings were highlighted. Firstly, the flaw in taking the state as the only unit of analysis; more importantly, in considering it as a self-contained homogeneous entity was strongly felt (statist bias). It became clear that the statist-bias of the approach prevented it from taking other units into account in any security analysis. By implication,
the internal dimensions of security were completely ignored. Secondly, the blatant military-strategic bias of the approach which underplayed other equally crucial aspects of security was found to be no longer tenable in view of the proliferation of non-military security problems. National security now was believed to encompass something more than the protection of the territorial integrity of the state vis-à-vis external military aggressions. Thirdly, some features of the disciplinary parentage, such as great-power centeredness and the Western bias were now found more unbecoming. The heuristic constructs employed in the conventional paradigm to analyse security situations were meant to address great power military strategic calculations and situations. Hence, they usually did not have much relevance to the security problems confronted by the most of the newly independent countries in the Third World which were qualitatively different from those of developed stable countries in the north.

The questioning of the primacy of the military element and the narrow state focus of the conventional conceptualisation of security surfaced slowly in the 1980s. The challenge emerged in three directions simultaneously. Firstly, the origins of the new discourse on security can be traced to the Palme Commission report on 'Common Security'. Having been nurtured in the Social Democratic tradition, Olaf Palme questioned the basics of the conventional security analyses of the West based on their military-strategic superiority. He believed that world peace can not simply depend on the very delicate balance of nuclear deterrence between the West and East. In this report published in 1982, the Commission argued that 'both West and East have legitimate security needs and it can never be possible to demand unilateral security for one block based on superior military resources. On the contrary, in a world of incomprehensibly destructive nuclear potential, every ideological offensive toward military supremacy is a threat to universal security.' Later, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev adopted the concept of common security to remodel Soviet-US relations. Gorbachev's approach to arms control was based on the 'rationale of sufficiency' which seemingly contributed to debunk the military-strategic primacy in the building of security. The unilateral reduction of arms by the Soviet Union forced the US to reciprocate it, changing the tense environment which prevailed between the superpowers. This development in policy-making level had a serious impact on the security thinking patterned in an earlier Cold War context.

Secondly, at the same time, the academic tradition, later identified as Peace Research, developed an alternative paradigm by bringing the social groups and the individual as units of analysis and social and economic dimensions of security into security analysis. The contribution of the analytical frames developed by the Peace Research scholars to analyse violence, peace and security contributed to widen the disciplinary confines of security studies. In this regard the writings of Johan Galtung and Kenneth Boulding are particularly important. The concept of structural violence and the categorization of negative and positive peace questioned the narrow military-strategic perception of security. The threat emanating from the state itself to the society and individual was brought to focus by them. The concept of peace has been broadened to include not only the absence of war but, more importantly, to dismantle the structures and counter the processes leading to war and violence.

Thirdly, the realisation of the inadequacy of the existing analytical frames and theoretical constructs of security analysis to capture the totality of the security problematic and to analyse the defence and security problems of the developing world demanded an alternative paradigm. The progress of decolonisation strengthened the new category of states identified broadly as the Third World. They came forward to assert themselves in international politics with their groupings such as the non-aligned movement and Group 77. Their socio-political and economic development and power capabilities were structurally different from that of the great powers. With the proliferation of security problems which were structurally different from those of the developed world, a new Third World scholarship on security gradually emerged to pay attention to the region’s security priorities. Their internal political and other institutional structures are so weak and their internal divisions are so intense that internal threats are more immediate than the threats emanating from external sources. In this backdrop, the internal (domestic) dimensions and the nonmilitary aspects of insecurity acquired priority in Third World scholarship. There was a marked similarity of the issues and concerns raised by scholars in peace research and third world-centred security studies but both evolved independently. Thus, different aspects of the conventional paradigm of security had been challenged from different directions prior to the end of the Cold War. The blossoming of the new discourse on security became more visible in the post-Cold War context.

2.4 EPISTEMOLOGICAL ONSLAUGHT

A number of epistemological and ontological questions are raised in the new discourse on security by way of deconstructing the old paradigm.
The first set of questions relates to the ontology of security. The point of departure was to re-read the term: what is meant by security? Is it simply the pursuit of freedom from threats and fear? What are the sources of threats and agents of fear? What is really the reference point of national security? National security by implication denotes the security of the state. Is it simply just the territorial integrity of the state?

Secondly, the conventional taxonomy also came under attack. In a context where insecurities emanated mainly from internal sources, the abeyance of the internal dimension seemed no longer tenable. The deconstruction of the traditional concept of national security is the main thrust in the new security discourse. To begin with, the totality of national security as well as the two elements of the term, i.e. national and security have been subjected to scrutiny. As the term national has been used in this context as equivalent to the term state, what is really meant by national security (i.e., the security of the state)? The narrow definition—protection of territorial integrity from external threats—is found to be inadequate in the face of new threat scenarios. In many third world states, territorial integrity is challenged not externally but internally by secessionist movements within. The territory is only one element of the state. The other elements of the state, including people and their security, must also be taken into account in any security configuration. As soon as people are taken as a referent object of national security, the analysis of threat and threat perceptions has to be invariably changed. The security-building process involves the ability to meet and dispel threats and the reduction of vulnerabilities.

With the recognition of people as a reference of security in its own rights, a variety of threats and vulnerabilities enter into the forefront of security analysis with different types of agents and sources of threat. Even in the broader concept, the security of the state constitutes the key element of security. But this too has to be defined differently. The real issue here is to define the security of the state, and to go beyond narrow territorial confines. On the one hand, the state is a legal abstraction. On the other, it has a territorial basis and an institutional framework of its own. Barry Buzan identifies three elements of national security: the idea of the state (ideological base), the territory (physical base) and the institutions and people (institutional and human base). The ideological basis of the state is its most important aspect because it binds the territorial base with the human and institutional ones. According to Buzan, "it is the glue that binds territory, people and

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sovereignty together. In the classical ‘nation state’ framework, the concept of the nation provides the required rationale and conceptual content for the idea of state. In a situation where national and state boundaries do not coincide, presenting the concept of nation as the ideological rationale of the state itself creates serious insecurities to some sections of the people within the state. In many multi-ethnic states in the Third World, the state-denoted nation is just a politico-legal abstract that is not rooted firmly in the common psyche of the citizenry. In multi-ethnic states, it needs an idea for the state, other than one based on that of an exclusive nation, which could be shared by all groups in its territory. When the state fails to present an ideological rationale for its existence acceptable to all the collective identities or else when the existing ideology of the state is violently challenged by a section of citizens, the security of the state is undermined from within. One of the problems of the security of the state in many developing countries is the lack of a coherent ideology of the state or it is challenged violently internally. The importance of identifying co-values and shared values of the state arises in such a context. The promotion of core values and shared values simultaneously is considered the *sine qua non* for the security of the state in multi-ethnic societies.

There is a dialectical relationship between the ideology of the state and the other two elements of state security—the institutional foundation and the human base. The institutional foundation encompasses a wide array of institutions ranging from executive, legislative and judicial instruments of power and governance to education and human resource development. The security of the institutional apparatus of the state depends on its ability to maintain their institutional legitimacy. The security of the human base of the state is closely linked to the viability of the institutional apparatuses of the state and their ability to perform its functions. The threats to the institutional basis of the state are in many cases not external but internal and political. The political manipulations of the institutions of the state by those who yield power in the state in turn deprive the very institutions of their legitimacy. Once the institutions lack legitimacy, they cannot exercise their authority and are vulnerable to attack.

While re-defining the security of the state to incorporate the ideology (core and shared values) of the state and its institutional and human base, the new discourse on security emphasised the need to integrate other references within the state in any security analysis. In conventional analysis, a distinction is made between domestic and

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7 Ibid.
international security and the academic discipline of security studies addressed the issues relating to the survival/existence of the state in the international environment. This explains why the prefix 'international' is added to the term Security Studies. It is argued that this distinction in analysing the security of the state is no longer tenable in view of the increasing experiences of implosion of states. As a result, the existential threats faced by the non-state actors, such as the individual and the non-state social collectivities which were excluded in the national security analysis, are now entered into the framework of security analysis. With the world-wide growth of human right consciousness and the introduction of international human rights instruments, the importance of taking the individual human being as a focal reference point of security has been recognised. The security of the individual cannot be overlooked at the expense of the security of the state as insecurity of the individual ultimately undermines the security of the state itself. The recognition of the individual as a reference object of security has brought human rights into the security agenda. In addition, non-state human collectivities within the state come in between the individual and the state. The recognition of group rights and the resurgence of ethnicity have brought forward the importance of ethnicity as a reference point of security. The perception of insecurity on the part of ethnic groups creates serious security implications for national security. In this frame of reference, security must encompass not only the physical and existential security of collective identities but also their language and other socio-cultural dimensions.

2.5 MULTIPLE REFERENTS AND SECTORS OF SECURITY

The incorporation of different units of references in security analysis requires co-optation of different dimensions of security. As the emphasis was mainly on the military-strategic dimension in conventional analysis, political and economic aspects were included only when they related to the military strategic environment. When non-state references are incorporated into security analysis, other types of non-military threats acquire prominence. The incorporation of political, economic, societal and environmental aspects into the security problematic is the main thrust of the broader concept of security. Social dimension of security should not be mixed up with social security. Social security refers to the individual and is concerned mainly with economic support. In contrast, societal security is about the individual and his or her identity. The sources of threat and fear, and the intensity of insecurity

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are defined and perceived by non-state referents. The pursuit of freedom from threats emanating from environmental sources such as floods, droughts or land degradation are far more serious and important, for example, to a poor farmer in Bangladesh or Sri Lanka than any other concerns.

With the broadening of the scope of security studies in the new discourse on security, new concepts such as 'human security', 'common security' and "global security" have come into currency. According to Caroline Thomas "(T)he concept of human security involves a fundamental departure from an orthodox international relations security analysis that has the state as the exclusive primary referent object. Instead, human beings and their complex social and economic relations are given primacy with or over states.....human security describes a condition of existence in which basic material needs are met and in which human dignity, including meaningful participation in the life of the community, can be realised."9 However, there is a concern that widening of the parameters of security analysis would affect the intellectual rigour of the discipline of security studies. There is some validity in such concerns that over-stretching the scope to incorporate everything will ultimately end up in explaining nothing and "elevate 'security' into a kind of universal good thing—desired condition towards which all relations should move."10 Without risking the intellectual coherence of the discipline of security studies, it is necessary to broaden the epistemological framework to capture and analyse the type of insecurities faced by the state as well as many non-state actors. The threats and fears faced in non-military and non-political sectors should be brought into security analysis so long as it relates to the existential concerns of the state, social groups and the individual. By highlighting 'the major enterprise' engaged by Third World states relating to state-building in the decolonisation context, Mohammed Ayoob emphasises the political connotation of the term in the 'Third World concept of security'. He holds the view that the political and security realms must maintain their distinctiveness. Even then he admits that "the influence in other realms on matters that affect security must be filtered through the political realm and must be directly relevant to that realm ... when developments in other realms threaten to have immediate political consequences or are perceived as being able to threaten state boundaries, political institutions, or governing regimes, these other

10 Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde, *op.cit.* p. 4.
variables must be taken into account as a part of state's security calculus."^{11}

The interrelationship among multiple reference units and sectors of security has brought the nature and the role of state to the centre of discussion in the new security discourse. It admits the crucial significance of the security of state in the overall security architecture but reconstructs it on a different plane. It is not possible to ignore the security of the state at any score as it has a crucial role to play in ensuring the security of other reference units and sectors. The state also has its own rights and prerogatives; without them it is not possible for it to perform its functions and roles. What is important here is its dual role. It is a source of security as well as an agent of threat. Individuals and social groups ultimately turn towards the state for their security and it is the main source of security in relation to sectors such as the economic, political and societal ones. The paradox is that the state itself becomes the threat to the individual citizen and social groups when it exceeds its limits. Both inadequate 'stateness' as well as excessive 'stateness', create serious security problems to non-state actors as ultimately they turn to the state for security. The crux of the issue is how to determine the parameters of its role and functions and how to deter the state from going beyond its limits. The factors and conditions such as the lack of legitimacy as a result of its failure to present a strong and non-sectarian ideology (rationale) for the state, the over-politicisation of the exercise of power and governance, weak institutional apparatus, and lack of articulation between the state and civil society make the state insecure. When the state is insecure internally it not only fails to play its role in connection with the source of security but also acts as an agent of threat and fear. The identification of weak and strong states is particularly relevant in this context. When a state is weak it resorts to repression and coercion to impose its authority. In such situations, the coercive arms of the state, such as the police, the military and vigilantes, assert themselves. Such apparatuses of strong states are not visible if the hegemony of the state is not challenged internally. Barry Buzan in his influential work on the new security agenda used the concept of weak and strong states to analyse the insecurity problematic in the Post-Cold war world.^{12} He identifies a number of variables to typify weak and strong states.


According to Buzan “Weak states either do not have, or have failed to create, a domestic political and social consensus or sufficient strength to eliminate the large scale use of force as a major and continuing element in the domestic political life of the nation.”13 Weak states define their security problematic in terms of internal threats.

In the changed intellectual environment linked to the new discourse on security, the metaphors and heuristic constructs employed in the realist paradigm for explanatory purposes have been reconstructed to capture the realities relating to Third World security problems. The concept of ‘security dilemma’ can be cited as an example. In order to analyse the security problematic of weak states, Brian L. Job presents the concept of ‘insecurity dilemma’ in contrast to ‘security dilemma.’ According to Job “there are two contrasting conditions that compose this insecurity dilemma: first, an internal predicament in which individual and groups acting against perceived threat to assure their own security or securities consequently create an environment of increased threat and reduced security for most, if not all, others within the borders of the state: and second, a resulting paradox regarding the external security environment.”14 In the same context, Barry Buzan adopted the heuristic construct of a regional security complex to analyse regional security. He highlights the relative autonomy of regional security relations. Insecurity is often associated with proximity because threats from neighbours are more intimate than distant powers. According to the classical version of the theory “security complexes are about the relative intensity of security relations that lead to distinctive regional patterns shaped by both the distribution of power and historical relations of amity and enmity.”15

This conceptualisation of weak state highlights the fact that the insecurity of the state is basically internal. It is internal frailties of political institutions coupled with lack of legitimacy of the state that makes it weak. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention primarily to these internal frailties rather than their global or regional dimensions to understand the sources of threat, fear and violence on the part of the people—the individual and groups. This further highlights the need for internal reorganisation of the structures of power and governance of the state in order to strengthen the security of the multiple referent

13 Ibid. p. 67.
objects. The weakness of the state primarily relates to the lack of social cohesion of the polity. This must be understood in the framework of the problems faced in post-colonial state-formation and nation-building.

As in the case of many post-colonial states, Sri Lanka is faced with problems of post-colonial state-formation and nation-building. In the light of divided loyalties there are competing locations of authority within the state. As Ayoob points out “they (competing locations of authority) are usually weaker than the state in terms of coercive authority but equal to or stronger than the state in terms of political legitimacy in the view of large sections of state population.”16 In the context of its multi-ethnic composition, the state-nation link is the most vulnerable aspect of the composition of the state. The security of the state depends on the ability of rulers to handle these issues for the satisfaction of all the ethnic groups concerned.

The importance of the role played by non-state actors in security in the 1980s changed the policy environment of the security-building process. These actors have encroached into the hitherto exclusive policy territory of the state. These non-state actors include the peace movements, ethnic groups, environmental activists, human rights groups and consumer societies. They have come forward to influence security discourse.

In order to reconstruct the concept of security in a broader analytical contour it is essential to identify the several dimensions within which it operates—military, political, political, economic and environmental. Further, security issues in these four sectors are interlocked too. Under the changed international and internal (domestic) environment security no longer involves just the military security of the state, even in the broader definition of the state. Increasing concern about threats to the economic and environmental well-being of the people at large within the state demands more attention to the non-military origins of insecurity both in the industrialised and the developing world. As the threat of global nuclear holocaust is relegated to the background, a new set of concerns such as drug and human trafficking, terrorism, refugees and AIDS come to the forefront in the national and international security agenda. Political security is understood as the organisational stability of the state. In addition to the ideologies that give the state and its institutional expressions legitimacy, the system of governance now comes under the purview of political security. Economic security has been redefined to include proper management of resources and access to markets. In additions to the political and economic aspects,

societal and environmental aspects also enter into the security configuration.

The interconnectedness of the four sectors of security necessitates going beyond a single referent (state) and taking into consideration the multiple referents of security. Primarily the importance of the individual as a referent is felt. In between the individual and the state, other non-state human collectivities have also entered the security paradigm. This does not mean that the security of the state is unimportant, for it is still central; the role of the state in setting the conditions of the security of other sectors is still crucial. But the security of the state has to be defined according to a different analytical plain.

The questioning of the primacy of the military element and the state in the conceptualisation of security gives birth to two strands of security analysis and a debate over the scope of security studies. Those who defend the traditionalist position argue that over widening the concept of security risks the intellectual coherence of the discipline. At the same time, there have been some attempts to develop a framework based on a wider agenda that would also incorporate the traditionalist position. This 'wide' versus 'narrow' debate about security studies have prepared the way now to reconfigure security from the perspective of Human Security. The Human Security approach is not simply an extension of the earlier approach; it takes security to a different level altogether.

2.6 SECURITY WITH A HUMAN FACE

The credit of formulating the concept of Human Security as a policy framework should go to UNDP. In its *Human Development Report* in 1994, UNDP emphasised the need to reconfigure security from a human perspective. In presenting the concept of 'security with a human face,' it emphasised the need to take the human dimension into consideration in the security-building process. Since then, the concept of human security experienced wide publicity and recognition as a framework in directing foreign policy. Canada and Japan pioneer in declaring Human Security as the avowed norm of their foreign policy considerations. In highlighting human security as its foreign policy norm, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan established the Trust Fund for Human Security in 2005.

It is also important to note that the concept of Human Security requires conceptual precision and theoretical rigour. The concept of

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17 For example, see, Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *op.cit.*, 1998.
human security cannot remain over-idealistic or only a blanket term that can cover everything necessary for human existence. There were many attempts to define the concept of human security in a more systematic way so as to give analytical coherence to the concept. The appointment of the Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, is a concrete step taken in this direction. Their report, *Human Security Now*, published in 2003, which gives policy coherence to the human security approach, stands as a valuable contribution advancing the cause of widening and deepening the conceptual and theoretical discourse on human security. The Human Security Centre based at the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia published in 2005 the Human Security Report containing *the Human Security Audit 2005*. It reviews a new global dataset that provides a comprehensive portrait of global political violence for the years 2002 and 2003. It concludes with a discussion of the methodological challenges facing researchers measuring human insecurity. These reports and contributions from other working groups such as Uppsala’s Conflict Data Programme are indicative of the conceptual concretisation and policy operationalisation of the concept of human security.

The changes in the intensity and structures of conflict and trends in global political violence with the dawn of the 21st century also contributed to the development of an alternative approach that captures other dimensions of human insecurity.

1. “The number of armed conflicts around the world has declined by more than 40% since the early 1990s.

2. Between 1991 (the high point for the post-World War II period) and 2004, 28 armed struggles for self-determination started or restarted while 43 were contained or ended. There were just 25 armed secessionist conflicts underway in 2004, the lowest number since 1976.

3. Notwithstanding the horrors of Rwanda, Srebrenica and elsewhere, the number of genocides and politicides plummeted by 80% between the 1988 high point and 2001.

4. International crises, often harbingers of war, declined by more than 70% between 1981 and 2001.

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5. The dollar value of major international arms transfers fell by 33% between 1990 and 2003. Global military expenditure and troop numbers declined sharply in the 1990s as well.

6. The number of refugees dropped by some 45% between 1992 and 2003, as more and more wars came to an end.

7. Five out of six regions in the developing world saw a net decrease in core human rights abuses between 1994 and 2003.\(^{19}\)

On the other hand, the non-military dimensions of security have acquired more importance. The primacy of the state-centred military element in security analysis has further declined.

Human security places human beings—rather than states—at the focal point of security considerations. However, when it comes to defining the human security agenda there appears a broad division within the human security approach over what threats the individual should be protected from. The UN thus adopts a broader approach to human security. The UN Commission on Human Security also espouses the broad concept of human security. According to the proponents of the broad human security concept, threats should include, in addition to violent threats, hunger, disease and natural disasters which kill far more people than violent conflicts. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan argued, for example, “(H)uman security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her own potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy environment—these are the interrelated building blocks of human, and therefore national, security.”\(^{20}\)

Those who advocate a narrow concept of human security focus on violent threats to the individual. The Human Security Centre at the University of British Columbia in its reports uses the narrow concept of human security for both pragmatic and methodological reasons. Its Human Security Report argues that the broad concept of human security that lumps together all threats as diverse as genocide and affront to personal dignity may be useful for advocacy. But when it


comes to policy analysis it has only a limited utility. It is true that in conducting a human security audit it is practicable to adopt a narrow concept, but the reality in most of the third world countries including Sri Lanka is that all threats are interrelated. This study, therefore, adopts the broader concept of human security.

2.7 WHAT IS HUMAN SECURITY?
The Commission on Human Security defines human security as protection of the “vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strength and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.” Accordingly, human security reconfigures security centering it on people and not on states. The focus of attention here is survival, livelihood and dignity and these three elements of human security are projected from the point of view of the people.

Human security captures many aspects vital for the survival of the people which have remained outside traditional security analysis. Human security and human development are closely related. Survival means protection from violence as well as from malnutrition, disease and natural disasters. Human security emphasises the complex relationships and often ignored linkages between disarmament, human rights and development.

Going beyond direct survival issues, we can see that human security makes human dignity an important element of human security. Violation of human dignity is definitely a human security issue. Matters relating to the dignity of labour and citizenship need to be addressed in economic and political spheres. However, other equally important aspects relating to human dignity have to be addressed in the socio-cultural plain. Human security approach brings ethnicity and other identity issues directly to the centre of the security paradigm. Respecting and sustaining ethno-cultural diversity and accommodation of ethnic issues in the decision-making process constitutes very important dimensions in the human security-building process. The importance of bringing issues relating to ethnic and other collective identities in the human

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security discourse must be viewed against the background of the present trend of ethnic resurgence and pervasive insecurities generated by internal ethnic conflicts.

Human security captures a wide array of issues that are essential for human survival, livelihood and dignity. It is also important to note that there is no set hierarchical order of issues in the human security agenda. Priority of issues in human security depends on time and space. Human security is invariably dynamic on account of the economic and socio-political motion in operation. It is not possible to prepare all-weather itemised issues in human security inventory!

2.8 HUMAN SECURITY AND THE SECURITY OF THE STATE

The traditional idea of ‘National Security’ concentrates on the defence of the state. The focus of human security on the other hand, is the protection of the individual, his/her economic survival and the recognition of his/her ethnic and cultural heritage. This does not mean that human security simply ignores national security and the security of the state. What it means is that Human Security reconfigures national security and state security more broadly and rationally and, of course, on a different plane. Human security and national security are mutually reinforcing. Protecting people from external military threats is a very necessary condition for human security. The role of the state in protecting people from external military threats cannot be paralleled. But the character and context of wars have rapidly changed in the last two decades. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan elucidates this change: “Wars since 1990 have been mainly internal. They have been brutal, claiming more than 5 million lives. They have violated, not so much borders, as people. Humanitarian conventions have been routinely flouted, civilians and aid workers have become strategic targets, and children have been forced to become killers. Often, driven by political ambition or greed, these wars have preyed on ethnic and religious differences, they are often sustained by external economic interests, and they are fed by a hyperactive and in large part illicit global arms market ... In the wake of these conflicts, a new understanding of the concept of security is evolving. Once synonymous with the defence of territory from external attack, the requirements of security today have come to embrace the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence.”

purveyor of security in many aspects; but its role has to be positioned in a different analytical matrix. The relationship between state security and human security seems to be dialectical. Both need each other. Human security demands strong and viable state institutions. In turn, human security accords necessary legitimacy to state institutions. The thrust of human security is protection and empowerment of the people. When the people are threatened by events beyond their control, the state has to intervene to ensure their protection against these threats. These threats can be diverse, ranging from financial crisis to water shortages. In ensuring protection and upholding freedoms (‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want’, etc.), the state’s role in human security is thus vital.

Political security does not necessarily mean the security of the regime. Regimes often tend to interpret legitimate internal opposition to their policies as threat to the state and use state institutions against the opposition. By doing so regimes undermine the legitimacy and hegemony of the institutions of the state and alienate them from the people. Stability is something more than the security of the prevailing political order and a given power distribution at national and sub-national levels. Stability should not be interpreted as the freezing of social and political change in favour of the existing order. Stability is the condition that is invariably associated with the sustainability of political and social-cultural institutions. It must provide acceptable conditions for evolution and permit, if not facilitate, political and socio-economic change.

2.9 VIOLENT CONFLICTS AND HUMAN SECURITY
The emphasis on the non-military dimensions of security and augmenting the interconnectedness of security, development, protections and empowerment in the human security approach does not mean underplaying the importance of violent conflicts in human security configurations. Human security is really concerned with violent conflict and wars; but its concern extends beyond them to include all forms of violent conflicts that affect human survival and dignity. Further, human security takes into consideration links between internal violent conflicts and other elements of human security. Tracing the link between wars and human insecurity, the Commission on Human

Security observes that “Wars can destroy human lives and scar survivors. They destroy homes, economic assets, crops, roads, banks, and utility systems. They destroy habits of trust that form the basis of market transactions and broad-based political associations. Poverty rises in war time, often significantly.”

In the light of all these linkages between wars and other aspects of human insecurity, it must be said that human security is concerned with wars and other forms of violent conflicts.

The Human security approach towards violent conflicts, therefore, consists of two equally important elements—the prevention of conflicts and the protection of people, especially the vulnerable, in wars. It goes without saying that prevention is better than cure. As has been pointed out earlier, most violent conflicts and wars today are internal ones. Therefore, the prevention of internal violent conflicts must begin by addressing the root causes of these internal violent conflicts that are buried in internal political, economic and social systems. The most prevalent internal conflicts are those that relate to identity politics, as in the case of the Sri Lankan conflict. The root causes of violent conflicts are diverse. The root causes of conflict may include unequal distribution of resources among regions and people, competition over land and resources, exclusion of certain sections of the society from the decision-making process, the reluctance on the part of the state to expand the structures of power and authority so as to incorporate key stake holders of the polity, and non-recognition of basic human rights of the people. In the case of many ethnic conflicts, containment and solution to internal conflicts depend on the ability of the parties in the conflict to make mutual accommodations and compromises. It offers a real challenge to the present day political leadership. Even if they know the way out, they do not come forward to sell prevention strategies at home because they believe that the political costs of up-stream swimming are palpable and immediate. Human security approach emphasises the need to address the root causes of the conflict however difficult it may be. If the root cause of conflict is the existing conditions of the power and authority of the state, human security may emphasise restructuring the form and content of the state. As Kofi Annan points out “The solution is clear even if difficult to achieve in practice: to promote human rights, to protect minority rights and to institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented. Wounds that have festered for a long time will not heal overnight. Nor can confidence be built or dialogue develops while fresh wounds are being

inflicted. There are no quick fixes, no shortcuts. Every group needs to become convinced that the state belong to all people.”26 This is the Human security route to the prevention of internal violent conflicts.

The second component of the human security approach towards violent conflict is to pursue strategies in protecting people involved in the conflict. Having realised the importance of protecting civilians in a war situation, the international community gradually came forward after the Second World War to frame international conventions to give credentials to international humanitarian law. Until very recently, however, the focus in international conventions has been to protect states, people and institutions within the borders when the integrity of the state is threatened by an external adversary. These international conventions mainly count on states to protect civilians. Paradoxically, sometimes states themselves are perpetrators of violence against the very citizens that humanitarian law should protect. Furthermore, non-state actors of the conflict are either ignorant or disdainful of humanitarian law. Caught between Beelzebub and the deep sea, civilians become highly vulnerable and helpless in internal conflicts. According to The People on War Report of ICRC, “(M)any of today’s wars and armed conflicts do not involve the whole society. In fact, in most of these settings, those in the conflict area have struggled to stay out of the line of fire and avoid joining a side. In the countries as a whole, most of the population see themselves as distant from the conflict and not entirely sure of the combatants’ purpose or why the violence continues.”27 In this context, protection of people from violent conflicts constitutes an important element of human security. The United Nations also took a lead in developing a normative framework to protect victims of war, especially women and children. The Special Session on Children of the UN General Assembly held in 2002, for example, formulated recommendations on how to protect children in conflict. The Commission on Human Security recommends five policies essential to protect people in violent conflict: 1) placing human security on the security agenda; 2) strengthening humanitarian aid; 3) respecting human rights and humanitarian law; 4) disarming people and fighting crime; and 5) preventing conflicts and respecting citizenship.28

26 Kofi A. Annan, 2000, op. cit., p. 45.
2.10 DEPRIVATION AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

Other important aspects of human security are freedom from want and access to 'social minimums' and resources. The issues relating to deprivation and economic insecurity are brought to the core of the security agenda by the human security approach. In the present world, from a human security perspective, poverty is the main source of human insecurity. Those who are in extreme poverty are confronted with the problem of their day-to-day existence. No other security problem of a person is so grave than the threat of death by starvation or malnutrition. When there is no social or state-sponsored safety set, even those who are not in extreme poverty but have no financial or human assets would plunge in poverty in the face of an unexpected calamity. Even those who have stable livelihoods may be forced to compromise the many conditions required for decent living, ranging from prescription of medicines to safe living conditions. At the same time, poverty creates conditions in which the human security of others who are not in poverty is also threatened. Poverty does not necessarily generate terrorism; but it takes advantage of misery and deprivation.

In order to tackle the economic insecurity of people, the human security policy framework underscores the importance of pursuing strategies in the direction of improving individual and household incomes as well as ensuring access to social minimums. Development is nothing but freedom: the freedom to enjoy basic health, basic education, shelter, physical safety, clean water, clean air and etc. In this respect, human security can only be ensured through a collective arrangement jointly developed by the state, markets and other key stakeholders in society so as to weave a network for all to enjoy access to social minimums. It must also be noted that economic growth is an essential precondition for a successful programme for poverty reduction. Recent success stories in India, China and Vietnam prove that economic liberalisation gives impetus to economic growth. However, in order to ensure the economic security of people at large, it is imperative to address distributional issues to make sure that economic growth reaches the poor.

The rapid pace of globalisation has altered the character and pattern of the global flow of goods, services, finance and people. Its impact on capital, labour, production and work pattern is now increasingly evident, especially in the developing world. In the changed context, traditional mechanisms such as trade unionism for economic security in the workplace are becoming ineffective and unviable. Human

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security demands new thinking and programme of action in line with the changed environment to build economic security in the work place.

Further, “economic crises in developing countries often bring immediate threats to human security through shrinking output, declining incomes and rising unemployment, causing sharp increase in income poverty.”

When developed economies catch cold, developing economics get pneumonia. In this situation, the economically vulnerable developing countries are the most affected and suffered. Safeguarding the economic security of the people vis-à-vis such crises remains a real challenge in economic planning in the globalisation context. The internal construction of a ‘national economy’ while exploiting the positive elements of the globalisation process constitutes an integral part of this challenge. In addition to economic and financial crises, two other developments may endanger the economic security of the people: natural disasters and violent conflicts. There are two types of natural disasters. Earthquakes, cyclones, tornados and tsunamis are really unpredictable. The other category includes partly ‘man-made’ natural disasters. Whatever the origin, these disenable the economic conditions necessary for survival. Access to the means necessary to meet basic human needs such as food, water, shelter, education and health is an essential minimum condition for human security. The ability to extend a protective mechanism by the joint action of the state and non-state actors in the event of natural disasters ensures a high degree of human security. Provision of social protection is not to be left solely in the hands of the state. In the practical sense, resilience against threats and vulnerabilities linked with natural disasters depends on social networks and informal care arrangements. As the Human Security Commission pointed out, “These informal networks are built on patterns of social solidarity that have evolved over time at the grass-root level. Their effectiveness can be enhanced by giving communities access to basic social infrastructure and income.”

2.11 ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN SECURITY

When the security problematic of a country is reconfigured from an human-centred perspective, environmental aspects of security become relevant on two grounds. Firstly, as discussed in the previous section, environment-related natural disasters pose real threats to the survival and livelihood of people. Secondly, a safe social as well as physical

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30 Human Security Commission 2003, op. cit., p. 82.
31 Ibid., p. 89.
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environment constitutes an essential element of human security and the physical quality of life. History is replete with examples of civilisations and cultures wiped out due to climatic changes. The fact is that civilisations were wiped out from the earth because they failed to adapt to environmental change because they were too adamant to change their way of life or because their rulers were too blinded by their own self-interests to alter the way they governed. The collapse of the early Maya civilisation between 150 BC and AD 250 of lowland Yucatan can be cited as examples. The fate of the Norse farmers of Greenland after the sudden cooling of the climate is a more recent example. According to the *New Scientist*, the demise of the Greenlanders looks like a case of 'killed by climate'. "By the time the temperature had plummeted in the 1370s, the productivity of the land was falling because of overgrazing and soil erosion. But while the Inuit adopted appropriate technologies for hunting and fishing, the Norse farmers—constrained by rigidity ordered society and Christian culture—tried to maintain the way of life they were used to. They failed." Environmental security focuses on the maintenance of local, regional and planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all human enterprises depend. It is the biosphere that provides mankind with the space in which they live, the materials that supply their needs, and conditions sustainable for their life process. The environmental component of human security relates to two aspects of the proper management of environment-protection of the environment and sound resource utilisation. The impact of environmental degradation on human security can be immediate and long term. The environmental aspect of human security and the other two aspects essential of human security are closely related. They are sustainable development and good governance. In line with the Brundtland Commission, we can define sustainable development as a policy framework adopted 'to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

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33 Mayan civilisation disappeared not because of climate change per se, but because the rulers failed to respond appropriately to climate change. Instead of mobilising labour for irrigation, they ordered bigger monuments!
35 World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 8
2.12 HEALTH AS A HUMAN SECURITY INDICATOR

Any discussion of human security is not complete, if the health dimension of human security is not brought into consideration. Health is a very important indicator of human security for the individual and society at large. According to the Buddhist perspective, good health is the most valuable gain one can achieve (Arogya parama laba) One of the remarkable achievements of the mankind in the 20th century is developments in the health sciences. However, unequal distribution of health resources and facilities is the real issue here. In the absence of any security net or lack of access to proper health facilities, when people are destined to face serious health problems they are forced to sell their lands and other productive assets or borrow money from any available source. Health security and other element of human security such as environment, good governance and sustainable development are interrelated. For example, safe drinking water and sanitation facilities are essential for any successful campaign for the prevention and control of infectious and contagious diseases. The fall of infant mortality and rise in life expectancy has direct links to economic security and education of good health practices and reproductive health. Equitable development and reasonable access to basic health facilities to all can be ensured by good governance. Health is not simply the absence of disease. Health should be understood broadly and it is at the core of human, survival, livelihood as well as human dignity. “Health is both objective physical well-being and subjective psychological wellbeing and confidence about the future.” 36 Accordingly, human health has entered the security agenda in the reconfiguration of security from a human perspective. In the final analysis, heath security depends on peace and development.