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NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS OF BANGLADESH: CHALLENGES AND POLICY OPTIONS

Abstract

Non-traditional Security (NTS) issues, in recent times, have drawn heightened global attention and achieved undeniable prominence. Since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed unprecedented events compelling scholars and analysts to conceptualize or re-conceptualize the changing nature of threats to security in an increasingly interdependent and complex world. The past decades have been stunned by increasing numbers of terrorist attacks, state failures, deadly epidemics, rapidly fluctuating world energy and food prices, a global economic meltdown, and extensive natural disasters like cyclones, earthquakes and flooding. All these events led to the development of an alternative paradigm of security, i.e., NTS that focuses less on conventional military threats which has largely been defined in geopolitical and geostrategic terms and confined to the relationships among nation-states and their military strengths. However, NTS, though is a popular concept, remains ambiguous within and outside the academia; and in whatever context the NTS issues are coined together, Bangladesh as a developing country surely faces numerous NTS threats. Hence, the country needs to prepare itself to counter the challenges emanating from a host of NTS threats it is facing now or likely to face in near future. Against this backdrop, the paper has endeavoured to provide a brief conceptual understanding of the term NTS by delineating different explanations of the concept by renowned scholars and experts. It is argued that NTS is a useful framework of analysis to operationalize the concept of security in economic, social, political and internal security contexts. The paper also provides some arguments as to the need for 'prioritization' in curbing various NTS threats of Bangladesh, given the country's limited resources and capabilities. Keeping this point in view, the paper finds that Bangladesh is apparently managing the challenges well, but it needs to undertake proactive measures and policy options incorporating a dynamic and adaptive security framework, seek international cooperation and devise a comprehensive approach to meet the present and future NTS challenges of the country more effectively.

Keywords: Non-traditional Security (NTS), Comprehensive Security Approach, International Cooperation, Dynamic and Adaptive Security Framework

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1. Introduction

In the 20th century, the world experienced earthshaking swings in the form of two devastating world wars. Thereafter, it witnessed a balance of powers in effect among global powers with the emergence of bipolar world order despite having numerous proxy wars. With the end of the Cold War, the same century had to watch and accept the emergence of the US as the lone superpower. In the following decades, people of the world were obsessed with having a tension-free globe immersed in peace and prosperity. Instead, there were more conflicts, although, of different nature, more sufferings of the people and as a result, prospect for perpetual peace remains elusive. For security analysts and scholars, these developments have once again brought to the fore the debates about re-thinking and re-conceptualising security.¹

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the international security environment has changed dramatically. Although the risks of major armed conflict and interstate wars are now on decline, the world is increasingly confronted with a number of security challenges, which are non-traditional in nature.² Non-traditional security challenges that threaten the well-being and security of states and societies include but certainly not limited to climate change, food and water scarcity, environmental degradation, natural disasters, pandemics, irregular movements of people, human and drug trafficking, violent extremism, terrorism, and transnational crimes, cyber security, etc. Some of these threats are proving to be more severe and pervasive having the potential to cause more damage to a greater number of people than conventional wars and conflicts.³ Faced with such consequences, the global concerns about security have also changed, compelling global community to find new and innovative ways to appropriately respond to these new security challenges.⁴

The rise of NTS issues, therefore, presents new challenges that demand for developing new security architecture to ensure the national security. Traditional responses by nation-states are often ineffective against NTS threats, particularly threats to a state that are posed by non-state actors and threats arising from non-human sources.⁵ A common trend that has been observed by a number of security scholars is the growing tendency to highlight and designate any security concern that is non-

¹ Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Non-Traditional Security: Concept, Issues, and Implications on Security Governance", *Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs*, Policy Forum, Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 2016, p. 5.

² Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

³ Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Nontraditional Security and Multilateralism in Asia: Reshaping the Contours of Regional Security Architecture?", Stanley Foundation, *Policy Analysis Brief*, June 2007, p. 1.

⁴ Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Non-Traditional Security: Concept, Issues, and Implications on Security Governance", *op. cit.*

⁵ Rita Parker, "Resilience as a Policy Response to Non-Traditional Security Threats", available at <http://www.ipedr.com/vol44/020-ICSHH2012-W00032>, accessed on 14 December 2017.

military in nature as a non-traditional security issue.⁶ Contemporary trends and events in the environmental, food, energy, health, development and other sectors that had traditionally been considered as matters outside the purview of 'security' have now been incorporated into the policy strata of many states, international organizations and civil society institutions. These shifts have led to the language and conceptual underpinnings of 'security' being applied in a comprehensive way and in new areas as tools for understanding and addressing contemporary challenges.⁷ Moreover, designating as security concern implies that an issue should receive immediate, priority attention and if necessary, governments may employ lethal responses.⁸

As far as Bangladesh is concerned, when security is discussed, thoughts about military security immediately come to mind. Bangladesh, due to its geopolitical environment and current state of economic, political and societal developments, encounters both traditional and NTS threats.⁹ Traditional security concerns emanate predominantly from the distinctive geographical location of the country, i.e., being surrounded by India, the dominant power in the region, on three sides of its border. The other neighbour, Myanmar, also remained at distance due to limited connectivity between the two countries. As for NTS threats, Bangladesh faces a wide and diverse range of threats, viz unemployment, poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters, climate change consequences, environmental degradations, transnational crimes, terrorism and violent extremism, water scarcity, energy shortages, etc, to mention a few.

As already noted, traditional responses by nation-states are often ineffective against non-traditional security threats,¹⁰ the same is applicable for Bangladesh as well. Security policy options so far followed by Bangladesh including military deterrence, diplomatic manoeuvring and short-term political arrangements have been rendered inadequate in addressing some of the more pressing NTS issues. New policy innovations including use of non-military means as well as comprehensive political, economic and social responses are required to properly address NTS threats in Bangladesh. Moreover, such issues also require national leadership to look

⁶ Mely Caballero-Anthony, Ralf Emmers and Amitav Acharya (eds.), *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Dilemmas in Securitisation*, available at https://www.amazon.com/Non-Traditional-Security-Asia-Dilemmas-Securitization/dp/0754647013#reader_0754647013, accessed on 12 December 2017.

⁷ J. Jackson Ewing and Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Non-Traditional Security 20 Years On: Assessing the Place of the Field", available at <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/NTS>, accessed on 09 November 2017.

⁸ John Bailey, "Nontraditional Security Threats in the U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Relationship: Overview and Recommendations", Washington D.C: Georgetown University, 25 January 2005, p. 5, available at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Nontraditional%20Security%20Threats%20in%20the%20U.S.-Mexico%20Bilateral%20Relationship.pdf>, accessed on 11 January 2018.

⁹ Md Iftekhar Ahmed and M Ashique Rahman, "Non-Traditional Security Threats of Bangladesh: Scope of Responses and Challenges for Its Land Forces", in Chowdhury Hasan Sarwardy and A K M Abdur Rahman, *Exploring New Areas of Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region*, Dhaka: Pacific Armies Management Seminar XXXVIII, Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), 2015, p. 51.

¹⁰ Rita Parker, "Resilience as a Policy Response to Non-Traditional Security Threats", op. cit.

not only inwards to execute internal socio-economic and political reforms but also outwards, with an open outlook to cultivate international cooperation.¹¹ Inexorably, there are lacking and limitations in the capability of states to counter and/or contain both traditional and non-traditional security alone, and thus, require cooperation not only between governments but also with the private sector, non-governmental and international organisations. For, they enable state actors to take advantages of geographical, technological, and knowledge resources, which the states would be unable to muster alone.¹²

Against this backdrop, this paper endeavours to answer the question as to what non-traditional issues can be considered as 'immediate/priority' security threats for Bangladesh and how the challenges can be met with to ensure the national security of the country? In doing so, the paper seeks to delineate a set of recommendations for appropriate measures as well as the ways in which the concerned stakeholders can better contribute to improve the overall security of Bangladesh. Following introduction, the second section focuses on a brief understanding of non-traditional security threats. The third section discusses the priority non-traditional security challenges of Bangladesh. The fourth section outlines the measures that Bangladesh may adopt in curbing NTS threats including future policy options. The paper argues for a comprehensive approach in countering NTS threats in Bangladesh to ensure the nation's security. Section five concludes the paper.

2. Understanding Non-traditional Security Threats

Any understanding of NTS needs to be preceded by an understanding of 'traditional' security concept, that is, the notion of security that dominated international relations and security studies thinking during the Cold War period. Walter Lippmann, an American political commentator, argued in the early-1940s that, "a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war."¹³ Another renowned scholar of security studies, Arnold Wolfers defined security in same fashion as "security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked."¹⁴ Even during the closing years of the Cold War, the traditional meaning of security dominated as Lawrence Krause and Joseph Nye defined security as "the absence of acute threats to the minimal acceptable levels of the basic values that people consider essential to

¹¹ Saurabh Chaudhuri, "Defining Non-Traditional Security Threats", available at <http://globalindiafoundation.org/nontraditionalsecurity.html>, accessed on 29 November 2017.

¹² "Armed Non-State Actors: Current Trends & Future Challenges", *DCAF Horizon*, Working Paper No. 5, 2015.

¹³ Walter Lippmann, *US Foreign Policy: Shield for the Republic*, Boston: Little Brown, 1943, p. 51.

¹⁴ Arnold Wolfers, "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol", in Arnold Wolfers (ed.), *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962, p. 150.

its survival.¹⁵ In these definitions, terms, such as 'core values', 'acquired values' and 'basic values', in the context of national security are essentially interpreted as the independence and territorial integrity of a state that must be protected and preserved. Hence, the meaning of security during the Cold War remained focused on the protection of the state and its vital interests from attacks by other states.¹⁶ Traditional (or conventional) security threats, therefore, refer to outbreak/potentiality of conventional war/battle/engagement between two countries where armed forces, intelligence services or proxy actors are employed to carry out offensive actions. In such conflicts, the targets are typically another country's important civil/military leadership, armed forces, intelligence services, key government agencies, and key point installations (KPIs). It also poses a threat to self-chosen mode of existence and moral stance of a state, of course, with respect to the rest of the world.¹⁷ Traditional security threats may also endanger the survival of states, unhindered development, pursuit of national goals, and protection of basic national interests. The complexities of the Cold War witnessed the divide of the global order into two geopolitical and ideological blocks in which the concept of security remained strongly knit around the traditional model. State security remained pre-eminent over security of individuals. This kept the discipline of security mainly limited to conventional concept seen through a narrow prism of state facing external military threats.¹⁸

However, since 1989, the majority of conflicts have been internal.¹⁹ The changed nature of conflicts has influenced evolving theoretical approaches and understandings of security, as well as practical responses.²⁰ The conceptual understanding of national security started reshaping itself focusing on individual citizens and peoples' way of life, with of course, emphasis on the integrity and interests of the state. The difference between traditional and NTS, however, lies mainly in the source of existential threats. Unlike traditional security, NTS emphasizes basically the non-military character of security threats. It can also be distinguished in terms of the security referent. Caballero-Anthony argues that NTS includes additional security actors such as communities or individuals in addition to the state actors.²¹ However, when non-traditional security challenges increase the likelihood of conflict or war, the most important security referent remains the state.²²

¹⁵ Joseph S. Nye Jr. and Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field", *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1988, p. 5.

¹⁶ Mely Caballero-Anthony (ed.), *Introduction to the Non-Traditional Security Studies. A Transnational Approach*, London: Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 3-19.

¹⁷ Katarzyna Marzęda-Młynarska, "Non-Traditional Security Challenges and Regional Governance: EU and ASEAN Answers to the Migration Crisis", paper presented in *CEEISA-ISA Conference 2016*, Ljubljana, 23-24 June 2016, p.3.

¹⁸ Ehsan Mehmood Khan, *Human Security in Pakistan*, Islamabad: Narratives Pvt. Ltd., 2013.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ S. E. Sachs. "The Changing Definition of Security", available at http://www.stevesachs.com/papers/paper_security.html, accessed on 18 December 2017.

²¹ Caballero-Anthony (ed.), op. cit.

²² Marzęda-Młynarska, op. cit.

Since the inception of humans on earth, NTS threats have existed all along. But the issue has come to the forefront with the economic and social development of the people and change in mindset where the possibility of total war against a nation state has become bleak and unsustainable. Since the 1990s, there has been a growing interest in the study of NTS, especially in the light of emerging challenges brought on by a host of factors, including the effects of globalization.²³ ‘Security-framing’ appears to be an effective way to bring attention to these threats, convey urgency and command governmental resources to address the complex challenges that arise as one responds to them.²⁴

Non-traditional security threats share ‘conceptual spaces’ with ‘comprehensive security’ and ‘human security’.²⁵ In the contemporary world and according to the UN, ‘Human Security’ has become an inseparable and complementary part of overall security.²⁶ Even during the inception of the UN, the concept of human security was there although in an implicit manner. For instance, in 1945 the US Secretary of State, Edward Reilly Stettinius Jr., reported to his government on the result of the conference in San Francisco, which established the UN, in these words:

“The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can ensure the world of an enduring peace...”²⁷

Hence, the concepts of “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want” have been there in mid-1940s, decades’ back, when in 1990s, we formally started to talk about them. The human security concept highlights that everything should be subject to the human’s benefits and needs.²⁸ Therefore, it is important to counterbalance the divergence of security understanding and bridge the gap with a view to bringing the two concepts of traditional and non-traditional security at converging point. Only then a comprehensive approach can be adopted to address the challenges of both traditional security and NTS objectively.

²³ Annegret Bendiek, “Regionalisation and the Taming of Globalisation? Economic, Political, Security, Social and Governance Issues”, available at <http://lib.znate.ru/docs/index-148167.html> accessed on 30 October 2017.

²⁴ Nirmala Joshi, “Responses to Non-Traditional Threats and Challenges”, available at <https://silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/Monographs/1004Joshi-VI-Responses>, accessed on 30 October 2017.

²⁵ Mely Caballero-Anthony, *Understanding Non-traditional Security*, London: Sage Publications, 2016.

²⁶ Human Security Centre, *op. cit.*

²⁷ Okubo Shiro, “Freedom from Fear and Want’ and ‘the Right to Live in Peace’, and ‘Human Security’”, Kyoto: Ritsumeikan University, Institute of International Relations and Area Studies, 2007.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Now, before delving into an elaborate discussion of the characteristics and ramifications of NTS threats, it is important to note that interestingly, the evolution of the concept of security has been buttressed by the onset of various theoretical approaches or schools of thought of international relations, i.e., realism, liberalism, constructivism, etc.²⁹ Realism and liberalism are the two most dominant schools of thoughts of international relations which while striving to explain why and how states have sought security also essentially revealed the meaning of security. Realists argue that states seek security in an anarchic international environment through a process of 'security maximization' that ultimately led to the competition and most often than not to conflict between and among the states. Liberalists, on the other hand, while maintain state as the unit of analysis, place importance on domestic actor's power and preferences and uphold that the recognition among state leaders that they have common, shared values means that they can agree to come together to cooperate than to compete, thereby, creating a secure environment. As far as traditional and NTS dichotomy is concerned, both realists and liberalists' explanations basically reflected on traditional security since they remain fused with 'state-centrism'. It is only after the emergence of alternative approaches in the post-Cold War era, viz., Critical Security Studies (CSS)³⁰ that include constructivism, post-positivism, post-structuralism, etc, 'human security' and 'comprehensive security' approaches that discussion of NTS issues has been made possible. However, it is not the objective of the paper to dig deep into this relationship between the emergence of various approaches of international relations and the evolution of security understanding. Rather, the intention is to highlight the fact, which is also noted by Alan Collins³¹ that the theoretical approach one takes towards examining security will essentially determine the type of subject matter that one consider constitutes security. A realist can never agree to the importance of security of an individual over the state while a CSS scholar can widen and deepen the meaning of security to the extent of including any threat to human well-being far less than endangering human life as a security concern.

NTS threats can originate from a variety of non-state human and natural causes and they can affect both government institutions and civilian populations.³² Mely Caballero-Anthony argues that the NTS concept is based on five assumptions. The first and most important one is: the non-traditional challenges or threats could lead directly to conflict or war. Secondly, that the narrow state perspective is insufficient for dealing effectively with NTS challenges. Third, that the states as well as communities and individuals are actors responsible for ensuring security. Fourth,

²⁹ Alan Collins in the introduction of his edited book has emphasized the crucial importance of different approaches in establishing what constitutes security. See, Alan Collins, "Introduction: What is Security Studies?", in Alan Collins (ed.), *Contemporary Security Studies*, (3rd Edition), Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 3

³⁰ Daved Mutimer, "Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History", in Alan Collins (ed.), *Contemporary Security Studies*, op. cit., pp. 67-86.

³¹ Alan Collins, "Introduction: What is Security Studies?", op. cit., p. 6.

³² John Bailey, op. cit.

that threats, such as climate change or pandemics are transnational in nature and require non-military responses. Fifth, because of the transnational character of these challenges, international cooperation is essential.³³ Moreover, she also highlighted six distinctive characteristics of NTS threats. These are:

- They have a transnational character understood in terms of their origins, conceptions, and effects;
- They are defined in political and socioeconomic terms;
- They cause societal and political instability and become security threats;
- Their effects are difficult to reverse or repair;
- They require regional and multilateral cooperation due to the inadequacy of national solutions; and
- They constitute a threat to both states (their territory and sovereignty) and peoples (individuals and societies).³⁴

NTS issues are, however, complex in nature and often debated by scholars and academia. Through NTS, the very concept of 'security' has been extended to become comprehensive that includes individual and personal needs. In this case personnel security could be endless, hence, critical analysts argue that extending 'security' in such a way may render security discourses out of context.³⁵ There remains a growing tendency to lengthen the list of NTS issues, and to put almost everything into the basket. Indeed, all issues threatening human well being can be included under the canopy of NTS, once they are considered serious enough. At the same time, it is important to understand whether or not there is a certain limit to distinguish NTS from traditional ones, because security always has special implications in the overall context of a country. One may argue that some conditions can be identified as a security issue at a certain geographical area whereas the opposite may be regarded as security issue at particular time and place. For example, shortage of water in the desert countries may be a security issue, but the flood water in monsoon may be regarded as security issue in a deltaic country like Bangladesh due to crop damage, epidemics and loss of food grains. Moreover, NTS threats are often interlocking, with the occurrence of one NTS emergency leading to others. For example, Indonesia witnessed widespread social unrest and instability following the Asian financial crisis.³⁶ In western Africa, many are concerned that the widespread transmission of Ebola has inflicted severe

³³ Caballero-Anthony, *op. cit.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ O. Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritisation", in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 46-86.

³⁶ Brian Lucas, "Indonesian Financial Crisis (1997-1998)", available at <http://gsdrc.org/publications/indonesian-financial-crisis-1997-1998/>, accessed on 21 December 2017.

economic and social trauma, affecting the success of local peacebuilding efforts.³⁷ It is argued that time and place can have implications for considering the NTS threats.

There is little disagreement that the conceptualisation of NTS has brought about a new era in the security affairs, shifting the focus away from military power alone as the core determinant of international order and security.³⁸ It, however, implies that the political leaderships and national security policy now have greater role to play in ensuring security of a state since, it essentially involves combating both traditional and non-traditional security threats.³⁹ According to Caballero-Anthony, there are many times the NTS issues are transnational in scope, defying unilateral remedies and requiring comprehensive – political, economic, social responses, as well as humanitarian use of military force.⁴⁰

Finally, it can conveniently be inferred with Frans-Paul van der Putten and others⁴¹ that NTS is a comprehensive way of conceptualising security that include economic security meaning the ability to function without disruption as an effective and efficient economy; environmental security that is concerned with ensuring a safe natural living environment; physical security encompassing the ability of individuals and groups of individuals to function safely within society; and social and political stability, which is about maintaining a social climate in which the core values of democracy and the rule of law are observed. In a developing country like Bangladesh, NTS issues involve all dimensions and varieties of NTS threats ranging from environmental degradation, food insecurity, climate change to lack of social and political instability and economic vulnerability.

3. Non-traditional Security Challenges of Bangladesh

A wider approach needs to be taken while discussing the NTS issues in Bangladesh, without being either extreme or simplistic, since different countries have different NTS issues. For example, the US government now puts priority on international terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among the list of NTS issues,⁴² while, the poor households of developing countries are concerned

³⁷ Available at <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/ebola.shtml>, accessed on 22 December 2017.

³⁸ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998.

³⁹ Saurabh Chaudhuri, "Defining Non-Traditional Security Threats", accessed at <http://globalindiafoundation.org/nontraditionalsecurity.html>, accessed on 11 December 2017.

⁴⁰ Mely Caballero-Anthony, 'An Introduction to Non-Traditional Security Studies: A Transnational Approach', op. cit.

⁴¹ Frans-Paul van der Putten, Minke Meijnders and Jan Rood, "Deterrence as a security concept against non-traditional threats", *Clingendael Monitor*, June 2015.

⁴² Sara Z. Kutchesfahani, "Preventing nuclear terrorism should remain a top U.S. priority", available at <http://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/356439-preventing-nuclear-terrorism-should-remain-a-top-us-priority>, accessed on 25 November 2017.

about the lack of fixed income. Some people in the Middle East are concerned with water resources while the forcibly displaced Palestinians are concerned with whether they can return to their home land or not. Even for the same country, there will be different NTS issues or different priorities at different stages of development. The NTS threats may also vary geographically. And NTS issues are time sensitive as well, meaning problem of today may appear differently tomorrow. All these factors are applicable in case of Bangladesh. For example, with a large number of populations depending on the agricultural contribution, Bangladesh may suffer from food insecurity and adverse effect on ecological environment due to fast industrialization and urbanization. Drying up of major rivers may further aggravate the situation and pose severe threats leading to human insecurity, ecological imbalance, and demographic displacement. In this respect, the water sharing of international rivers may be put on the top of the list while dealing with various NTS issues of Bangladesh.

Furthermore, the security challenges of Bangladesh can be inferred with Barry Buzan's concept of security where it is stated that domestic threats to a weak state can almost never be isolated from the influence of outside powers, thus entangling domestic security problems with its external relations.⁴³ Buzan also states that the tyranny of geography is the most important factor in the defence-vulnerability of the small states. Surrounded by big and problematic neighbours all around, Bangladesh is vulnerable to transnational NTS threats. Transnational organized crime networks are especially a potent threat to the national security⁴⁴ and Bangladesh needs to do away with the threat. The geographical proximity of the golden triangle⁴⁵ and golden crescent⁴⁶ makes Bangladesh a vulnerable route for arms and drug trafficking/smuggling.

The rise of non-state actors, intra-state conflicts, environmental degradation and climate change, demographical changes and cyber-crime pose a greater security threat to the nation-states in the 21st century than militaries of other states⁴⁷ and Bangladesh is gravely vulnerable to most of such phenomena. However, the problem of prioritisation is always there. Some may argue to put the priority on economic

⁴³ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Brighton, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd, 1983.

⁴⁴ Divya Srikanth, "Non-Traditional Security Threats in the 21st Century: A Review", *International Journal of Development and Conflict*, Vol. 4, 2014, pp. 60–68.

⁴⁵ A United Nations report in December revealed that opium production in the Golden Triangle had tripled since 2006, with the illegal drugs trade in the region worth \$16.3 billion. The area produced 762 tonnes of opium in 2014, making about 76 tonnes of heroin, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime said in its Southeast Asia Opium Survey stated. See, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/welcome-to-the-golden-triangle-the-centre-of-the-worlds-drug-trafficking-10100420.html> accessed on 13 January 2018.

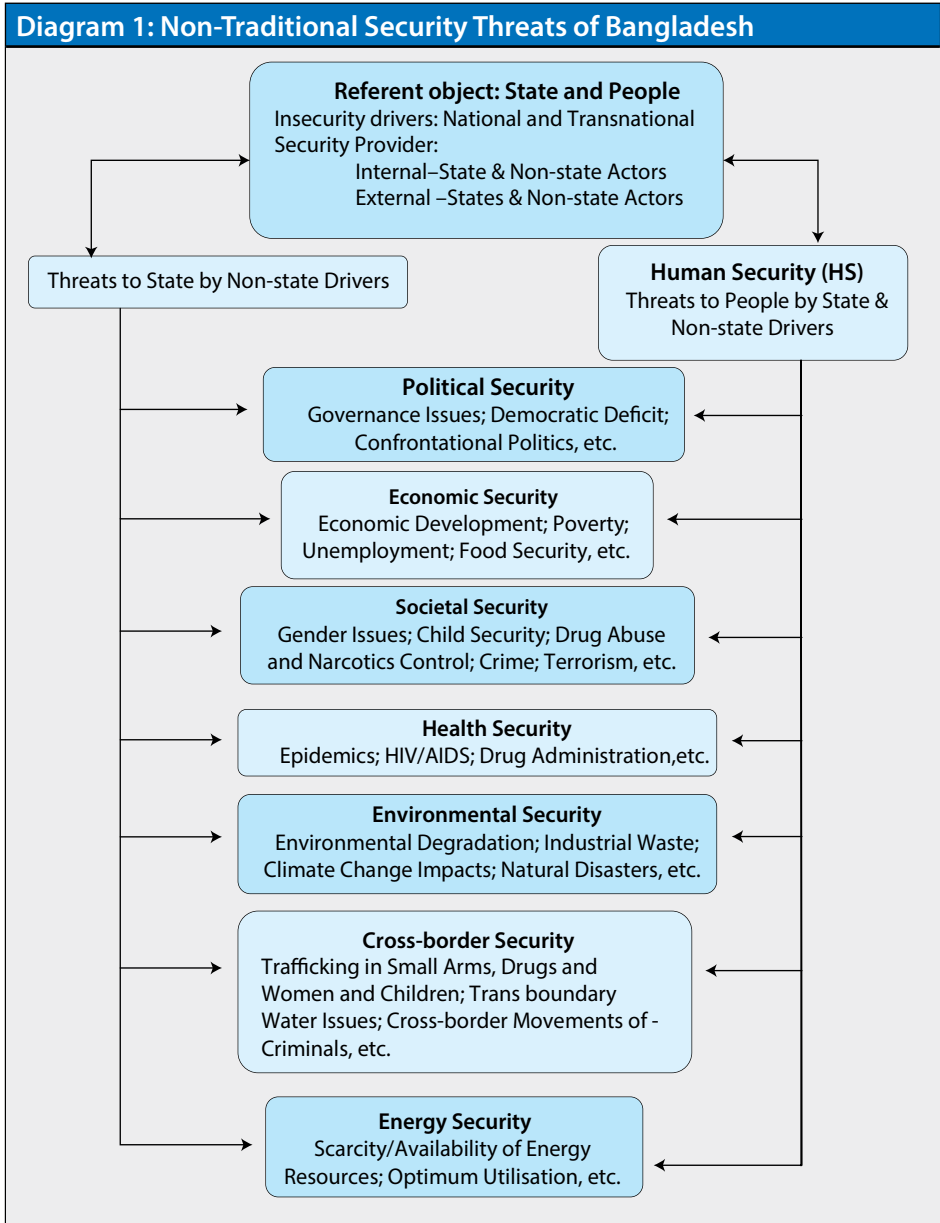
⁴⁶ The clandestine land routes of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan collectively constitute the Golden Crescent, also called the silk route of drugs. Heroin, poppy husk, opium, and synthetic drugs are the four kind of drugs entering India. See, <https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/golden-crescent-the-route-through-which-drugs-are-making-their-way-into-punjab-256556.html> accessed on 13 January 2018.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

security (including energy security, financial security, food security) followed by environmental security (or ecological security), cyber/information security, and human security. Some may argue for alleged three 'societal evils', i.e., religious extremism, radicalism and terrorism.⁴⁸ Yet another group of experts may view NTS issues of Bangladesh from economic, social and political dimensions as well. Indeed, given the versatile demographic characteristics of Bangladesh, people from different cultural and need based orientation will possibly have completely different opinions about NTS issues. For example, the rural populace would think about the hazards of cultivation, the environmentalists would regard environmental pollution from the industrial urban area as more pressing whereas, the educated youths may think about unemployment and other related problems as non-traditional issues; the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) might give more priority to issues related to different ethnic groups or how to preserve its ethnic diversity; and the South-eastern tip (Teknaf) would probably include arms/drug trafficking, illegal money transaction and illegal immigrants as the most dangerous non-traditional issues. The elite intellectuals would be more willing to emphasize on economic security issues like population migration, poverty or societal disharmony like emerging conflicts among polarized political and social groups. However, a comprehensive list of non-traditional security concerns of Bangladesh can be formulated as depicted in diagram 1.

Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish and integrate all NTS issues within national security efforts, put them in order of priority, realistically measure and assign due weights to them. Bangladesh is yet to see a broad consensus on issues about which should be considered as NTS threats or what should be included as key objectives of the government to face the challenges of NTS. The reasons are obvious, because the NTS issues are often contextually defined. However, the paper argues following NTS issues of Bangladesh as priority security concerns that require immediate attention and coordinated measures to deal with them more effectively.

⁴⁸ Divya Srikanth, op. cit.



Source: Md Iftekhar Ahmed and M Ashique Rahman, "Non-Traditional Security Threats of Bangladesh: Scope of Responses and Challenges for Its Land Forces", in Chowdhury Hasan Sarwardy and A K M Abdur Rahman, *Exploring New Areas of Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region*, Dhaka: Pacific Armies Management Seminar XXXVIII, Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), 2015, p. 52.

3.1 Transnational Crimes

Due to the globalization processes, a new transnational space is created and, societies and individuals are no longer limited by national territory. They can undertake actions, which transcend national borders.⁴⁹ In case of Bangladesh, far from popular belief that it will remain unaffected from all small arms and light weapons since Bangladesh is neither fighting a 'classical' war nor faced with any insurgency movement like its neighbours, the effect of arms trafficking on security has proven otherwise.⁵⁰ As already noted, the geographical proximity of the golden triangle and golden crescent makes Bangladesh a viable route for arms and drug trafficking/smuggling.⁵¹ Such transshipment has a dangerous impact since, some of the weapons, originally trafficked into the neighbouring countries, leak into the local black and grey markets and fall into the hand of local criminal syndicates. The rise in crime in the cities and border areas and the "weapon-power" of the thugs and goons has led to the deterioration of law and order in Bangladesh. Moreover, border conflicts, infectious disease, cross-border criminal movements, extortion, human trafficking among the labour and sex industries, money laundering, etc., remain other transnational threats for Bangladesh.⁵²

Due to push factors like poverty, limited job prospects compared to large population seeking jobs and the enticement for becoming wealthy quickly, a large number of people in Bangladesh are still vulnerable and fall prey to human traffickers and often end up in situation of forced and exploitative labour, and in case of female workers sexual exploitation. The demand for cheap labour and the existence of the informal sectors, including domestic work and prostitution in the countries of destination, are also important pull factors of human trafficking. Although, there is no reliable statistics of the actual number of men, women and children who are being trafficked, it is, however, considered significant. Moreover, the large scale forced migration of Rohingya people in the last two years especially, after August 2017, is also proving to be a very difficult security problem to manage. The potentiality of Rohingya radicalization and their integration with the local and transnational terrorist groups are all becoming pressing security issues for government and communities to tackle.

⁴⁹ M. Pietras, "Globalization as the Process of Changing the International Community", in M. Pietras (ed.), *The Faces of Globalization*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, pp. 35-64.

⁵⁰ A K M Nazrul Islam, Neila Husain and Mahbubur Rashid Bhuiyan, "Small Arms Trafficking in Bangladesh: Threat to National Security", in Golam Mohammad (ed.), *National Security Bangladesh 2009*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2010, p. 214.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Mohammad Humayun Kabir, Neila Husain and Segufta Hossain, "Non-Traditional Security of Bangladesh", in Mufleh R Osmany (ed.), *Whither National Security Bangladesh 2007*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2008, p. 255.

3.2 Environmental Security and Climate Change as National Security

Ecological crises have been responsible for killing and injuring substantially larger numbers of people over time than conventional military threats, and therefore represent a parallel and arguably more important source of insecurity.⁵³ Due to Global warming, the coastal areas of Bangladesh will be at great risk owing to flooding and tidal upsurge; warming may force pests and pathogens to move beyond their traditional regions with tropical diseases; and the disruption of ecological equilibrium may increase conflict between societies especially along the long coastal belt of Bangladesh. The pollution in the upstream across the border can cause ecological damage to the downstream land mass of Bangladesh.

Table 1: Climate Change Consequences in Bangladesh

Cause	Consequences Phase I	Consequences Phase II	Consequences Phase III
Climate Change	Shortage of fresh water availability	Lose of biodiversity	Livelihood contraction
	Increase natural extreme events	Risk to human health and lives	Food insecurity
	Intrusion of saline water		Migration and conflicts

Source: National Security Index Bangladesh 2009.⁵⁴

Due to the ongoing climate change, consequences on environment of Bangladesh have been divided into three phases. In the first phase there are shortages of fresh water availability, increased natural extreme events and intrusion of saline water. In the second phase there are lose of biodiversity and risk to human health and lives. The third phase includes livelihood contraction, food insecurity, migration and conflicts (see Table 1). Bangladesh has seen its fair share of unpredictable and devastating climate and weather events in recent years: temperature extremes, cyclones, tornados have taken thousands of lives and affected millions more. The environmentalists argue that the climate change is turning out to be the most fundamental non-traditional security threat for Bangladesh and its impacts are already felt in the forms of floods, droughts, cyclones and sea level rise.

⁵³ Dennis Pirages, "Ecological Security: A Framework for Analyzing Non-traditional Security Issues", available at http://www.nbr.org/publications/specialreport/pdf/Preview/SR28_EcoSecuritySouthAsia_preview, accessed on 29 November 2017.

⁵⁴ Shaheen Afroze, Sufia Khanom and Akand Muhammad Faisal Uddin, "Climate Change and National Security of Bangladesh", in Golam Mohammad (ed.), *National Security Bangladesh 2009*, op. cit., p. 158.

3.3 *Water Security*

Water is most essential to life and it is also an integral part of economy, society and ecology. Water resources dominate the natural system of Bangladesh, indeed, water is a key natural resource of the country. The major sources of available waters are however, trans-boundary rivers accounting for 76.5 per cent of total water availability of the country. Rainwater and groundwater account for only 23 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively. Withdrawal and obstruction of water flow by India of the trans-boundary rivers, particularly in the dry season, makes the problems for Bangladesh critical and pervasive. The consequential impacts on the socio-economic life, ecology, environment, and river morphology in Bangladesh are severe. Refraining from equitable sharing of trans-boundary rivers by India has severely affected the natural flow of the downstream rivers and its distributaries, having adverse effects on agricultural production, fisheries, forestry, industrial activities, inland navigation, biodiversity, wetlands and so on.

Hence, from NTS perspective, the water sharing of international rivers may be put on the top of the list while dealing with various NTS issues of Bangladesh. The Ganges and Teesta waters continue to be a thorny issue between Bangladesh and India since long. This is a glowing example of not just a trans-boundary issue with potentially serious ramifications, but also of how a shared resource can have contending interests on two sides of an international border. Here from Indian perspective, the importance of Farakka Barrage lies in serving the Northeast India as a lifeline to its economic activities; the barrage is also crucial for preservation and maintenance of the Kolkata Port by improving the water regime and navigability of the Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system.⁵⁵ However, from Bangladesh perspective the concern is about ecological and agricultural impact. How this issue is finally resolved will have serious consequences for both the countries and the millions of people who depend on these important international rivers.

Moreover, the deltaic Bangladesh is affected with another hotspot problem, such as arsenic contamination. It is a global problem, which now appears to be a serious problem in Bangladesh as well. It is estimated that two-thirds of Bangladesh's groundwater is contaminated by arsenic. As the groundwater table goes down more and more, arsenic contaminated water will come up, increasing the risk of arsenic poisoning throughout the country.⁵⁶ This poses a major health security challenge since many people still consume arsenic-contaminated water.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Priyadarshi Siddhanta, "Farraka Barrage: The tale of two countries and one river", available at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/farraka-barrage-the-tale-of-two-countries-and-one-river/>, accessed on 11 December 2017.

⁵⁶ Mohammad Humayun Kabir et. al., "Non-Traditional Security of Bangladesh", op. cit., p. 261.

⁵⁷ Abbas Bhuiya, "Health Threats as Nontraditional Security Challenges for Bangladesh", available at <http://nbr.org/publications/element.aspx?id=591>, accessed on 23 December 2017.

3.4 Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Until very recently, terrorism was considered to be political and military threat to be addressed by the state alone. The fact that terrorism and human insecurity are closely interlinked dawned much later in the minds of policymakers. Now, some may believe that the threats of violent extremism and terrorism need special attention and should be put on the top of the security agenda. The internal social, political and economic dynamics of Bangladesh have given birth to this non-traditional security issue in the form of violence, extremism, and terrorism. The main threat of terrorism lies in its potential to cause wider social unrest, which can in turn lead to further social polarization and radicalization of various population groups. These, in turn, have profound implications on the nature of security cooperation among the various security agencies, as well as between the policy makers and other stake holders. The recent terrorist attacks during 2014-2016, in various parts of Bangladesh have brought the debates about re-thinking and re-conceptualizing terrorism as the top security agenda to the fore front. Especially, the 2016 Holey Bakery attack wrecked havoc in the country killing 20 foreign nationals for the first time in the history of Bangladesh. The incident rattled the whole nation and questioned the very moderate fabric of the society of Bangladesh. However, the government has very successfully tacked the post Holey Bakery situation. Due to various counterterrorism measures and legal and institutional setups, the country has not witnessed any major terrorist incident since 2016.

However, terrorism in contemporary times is not only a domestic phenomenon but a global phenomenon. In spite of successful and effective counterterrorism measures and stringent legal and institutional setups, terrorist outfits are continuously striving to re-group and re-organise themselves taking advantage of various structural causes as well as enabling environment. There are numerous reports of new arrests, law enforcing agencies information and reports suggesting possibilities of militant organisations re-grouping and re-organising themselves cannot be ruled out. Hence, terrorism and violent extremism remains a major non-traditional security threat for Bangladesh.

3.5 Natural Disasters

Extreme weather events have caused havoc in Bangladesh since its independence. Sometimes, it had experienced longest dry spell causing water shortage, huge water pollution, depleting fish stocks in some major rivers as well as tropical cyclones like *Sidr*, *Aila*, etc. On the evening of 15 November 2007, Cyclone *Sidr* hit the low-lying and densely-populated coast of Bangladesh. The cyclone devastated 30 southern districts of both Barisal and Khulna divisions. Hundreds of people perished as houses and buildings collapsed because of the 240 km per hour wind. Thousands of others drowned in tidal surges that were over 15 feet high in many

villages. The cyclone caused 3,363 deaths, injured 55,282, damaged or destroyed 1.5 million homes, and 2.5 million acres of cropland.⁵⁸ On 25 May 2009, *Aila* hit 14 districts on the south-west coast of Bangladesh. It was the second major natural disaster for the region in less than two years while many of these areas were still recovering from the effects of 2007's cyclone *Sidr*. Cyclone *Aila* caused 190 instant deaths, injuries to 7,103 people, damage to 6,000 kilometres of roads, collapsed more than 1,700 kilometres of embankments, leaving more than 500,000 people homeless. It is estimated that about four million people have been affected during and after cyclone *Aila*.

On the other hand, the country has been victims of flood since the recorded history due to its topography – basically a floodplain of three of the greatest rivers of the world, the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna (GBM). About 80 per cent of its landmass is flood prone while about 20-30 per cent is inundated regularly which sometimes reached up to 70 per cent in extreme years. The country has experienced severe flooding in the years of 1974, 1987, 1988, 1998, 2004, 2007 and very recently in 2017. Flood caused havocs in Bangladesh in terms of loss of life and property (see Table 2).

Table 2: Major Floods of Bangladesh

Year	Area Inundated (% of the country)	Total Deaths	Estimated Damage in Million US\$
1974	36	28,700	57.9
1987	39	2055	1000
1988	61	2300	1200
1998	68	1100	2800
2004	38	750	2200
2007	43	831	1800
2017	40	157	1975

Source: Sajid Karim and Mahbubur Rashid Bhuiyan, "Sustainable Flood Management in Bangladesh: Addressing the Challenges", *BISS Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 1, January 2018, p. 8.

Over the years, government in association with various development partners, intergovernmental bodies, NGOs and community people has been implementing various measures both structural and non-structural to better deal with floods. As can be seen from Table 2, the country has been successful in drastically reducing loss of life during floods. However, the economic loss remains high. In fact, as noted by one study, "nowadays, it is worsening due to unplanned urbanization and development activities, rapid population growth, faulty structural interventions and adverse impact of climate change, with more intensity and frequency than ever before."⁵⁹ Hence,

⁵⁸ Available at https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/4926_4990.htm, accessed on 13 December 2017.

⁵⁹ Sajid Karim and Mahbubur Rashid Bhuiyan, "Sustainable Flood Management in Bangladesh: Addressing the Challenges", *BISS Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 1, January 2018, p. 1.

natural calamities due to environmental degradation and climate change are most crucial NTS challenges that are persistent in Bangladesh.

3.6 *Economic Security*

Economic capability of countries is being determined by a range of internal and external factors. Among internal factors, there are: size of the country, existing resource base, political and social stability, level of technological and institutional development, ability to adapt to the changes occurring in the internal and external economic and socio-political situations, human resource capability, etc. The external factors include level and nature of international trade, relationships with other countries, international political and economic order, international economic environment, etc.⁶⁰

A great challenge facing Bangladesh today is how to raise the living standards of the marginalized poor and integrate them into the national economic system by ensuring that people from all walks of life can claim their share of economic opportunity. However, the appropriation of the security label attached to these concerns and threats has been a significant development. Because it is important to draw concentration to these NTS challenges, put across necessity, and mobilize government resources to address them. It, therefore, becomes imperative for the government to develop a comprehensive NTS framework that will either supplement or go side by side with the national security framework. Unfortunately, very less has been done in this field in terms of contribution to policy formulation and drawing up of appropriate strategy.

4. **Policy Options for Bangladesh**

For properly addressing the NTS threats, Bangladesh should learn to adopt new approaches and positive outlook about dealing with its own NTS issues. It has to realise that most of the NTS issues as Sebastian Biba noted, usually require mitigation and adaptation strategies, instead of preventative measures.⁶¹ In the context of limited resources and capabilities, the country needs to prioritize, in order of importance and urgency, virtually endless list of non-traditional issues that Bangladesh is facing today and likely to face in near future. Today, a nation's security, international legitimacy, and sovereignty rest not only on territorial control, but also on the integrity of its services and its ability to fulfil the basic rights of its citizens.⁶² Therefore, it is suggested

⁶⁰ Abul Kalam Azad, Mohd. Mahfuz Kabir and Benuka Ferdousi, "Global Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Bangladesh", in Golam Mohammad (ed.), *National Security Bangladesh 2009*, op. cit., p. 76.

⁶¹ Sebastian Biba, "New Concerns, More Cooperation? How Non-Traditional Security Issues Affect Sino-Indian Relations", *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2016, p. 4.

⁶² Mely Caballero-Anthony and Alistair Cook, "Non Traditional Security in Asia: Issues, Challenges and

in this paper that the national security stakeholders of Bangladesh should develop a three-pronged policy – (a) devising a comprehensive security approach; (b) boasting international cooperation; and (c) crafting a dynamic and adaptive security framework – for addressing NTS threats more effectively. These are briefly elaborated below.

4.1 Devising a Comprehensive Security Approach

Bangladesh government needs to formulate the strategy of ‘comprehensive security’ to address the challenges of NTS. The comprehensive security goes beyond (but does not exclude) the military to embrace political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions.⁶³ While comprehensive security provides a broader conceptualization of security beyond military threats, the main security referent still remains the state. A comprehensive view of security helps to ensure the stability of a regime and as a consequence, reinforce the state as both the primary unit of analysis as well as the main actor that defines and provides security.⁶⁴

In whatever form NTS threat appears, Bangladesh needs to realize that under certain conditions the threats caused by some NTS issues could be even more dangerous than the traditional security issues. The recent terrorist attacks that bewildered the foreign investors and the recent Rakhine crisis that have shaken the national economy and raised the level of social insecurity, are some crucial examples of such kind. The concerns of government and relevant policy makers must not lose sight of the NTS issues and must not fall short of timely response to NTS threats. Therefore, faced with new NTS challenges, Bangladesh government should have new approaches and formulate new strategy to confront the emerging threats. Once any phenomenon is identified as a security issue, it should have a special significance that would necessitate government’s attention for subsequent action(s). Besides, policy makers must bring forth the issue at the top of the agenda incorporating an awareness programme taking on board the people, civil society, NGOs and the mass media.

Moreover, as a practical approach, Bangladesh needs to assess and analyze security issues from a comprehensive need and rights-based perspective rather than from a purely statist or military-based understanding. Terrorism, climate change issues (mitigation and adaptation) as well as humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief operations demand high priority on the agenda of Bangladesh.

frameworks for Action”, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISAS), 2013.

⁶³ Muthiah Alagappa, *Asian Security Practices: Material and Ideational Influences*, Stanford University Press, 1998.

⁶⁴ Mely Caballero-Anthony, “Re-visioning Human Security in Southeast Asia”, *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2004, pp. 155-189.

4.2 *Boosting International Cooperation*

Bangladesh cannot deny the NTS issues that emanate from trans-boundary phenomenon. For example, the trans-nationality of NTS challenges was illustrated by the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002 and 2003, when the epidemic was transmitted from Beijing to Hong Kong, and then to Southeast Asia and rest of the world.⁶⁵ The 2009 swine flu pandemic in northern India claimed many lives as it moved to neighbouring Pakistan and Nepal. It was reported that the flu impacted the daily lives of millions of people as well as the economies of the affected regions.⁶⁶ Bangladesh needs to develop the mechanism to oversee and constantly monitor the peripheral and regional as well as global NTS issues that may affect the country and remain prepared to respond timely if needed.

The trans-boundary nature of the issues makes it difficult for a country to effectively deal with NTS challenges alone. Thus, for the effective governance of NTS issues, Bangladesh needs cooperation and coordination among states, international organization/institutions as well as between state and non-state actors. The good offices of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh need to continue their outstanding efforts to rally the international community behind the cause of Bangladesh by highlighting their economical, social, environmental and human security implications. The Rakhine Rohingya crisis needs to be dealt with this way. Mass media campaign including national, regional and international seminar, symposium, workshop, roundtable may be useful for this purpose.

In a globalized world, geo-political diversities of Bangladesh are significantly important to security and well-being of the nation. It is critically important to build an inclusive nation, bound together by legitimate freedom, fortified by the rule of law, and prospering through balanced development. The geography of Bangladesh demands for natural economic relationships with global community especially with its neighbours. Because the internal insecurity in the economic domain comes mainly from massive poverty while the external ones emanate mainly from the process of globalization.⁶⁷ The economic relationships are vital but would demand careful attention as well. For both political and security interests, it is imperative to have strong, democratic neighbours working together to secure the borders and defend shared interests and values to defuse the potentiality of NTS threats arising from trans-border vested groups. Bangladesh needs to be engaged effectively with

⁶⁵ Melissa Curley and Nicholas Thomas, "Human Security and Public Health in Southeast Asia: The SARS Outbreak", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 58, No.1, 2004, pp. 17-32.

⁶⁶ Zahir Janmohamed, "Deadly Outbreak of Swine Flu in India May Be Due to a Mutated Strain", *Al Jazeera*, 23 March 2015.

⁶⁷ Khaled Sarwar and Md. Saifullah, "Economic security in the context of Bangladesh", available at http://www.newstoday.com.bd/index.php?option=details&news_id=2377105&date=2014-05-04, accessed on 20 December 2017.

global community in fighting the menace of terrorism, and climate change in terms of intelligence sharing regarding terrorist movements/plans and mobilizing the fund to reduce the effect of climate change respectively.

4.3 *Crafting a Dynamic and Adaptive Security Framework*

Time demands that the security framework of Bangladesh should be dynamic and adaptable, addressing not just conflict between and within states, but also the societal challenges of the 21st century. In many countries today, corruption and inefficiency have stunted economic development and spawned disenchantment with free market prescriptions. These factors combined are likely to stir up popular dissatisfaction and, in some cases, violent outbursts, which may be difficult to control by relatively weak and unprepared institutions of government. For example, in many of the middle-eastern countries there are organized violent protests against the sitting regime for democratic freedom and economic enhancement. Ultimate result is pervasive civil war or near civil war. So the levers by which Bangladesh can ensure human security and remove the obstacles to growth are in the hands of its leadership. Sound policies with economic opportunity to all, ensuring social justice and good governance are important. It is also important to recognize that the fundamental protective measures against all these threats lie on strong democracy and harmonious society. Democracy, of course, goes hand in hand with the protection of human rights. Economic development and prosperity are important underpinnings of democracy as well.

Most of the NTS challenges faced by Bangladesh are not new and are not unique as well. How these issues are framed, approached, addressed, and understood will have significant bearing on how many will be affected by the menaces or how few will have less suffering. The appreciation and acceptance of NTS as a national security challenge with global implications will also guide Bangladesh to create mechanisms to deal with such issues. The policy makers of Bangladesh should be engaged regarding the importance of NTS in guiding political response to face the crisis and developing strategies to lessen or eliminate the threat to its citizens. Bangladesh government needs to develop the institutional competence to engage the regional and international organizations to address these challenges. If viewed from complicated and volatile context of global and peripheral security environment, and the national perspective as well, all the issues should be placed in the big basket of decision-making of the government policy makers targeting national consensus and national unity.

The country needs to work with a broad spectrum of actors to address the range of insecurities affecting the nation. It has to forge partnerships among different stakeholders to improve multi-level governance with a view to addressing NTS challenges and promoting human security. For instance, the vulnerability of

rural people to emerging health threats can be diminished through renewed public health efforts that involve social movements and collaborations on global health promotion.⁶⁸ Bangladesh may take initiative for creating regional food bank, storing disaster management resources at calamity prone areas, and creating a regional pool of physicians and pharmaceuticals to deal with diseases and medical matters in time of crisis. Strong mechanism of acquiring early warning to mitigate or prevent the effects of natural calamities that befall the nation will also assist in identifying and preventing problems, thereby, ensuring enhanced preparedness. Incorporating such adaptive framework in the policy process will definitely enhance the capability and resilience of Bangladesh against diverse NTS threats.

To curb violent extremism and terrorist acts, drug, arms and human trafficking, Bangladesh may engage regional stakeholders, and global communities and countries for intelligence exchange and trans-boundary cooperation. Bangladesh government may take the initiative to set up 'Regional Intelligent Cell' for acquiring and sharing information on the movement, plans and strategy of the terrorist groups and outfits within and beyond the region. To address other issues like Rohingya crisis, common rivers' water sharing, and environmental hazards, Bangladesh needs to intensify and enhance bilateral and multilateral engagements and launch mass awareness campaign targeting national unity. Moreover, appropriate responses to NTS issues will require constant vigilance and instantaneous or even pre-emptive action in order to protect and preserve the security, prosperity, and lives of people.

5. Concluding Remarks

In the post-Cold War era, the concept of 'security' has undergone tremendous transformation. Although intense debate continues to persist among the scholars of 'security studies' regarding the boundaries and the range of issues of its subject matter, meaning of security no longer confined within the traditional conceptualisation of security i.e., protection of the state and its vital interests through military means is the prime concern of ensuring security. Since 1989, the changed nature of conflicts has influenced evolving theoretical approaches and understandings of security and there has been a shift from traditional security. The difference between the two lies mainly in the source of existential threat, as NTS unlike traditional security emphasises basically on the non-military and non-state characters of security threats. Hence, an exhaustive list of NTS might include but certainly not limited to climate change, food and water scarcity, environmental degradation, natural disasters, pandemics, irregular movements of people, human and drug trafficking, violent extremism, terrorism, and transnational crimes, cyber security, etc.

⁶⁸ Abbas Bhuiya, *op. cit.*

Bangladesh as a developing country is very much vulnerable to NTS threats emanating from global, transnational and national phenomenon. However, one needs to take a wider approach while discussing NTS issues in Bangladesh as many factors – geography, length of time, and context – impact a country’s sources of NTS threats. A comprehensive list may include numerous NTS threats for Bangladesh, however, a priority list subsumes transnational crimes, environmental degradation, climate change, water scarcity, natural disasters, economic security and terrorism and violent extremism as more significant NTS threats requiring urgent attention and measures.

Traditional responses by nation-states are ineffective against NTS threats. Security policy options traditionally followed by nation-states, viz military deterrence, diplomatic manoeuvring and short-term political arrangement rendered inadequate in addressing some of the NTS threats. New policy innovations including use of non-military means as well as comprehensive political, economic and social responses are required to properly address the NTS threats in Bangladesh. Moreover, the NTS issues also require the national leadership to look not only inwards to execute internal socio-economic and political reforms but also outwards, with an open outlook to cultivate international cooperation. The paper suggested undertaking three-pronged policy options for Bangladesh, i.e., devising a comprehensive security approach, boasting international cooperation, and crafting a dynamic and adaptive security framework. Failure to address the challenges timely and appropriately will only increase the sufferings of its people and ultimately endanger the survival and safety of both people and the state. Finally, seizing the opportunity of economic progress and development, security policy of Bangladesh must be forward-looking, constructive, and optimistic. Moreover, it has to be comprehensive enough to address the NTS challenges appropriately with a view to bolstering broad-based economic growth in the country with sustained peace and security.