

Human Security for Women: A Review on Assam, India's Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD)

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ABSTRACT The present study is undertaken to find out the rural and urban women's perception towards economic, health and personal security within the BTAD. This followed a descriptive method of research, which aimed to determine the rural and urban women's perception towards personal, economic and health security, and was designed as a qualitative case study. It was hypothesised that there is no significant difference between rural and urban women's perception of the three factors of human security. The data was collected from 240 respondents, 60 each from Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Udalguri districts of the BTAD. Further, 30 rural and 30 urban respondents comprised each district's group. The statistical technique used was Measures of Central Tendency, Measures of Variability and 't' test. The findings of the present study revealed that statistically significant differences exist between rural and urban women's perception of human security.

INTRODUCTION

The origin of the thought of human security has gained a lot of importance since the publication of *Human Development Report* of 1994 was issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1994). Several political scientists play a serious role to outline security, however, the thought of human security was the intellectual contribution development economists, like the Pakistani economic expert Mahabub ul Haq and United Nation's agency conceptualised in the UNDP's *Human Development Report*. They were increasingly discontented with the standard notion of development that viewed it as a performance of the economic process. Therefore, they projected an idea of *human development* that focuses on building human capabilities to confront and overcome poorness, illiteracy, diseases, discrimination, restrictions on political freedom, and therefore the threat of violent conflict (UNDP 2005). Meanwhile, the *Human Development Report* of 1994 outlined the scope of human security that embodies seven areas, namely, Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, Personal Security, Community Security and Political Security.

Completely associated with the trouble to come up with a broader paradigm for develop-

ment was the growing concern for negative impact of defence payment on development or the supposed 'guns versus butter' dilemma. As an international study led by Inga Thorsson of Sweden concluded, 'The arms race and development are in a competitive relationship' (Roche 1986). Supporting the study, UN-sponsored International Conference on the link between disarmament in 1986 in Paris sought 'to enlarge world understanding that human security demands more resources for development and fewer for arms' (Acharya 2016).

Several international commissions offered a broader view of security, which looked more than the cold war emphasis on East-West military competition (Acharya 2001). The Report of the Palme Commission of 1982 was one of them, which projected the principle of 'common security'. It stressed that 'in the Third World countries, as in all our countries, security requires economic progress as well as freedom from military fear' (Palme Commission 1982). The Palme Commission's notion of common security became the abstract basis of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The CSCE created East-West security cooperation conditional upon the advancement of the human rights scenario within the former Soviet alignment. The North-South Roundtable on the 'Economics of Peace', held in Costa Rica in 1990,

immersed a shift from associate degree exclusive concern with military security to a broader concern for the security of people from social violence, economic distress and environmental degradation (Jolly and Ray 2006).

The report (CHS 2003) called Human Security Now, argues that human security balances state security by consisting threats, which will not basically involve state security, just like the healthcare and human rights problems. It describes a comprehensive approach to human security that enlarged the perception of security from the country's territorial borders to the folks that live within. Per this report, human security threats comprise illiteracy, ill health, deficiency disease and environmental pollution. It focuses on living standard and threats like hunger, poverty, disease, and illiteracy reveals the significance of the development. Haq (1999) has argued that security will be obtained through development rather than weapons. Also, he argues that it is "easier, instead of face their tragic consequences downstream."

In the same method, Thakur (1997) emphasises on the importance of the standard of life-time of individuals as a key component of human security and examine and view any challenge to their quality of life as a threat to the security of people. Sen (2000) explains that threats to human security contain any threat to the endurance, the standard of living, and human dignity. At the same time, McRae and Hubert (2001) emphasises on the lives of individuals by appraising the socio-political state of nations.

The thought of human security was a boon for feminist scholars in particular. It gave them a language to put in considerations regarding the types of social and structural violence women experience into larger debates on security (Heideman 2013). Women are often the ones most victimised by violence in times of armed conflict. Their basic wellbeing is additionally severely vulnerable in everyday life by unequal access to resources, services and opportunities, not to mention the many forms of violence women experience under "ordinary circumstances". The thought of human security will capture this broader vary of threats and risks. It is so not shocking that the looks of the thought were celebrated as giving new lenses through that to grasp the difficulties women and girls encounter (Rubio-Marin and Estrada-Tanck 2013).

A substantial body of work has applied human security ideas to gender considerations and personal security, and at an equivalent time has enriched human security analysis with ideas from gender theory (Truong et al. 2006; Truong et al. 2014). Instead of delimiting human security considerations into only one section, the gender-informed work emphasises, however, understanding and endorsing people's security needs all-encompassing thought of their lives (Brush 2013). There are on-going debates concerning the human security agenda, explores prospects and projects for the advancement of human security, to deal with problems with human security as rising styles of new multilateralism (Black and MacLean 2016).

In a world beset by "problems without a passport" like infectious diseases, environmental pollution, international crime, conflict spillovers, terrorism, etc., a new paradigm should supplant the now obsolete development consensus. Picciotto took stock of current development practices through the prism of Sweden's Shared Responsibility Bill, which addresses peace, security, opportunity, environmental conservation, human rights, and democracy (Picciotto 2017).

Theory and Action explores the theory and application of concepts central to this notion of security. It examines the conceptual roots of human security, connecting its origins to its applications and challenges in war and peacetime. With a unique focus on the evolving notion of responsibility for security, the work introduces the critical questions and priorities that underpin policies and actions (Andersen-Rodgers and Crawford 2018).

The Bodoland Territorial Council is a political arrangement for the Bodos under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. This was created as a result of the prolonged struggle by the various Bodo organisations. The Memorandum of Settlement was signed on the 10th February 2003, to create Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The creation of BTC was the start of a phase of dissatisfaction and distrust between and non-Bodos. There was counter mobilisation against the formation of BTC, which was from outside the community as well as from inside the Bodo itself. Since its commencement, BTC suffered many setbacks in the form of ethnic clashes, fratricidal killings, fake encounters

in the name of counter-insurgency operations. The ethnic clashes in 2008, 2012 and 2014 in different parts of the BTC persist insecurity among the inhabitant of BTC (Brahma 2015). It is observed that in every incident, women suffer the most. Besides, above all, there are various allegations on BTC. Primarily, BTC failed to provide personal security, economic security and health security to the poorer section of society irrespective of its gender and caste. Given the above, the present study is undertaken to find out the rural and urban women's perception towards economic, health and personal security within the BTAD.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To explore rural and urban women's perception of economic security.
2. To understand rural and urban women's perception of health security.
3. To find out the rural and urban women's perception of personal security.

Hypotheses

Three null hypotheses are proposed to test as follows:

- ◆ Ho1: There is no significant difference between rural and urban women's perception of economic security in BTAD.
- ◆ Ho2: There is no significant difference between rural and urban women's perception of health security in BTAD.
- ◆ Ho3: There is no significant difference between rural and urban women's perception of personal security in BTAD.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study followed a descriptive method of research, which aimed to determine the rural and urban women's perception towards personal, economic and health security, and was designed as a qualitative case study. A case study is an empirical research design in which a current phenomenon is studied within a real-life context and which is applied when there are no certain borders between the current content and

itself, and when there are more than one evidence and data sources. An Interview Schedule was completed by the respondents. The present study was undertaken within the four districts of BTAD, Assam. The geographical boundary of BTAD lies between 26°7'12" N to 26°47'50" N latitudes and 89°47'40" E to 92°18'30" E longitudes and is in the northwestern part of Assam. The sample comprised a total of 240 respondents, 60 each from Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Udalguri. Further, 30 rural and 30 urban respondents comprised district. An Interview Schedule was developed by the researcher and administered. This Interview Schedule also includes personal information of the participants. This Interview Schedule was further divided into three parts related to accountability, transparency and inclusiveness. Each part consisted of 12 statements. Several statistical analyses were carried out, namely, Measures of Central Tendency, Measures of Variability, Dispersion, and 't' test. Data analysis was performed using statistical software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the BTAD, human security is affected by several factors. The frequent ethnic conflict in the area affects development. However, human security cannot be merely viewed as an upshot of or escort to development. According to the Commission on Human Security Report (2003), the response of institutions and states to issues of human security "cannot be effective if it comes fragmented from those dealing with rights, those with security, those with humanitarian concerns and those with development. With human security as the objective, there must be a stronger and more integrated response from communities and states around the globe." Thus, the main objective of human security is to safeguard the vital core of human lives from critical pervasive threats, to achieve a consistent and long-term human fulfilment. From this perspective, it is seen that human security is a deliberately protective approach, which recognises the people as well as the communities to be fatally threatened by events that they control such as diseases (HIV/AIDS), financial crisis, terrorism and pollution among others (Alkire 2003).

Economic Security

Economic security refers to basic income from productive and remunerative work. It implies freedom from poverty. It aims for job security for the young generations. Economic security is to create provision of earning for the people to sustain a minimum standard of living. It requires an assured basis usually earning either from productive and remunerative work, or it may be from the publicly financed safety nets (UNDP 1994). Thus, one sees that economic security is mostly linked to poverty and unemployment. A study conducted by Basumatary (2010) revealed that the overall Human Development Index of Bodos living in the areas under BTAD is as low as 0.426, which is defined as low human development level in UNDP literature. However, the average of BTAD seems to mask the variations across the districts and villages. The district of Udalguri has emerged as the highest scorer among all four districts under consideration, as the district attains a level, which is recognised as a medium level of human development in the mainstream human development literature. Next comes the district of Kokrajhar, which lags marginally behind the level of medium human development level. The remaining two districts of Baksa and Chirang have recorded very poor expansions of human development. With fewer employment opportunities, economic security is being threatened.

Table 1 shows the location wise distribution of perception towards economic security in BTAD. The overall result depicts that fifty percent peoples' perception is low towards economic security followed by thirty-five percent with a moderate perception, and fifteen percent with an excellent perception. It was observed

Table 1: Location wise perception of women towards economic security

Location	Perception of economic security			Grand total
	Low	Moderate	Excellent	
Rural	46 (38.33)	58 (48.33)	16 (13.33)	120 (50.00)
Urban	74 (61.67)	26 (21.67)	20 (16.67)	120 (50.00)
Total	120 (50.00)	84 (35.00)	36 (15.00)	240

Percentages are in Parentheses

that among urban respondents, approximately sixty-two percent have shown a low level of perception towards economic security, followed by 21.67 percent being moderate and 16.67 percent being excellent. In the case of rural, 48.33 percent have shown a moderate level of perception followed by 38.33 percent low and 13.33 percent excellent. This has shown the overall dissatisfaction over human development in terms of improving opportunity.

Health Security

Health security refers to relative disparities between rich and poor as far as access to health services is concerned. All people should have equal freedom from disease and infection. Therefore, it includes safety from injury and diseases. Good health is both essential and instrumental to achieving human security. It is critical because the very heart of security is protecting human lives. Illness, disability, and avoidable death are "critical pervasive threats" to human security. Health is both objective physical wellness and subjective psychosocial wellbeing and confidence about the future (CHS 2003). However, in BTAD the accessibility of health centres is less in comparison to other districts of Assam. The State Average of Health Sub Centre is 171.15. It is observed that in BTAD the average is 137.5. Similarly, the average of Primary Health Centres is 37.56 and in BTAD it averages 33.75. As per the *Annual Report 2016-2017* of Assam State AIDS Control Society (up to 31st March 2017) in Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang and Udalguri, a total of 207, 20, 7 and 22 AIDS patients were detected, respectively (ANRHM 2014).

Moreover, Hepatitis A is the most common cause of acute viral hepatitis (AVH) worldwide. So, BTC is no exception to it, excessive use of alcohol by both men and women decreases the efficiency of the liver and they quickly acquire the syndrome of Hepatitis. Thus, the Maternal Mortality Ratio in Assam is higher than other states of India (per 100,000 live births), which is 480 in 2004-2006, 390 in 2007-2009, 328 in 2010-2012, 300 during 2011-2013 and 237 during 2014-2016. The average maternal death rates are 212.35 in Kokrajhar, 225.93 in Baksa, 229.15 in Chirang and 267.64 in Udalguri districts during 2013-2014. Apart from other direct causes of maternal

mortality, a large proportion of maternal death occurs due to indirect causes like anaemia (Government of India 2015). According to WHO estimates, anaemia is a major contributor to the death of women during reproductive age (Brabin et al. 2001). It is, directly and indirectly, accountable for forty percent of deaths in India (Kalaivani 2009). However, the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) IV has shown that forty-six percent of women are anaemic in Assam, which is lower than the national average of fifty-three percent (Dutta 2018). Thus, all these factors that affect the health of women are the threat for health security and look blur in the four districts of BTAD.

A study was conducted by Das and Bhattacharyya (2012) on the groundwater quality in Kokrajhar district. It was observed that values of most of the parameters are within the WHO permissible limit. Minimum values of pH of some of the samples lie below the lower level of WHO permissible limit (6.5). Although fluoride and arsenic contents are low in most of the sources, a few sources have appreciable amounts and continuous use of the water may lead to their accumulation, producing long-term effects. Altogether, all the above phenomenon creates health insecurity in the BTC area.

The distribution in Table 2 yielded women's perception of health security. The overall result in Table 2 showed that 53.33 percent of the total respondents felt a low level of health security, followed by 37.5 percent moderate, and 9.17 percent excellent. One hand, out of 120 rural respondents, approximately 52.00 percent have shown a low level of perception towards the health security followed by 38.33 percent moderate and 10.00 percent excellent. On the other hand, among 120 urban respondents, 55.00 percent have low, 36.67 percent moderate and 8.33

Table 2: Location wise perception of women towards health security

Location	Perception of economic security			Grand total
	Low	Moderate	Excellent	
Rural	62(51.67)	46(38.33)	12(10.00)	120(50.00)
Urban	66(55.00)	44(36.67)	10 (8.33)	120(50.00)
Total	128(53.33)	90(37.50)	22 (9.17)	240

Percentages are in Parentheses

percent excellent level of perception towards health security.

Personal Security

Personal security is freedom from physical violence, unpredictable violence, anxiety, and crime. The 1994 HDR specified at least three types of threat to personal security, that is, threats from external or internal, regular or irregular (armed) conflict, threats internal to the polity, excluding armed conflict, including diverse kinds of crime, whether committed by the state or others, and threats to the self, related to suicide and drug use. It is worth to mention here that the term 'security of a person' also finds its mention both in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948, Article 3) and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966 Article 1). However, as far as the armed conflict in the BTAD, during the year 2000 to 17th July 2019, there are 2,560 terrorism-related incidents where 5,029 persons were killed. Among the deceased persons, 2,208 identified as civilians, 340 security force personnel, 2,331 were identified as terrorists, and 150 unspecified persons. During that period total, 888 were killed in four districts of BTAD. It is interesting to note here that among all violence that occurred in Assam, the BTC region alone has a 17.66 percent share (South Asian Terrorism Portal (SATP) 2019).

Besides armed conflict violence, rape, dowry killing, women trafficking and witch-hunting are also major threats to the personal security of women. During 2011 to 2019 (November) a total of 107 people have been killed in witch-hunting incidents in Assam. Kokrajhar, Chirang and Udalguri districts under the BTAD jurisdiction have recorded the highest number of witch-hunting deaths at 22, 19 and 11, respectively (India Today 2019).

As per the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) annual report titled 'Crime in India, 2015', 1,494 cases of trafficking were reported from Assam in 2015, the highest in the country (Saikia 2018). This number took a sharp dip in 2016, falling as low as 91 in terms of cases reported. The numbers of women trafficked in Assam in 2015 stood at 187 while it was 163 in 2016 (The Telegraph 2017). Thus, all the above factors have threatened personal security in the BTAD.

Meanwhile, the study revealed a different level of perception towards personal security of rural and urban women. The location or social environment where a woman resides influences her behaviour. The overall result depicts that 54.17 percent low, 37.5 percent moderate, and 8.33 percent have excellent levels of perception on personal security. Among urban women, 61.67 percent low, 33.33 percent moderate, and 5.00 percent have an excellent level of perception on personal security. Looking at the rural women, 46.67 percent low, 41.67 percent moderate, and 11.67 percent have an excellent level of perception towards personal security. Hence, primary data also supports the secondary data to prove that in the BTAD personal security is not satisfactory at all (Table 3).

Table 3: Location wise perception of women towards personal security

Location	Perception of economic security			Grand total
	Low	Moderate	Excellent	
Rural	56(46.67)	50(41.67)	14(11.67)	120(50.00)
Urban	74(61.67)	40(33.33)	6(5.00)	120(50.00)
Total	130(54.17)	90(37.5)	20(8.33)	240

Percentages are in Parentheses

Table 4 exhibits the summary scores of both the categories rural and urban women's perception scores towards economic, health and personal security within the four districts of BTAD. To test the hypotheses, Mean and S.D. were calculated. A *t-test* was used to see the significance of mean differences of two groups. The results in Table 4 show that both the rural and urban women's perception towards economic, health and personal security within the four districts of BTAD significantly differ at 0.01 level of

significance. Thus, the null hypotheses Ho1 ('*t*' value = 4.128, *df* = 236 and $p < .05$), Ho2 ('*t*' value = 4.052, *df* = 236 and $p < .05$) and Ho3 ('*t*' value = 4.542, *df* = 236 and $p < .05$) were rejected. It indicates that statistically, the difference exists between both the rural and urban women's perception towards the three elements of human security.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the perception of rural and urban women towards three elements of human security. There are some points, which can be earmarked from the above discussion. The Human Development Index of Bodos living in the areas under BTAD is as low as 0.426. The average of BTAD has varied across the districts and villages. Hence, it can be assumed that for economic security that was measured through the parameter of the Human Development Index, BTAD failed to achieve the desired level. Even, the overall result of the study showed that fifty percent rural and sixty-two percent urban respondents have a low level of perception towards economic security. In BTAD there are less number of hospitals in comparison to other districts of Assam. On health security fifty-two percent rural and fifty-five percent urban respondents have a low level of perception. 38.33 percent moderate and ten percent have an excellent level of perception towards health security. Besides, only ten percent rural and 8.33 percent urban respondents have an excellent level of perception towards health security. For personal security, a majority of 61.67 percent urban, and 46.67 percent rural respondents have a low level of perception. In contrast, only give percent urban and 11.67 percent urban respondents

Table 4: Analysis of mean differences along with descriptive statistics

Factors	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	df	Sig.
<i>Economic Security</i> Significance of the Mean Difference in Economic Security						
Rural	120	16.40	6.004	4.128	236	.041P<.05
Urban	120	13.96	6.884			
<i>Health Security</i> Significance of the Mean Difference in Health Security						
Rural	120	16.54	6.996	4.052	236	.045P<.05
Urban	120	13.96	6.884			
<i>Personal Security</i> Significance of the Mean Difference in Personal Security						
Rural	120	16.64	7.944	4.542	236	.025P<.05
Urban	120	13.96	6.884			

have an excellent level of perception towards personal security. Thus, based on the study conducted, all three null hypotheses (Ho1, Ho2 and Ho3) were rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is statistically significant difference between the rural and urban women's perception towards economic, health and personal security in the BTAD area. These findings could be useful for protecting human security in the BTAD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The BTAD authority should give importance to improve the living standard. For the improvement of living standard, it is necessary to generate employment. The existing policy, which distributes the resources, should be replaced by a sustainable policy like the creation of resources. The number of the hospitals needs to be increased so that everyone can access good health facilities. The iron curtain murder that is claimed by different NGO and civil societies of the BTC should be interlinked with the personal security of the inhabitants of BTC.

LIMITATIONS

Though the concept of human security includes seven factors, in the present study only three factors were deliberately selected. These three factors were selected as it was observed that, among the other factors these security factors have contemporary value to study. Besides this, the sample size along with the statistical analysis also suffered from some limitations.

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