

Dimensions of National Security and Development of Nepal

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Abstract

The dimensions of national security are increasing in the world day by day. In a similar fashion, development is also becoming a multi-perspective phenomenon. However, both of them differ from country to country. Therefore, it needs a better understanding of the country-specific scenarios. The scenario of Nepal is also a specific subject matter in this regard because of its own inherent multidimensional features related to its geography, economy, socio-cultural aspects, environmental aspects, and others. This study aims to explore the key dimensions of national security, key perspectives of development, and the two-way interrelation between national security and the development of Nepal. More specifically, this study focuses on the following research questions in the context of Nepal: What are the key dimensions of national security? What are the key perspectives of development? How dimensions of national security and perspectives of development interrelate to each other? This is qualitative research, and uses secondary information through books, journal articles, newspaper articles, magazines, and others. Moreover, I come up with some resolutions to the issue of national security through discursive practices and critical analysis. Three

conclusive points of the study are: (i) As a buffer state, the concentration of national security lies on its border and culture whereas as a member of the globe the concentration lies on its economy, politics, environment, and information technology. (ii) Common perspectives of development in the recent world are generally applicable in the case of Nepal. (iii) Political, economic, sociocultural, environmental, human, and information-technological domains of interrelation are applicable in the context of Nepal.

Keywords: national security, dimensions, development, perspectives, interrelation

Introduction

The dimensions of National Security are becoming important issues in the world because each dimension focuses on one or more specific sectors of the nation. Some common but important sectors are the nation's geography, history, economy, socio-culture, environment, human, information technology, etc. However, each dimension varies from one country to another. Furthermore, country-specific dimensions also vary from time to time with regard to the changes in the countries' political, economic, socio-cultural, environmental, technological, and other aspects. The military (defense) dimension has a long history whereas the

dimensions such as environmental, cyber, and crime are the latest ones in the world. Many scholars and authors also point out the new dimensions of national security in their books and studies in this regard (Fjäder, 2014, p. 128; Shiwakoti, 2014, p. 232; Stewart, 2004, p. 24). All the dimensions of national security are important for the nation, but only key dimensions are in priority for the nation-specific cases. For a period of a long history of Nepal, the military dimension of national security has become a synonym of national security. Day after day, other dimensions also entered into the national security area of Nepal. At present, Nepal has also addressed national security issues as a sum of economic, sociocultural, environmental, human, cyber security, and other dimensions. As the latest practice, National Security Policy, 2016 has comprehensively incorporated the multiple dimensions of the national security of Nepal. With this policy practice, the dimensions of national security have created a heated issue among the policymakers, government officials, and others for the quick execution of its provisions.

In a similar fashion, the development is understood from multiple perspectives. It began with an economic perspective and day after day, other perspectives came into the practice. Socio-cultural, environmental, technological perspectives are some well-known examples of the latest. As per the multiple perspectives, scholars describe development in the multiple aspects in their books and studies (Abuiyada, 2018, p. 119; Acharya, 2019, p. 407; Geiser, 2014, p. 22; Pande, 2013, p. 25; Pokharel, 2012, p. 411). Like the dimensions of national security, the perspectives of development also vary from one country to another. Furthermore, the perspectives of development differ from each

other with regard to the country-specific cases. For example, the demand for development lies under the economic perspective for developing countries whereas the demand lies under the environmental perspective for the industrial countries. The country, Nepal has also recognized the development as a multi-perspective phenomenon. The practices of different approaches of the development at different times are evidence such as planned approach, regional approach, sustainable approach, and others. Recently, The constitution, Fifteenth Plan, and other national policies have acknowledged the development from economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and other perspectives. The Fifteenth plan (2019-24) has put the slogan “Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali” as a sum of multiple perspectives of development.

In a classical view, national security, and development were the subject matters of political science and economics respectively. However, both of them have become interrelated phenomena these days. The two-way relationship between national security and development has become an important concern among policymakers, government officials, and scholars. On the other hand, the concerns of national security and development strongly relate to most of the interdisciplinary subjects such as Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Population Studies, Law, and others. Furthermore, interdisciplinary subjects strengthen the multiple dimensions of national security and multiple perspectives of development. As an illustration, the subject matter of economics has strengthened the economic dimension of national security as well as the economic perspective of development. In a similar fashion, someone can interpret the socio-cultural dimension of national

security and socio-cultural perspective of development with the help of social sciences and so on. Country specific interrelations are also interesting. Most of the countries show positive relationships.

This article aims to explore the key dimensions of national security and the key perspectives of development in the context of Nepal. Furthermore, it aims to describe the two-way relationship between dimensions of national security and the development of Nepal. More specifically, this article comprehensively seeks the answer to the following three research questions: What are the key dimensions of national security in the context of Nepal? What are the key perspectives of development in the context of Nepal? How dimensions of national security and perspectives of development interrelate to each other in the context of Nepal? The following headings provide the answers to these questions.

This study is qualitative research and uses the pieces of secondary information, which are collected through books, journal articles, newspaper articles, magazines, and others. Moreover, this article uses a content analysis approach to make the conclusion through the collected information.

Key dimensions of National Security in the context of Nepal

As an independent nation, Nepal has its own territory, history, economic and socio-cultural identity, and population. The sovereign identity of Nepal lies under these inherent features. Therefore, the dimensions of national security must cover these inherent features. As a supreme law, the constitution has acknowledged freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence,

national interest, and human security under the dimensions of national security. In addition, the constitution has addressed to strengthen all security organs of Nepal. Under the constitution, Security policy, 2016 has extensively recognized the dimensions of national security in terms of the security of national interests, people, citizen's right and freedom, economy, state system, science, technology and information, culture, national resources, and environment. In this new scenario, it needs to participate all stakeholders on the expected national security destination especially through the active presence of the National Security Council and other institutional activities (Upreti, 2019, p. 12). The following dimensions are the key dimensions of national security, which lie under the first priorities in the present context of Nepal.

Military Dimension

This is a key dimension that has a long history in Nepal since the period of unification of the country. This dimension focuses on the protection of the borderland of Nepal from adjacent nations and others. Nepal Army plays a key role to strengthen the military dimension of national security in the context of Nepal. People of Nepal always remember and respect the Nepalese army for the unification of the country, border security, protection of the country against external threats, etc. In addition, the contributions of the Nepalese Army to disaster rescue and development sectors are also valuable for us. More specifically, the Nepalese Army has strongly contributed to both the national security and development sectors of Nepal (Adhikari S., 2020, p. 140). Now, the country has entered federalism and the people have expected more from the Nepalese army. The Constitution has also extensively

described the security issue with regard to the military dimension of national security. A key law, Army act, 2006, has defined the duty of military force is to protect and defend the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity of the state of Nepal. Therefore, the military dimension of national security is becoming the key dimension in the context of Nepal in the new domain to address the new scenario.

Political Dimension

Political security concerns the threats related to the political existence of the state, the political rights of citizens, and political culture. At present, political violence has become the main source of political insecurity (Stewart, 2004, p. 1) rather than other threats. Before 1950, there were no separate practices of political and military dimensions of national security in Nepal. After that, Nepal has practiced the democratic system of politics except for the thirty years Panchayat regime. The revolutions in 1990 re-established democracy whereas after the revolution of 2006 Nepal entered the era of federalism. The promulgation of the new constitution in 2015 has institutionalized federalism. Nepalese political values are now federal democratic values for all levels of government. Therefore, the political dimension of national security must focus on the protection of the federal democratic values in the context of Nepal in addition to other common political threats. The constitution (2015) has also acknowledged the democratic norms provisioning on the preamble and other clauses. Therefore, the political dimension is another key dimension of Nepalese national security.

Economic Dimension

The economic sovereignty of the country lies under the economic dimension of national security. More specifically, its objective is to protect the economic sovereignty from internal and external economic threats and shocks. Like other countries, Nepal has also entered into a global economy that has both opportunities as well as challenges. Therefore, the economic dimension in the context of Nepal should primarily focus on the use of global opportunities rather than global traps. In addition, the economic dimension also covers the monetary, industrial, and trade sectors. In the context of Nepal, The constitution (2015) has also addressed the economic security provisioning through national policies. To institutionalize the new constitutional provisions including ongoing practices, Nepal should focus on the economic dimension of national security as a key dimension.

Socio-Cultural Dimension

The protection of the socio-cultural values lies under the domain of the socio-cultural dimension of national security. It relates to the diversity of languages, religions, customs, social unity, and others in the context of Nepal. The Constitution (2015) has acknowledged the inclusive democracy through the preamble and some articles. However, the real inclusion is in waiting to institutionalize. Some external forces and internal conflicts are key threats in this regard. Therefore, Nepal should address the socio-cultural dimension as a key dimension of national security.

Environmental Dimension

The protection of environmental requirements for the country lies under the domain of the environmental dimension of

national security. It consists of the efforts about the protection of the environment against internal as well as external threats. More specifically, global warming as a key event, have challenged the environment of Nepal too. Like global factors, some internal factors also threatening the environment of Nepal. As a result, Nepal is facing the problem of snow melting, droughts, floods, and others. Furthermore, these environmental threats have influenced the livelihood of the human in terms of food security, income, migration, and others (Krishnamurthy et al., 2013, p. 39). Now, the constitution has addressed environmental protection through the provisions of state policies. Several laws and global commitments are also in practice under the constitution. However, Nepal has not legislated a single act to mainstream the climate change issues into various cross-sectors (Nepal, 2020, p. 112). Therefore, the environmental dimension is a key dimension of national security in the context of Nepal.

Information Technology Dimension

The development of information technology has provided smartness in the business in the world. On the other hand, the abuse of information technology has become a headache among the nations in the world. Furthermore, increasing virtual world technologies have demanded extra effort such as education, awareness schemes, and discouraging opportunistic and unethical behaviors (Lee, 2009, p. 9). In addition, ICT has confronted the globe through ethical, legal, and economic challenges (Oh, Acquisti, and Sia, 2018, p. 60). The country, Nepal is also facing the challenge of controlling information technology abuses. Cyber-crimes, virus attacking, system hackings, etc. are some examples. The protection of

national information technology systems against possible threats lies under the domain of the information technology dimension of national security. Due to the increase of the information technology threats, Information Technology Dimension has become the key dimension of national security in the context of Nepal.

Human Dimension

Humans are facing all of the dimensions of threats mentioned above in the present world. More specifically, human in the world has faced multidimensional threats such as political, socioeconomic, environmental, etc. Furthermore, the threats against humans are not only individual but also national, and international. The protection of human beings against exclusion, hunger, poverty, violence lies under the domain of the human dimension of national security. Only border security, a classical domain of national security cannot guarantee the human dimension of national security (Adhikari, 2020; Bhattarai, 2009, p. 35). It demands people-focused security efforts through national and international coordination (Singh, 2019, p. 66). Like other countries, there are several human threats in the context of Nepal such as poverty, hunger, exclusion, violence, etc. Therefore, human security is a key dimension of national security in the context of Nepal.

Dimensions mentioned above generally, explore the contemporary multiple threats of national security in the context of Nepal. Furthermore, understanding one dimension needs to understand another dimension. For example, to understand the human dimension of national security we need to understand the political, economic, social, and other dimensions of national security and so on. Therefore, Nepalese coming efforts should

focus on understanding of the possible multidimensional threats to national security.

Perspectives of the Development in the Context of Nepal

The concept of development concerns the improved situation from the previous situation. Scholars of different disciplines have defined the development following this line. As illustrations, economists have defined development in the sense of improved economy, sociologists have defined the development in the sense of improved society, and humanists have defined the development in the sense of improved human life and so on. Therefore, the understanding of the development has become the collection of all of the perspectives. Some evidence infers that to make a virtuous cycle, the design of development must focus on the interrelation among political, societal, and economic aspects (Rontos, Salvati, and Vavouras, 2013, p. 7). All of the nations in the world are now considering the development in the multi-perspective phenomena. However, the perspectives of development in the context of one country differ from another country. More specifically, the development of a specific country mirrors the situation, institutions, and potentialities of that country (Perspectives on Global Development 2019: Rethinking Development Strategies, 2019, p. 3). The following are the key perspectives of development that we should understand in the context of Nepal.

Political Perspective

The improvement of political consensus and the nation's political values lie under the political perspective of the development. In addition, national sovereignty, independence, national unity, the democratization of the country, etc. are also subject matters of the

political dimension of the development. More specifically, liberal democratic values are the core political building blocks for the development of the nation (Bhandari, 2015, p. 41). Nepal entered the democratic age in 1990. After that, Nepalese politics has been practicing to deepen democracy. However, the political consensus among the political parties could not maintain the level of satisfaction in people. In a similar fashion, our existing polity could not improve other political values, such as real social democracy rather than formal ritual democracy, real participation of the people and the practice of governance. Therefore, the development of Nepal should understand through the political perspective at first.

Economic Perspective

Economists understand the development as economic growth of the country. More specifically, growth in production from the previous year to the next year lies under the economic perspective of the development. The average economic growth of Nepal for the last ten years is only 4.6 percent (Ministry of Finance, GON, 2020, p. 5). This growth rate is very low with regard to the Least Developed Country (LDC) graduation criteria. In addition, the Fifteenth Plan has targeted to reach the developing country by 2022, to reach the medium-income country by 2030, and to reach the high-income country by 2043. All the targets focus on economic growth. Therefore, the development of Nepal should understand through the economic perspective too.

Socio-Cultural Perspective

This perspective focuses on the improvement of the sociocultural level of the country. More specifically, it concerns education, literacy, inclusion, rural development,

distributive justice, etc. In a similar fashion, the sociocultural perspective describes the level of national unity, sovereignty, and cultural diversity. Nepal has improved several sociocultural indicators such as literacy, social security, drinking water, and health (Fifteenth Plan, 2019). In addition, Nepal has significantly reduced poverty in spite of lower economic growth. However, there are some shortcomings with regard to sociocultural development. For example, the male literacy rate is significantly greater than the female literacy rate; rural poverty is higher than urban poverty; real people are still outside the inclusive democracy. Therefore, the development of Nepal should understand through the economic perspective, too.

Environmental Perspective

This perspective focuses on the improved status of the nation's environment. More specifically, it concerns the level of clean air in the atmosphere, quantity of rainfall, rise and fall of temperature, percentage of the forest, etc. At present, some global issues have become more anxious such as global warming, ozone layer thinning, deforestation, drought, etc. Due to these externalities, Nepal is also facing the problem of snow melting, glacier blasting, soil fertility decreasing and land sliding. We are also becoming poor in overall environmental performance during the period of this decade. In 2010, Nepal had got an Environmental Performance Index (EPI) score of 68.3 with 38th rank out of 163 countries whereas the score has decreased to 31.44 with 176th rank out of 180 countries in 2018 (Performance and Special Audit Report, 2077 (2020), p. 286). Nepal has addressed development through The Constitution, Periodic Plans, and global policies such as internalization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, there is no

aggregated environmental target as in other aspects of development in Nepal. With regard to such scenarios, the development of Nepal should understand through the environmental perspective as well.

Information-Communication Technology (ICT) Perspective

Information provides the tools for development. Through technology, information becomes easier to apply. In other words, information technology reduces the cost and time. Now, how innovative the state has become is another development issue. Nepal has tried to improve ICT sector through different efforts such as ICT policy (2015), Digital Nepal Framework (2018), and others; however, the development scenario of Nepal in terms of ICT is still poor. As a latest indicator of ICT application, Nepal's Network Readiness Index (NRI) score is 32.96 with 106th rank out of 121 countries (Network Readiness Index, 2019). For example, our official businesses are still paper-based, we could not run IT-based businesses during the period of COVID 19 pandemic, and so on. In this context, Nepal should step forward towards the innovative state for the short time to fulfill the desire of the people and to achieve the targets of the Fifteenth plan. Therefore, the development of Nepal should understand through the IT perspective too.

Human Perspective

Previously, the human was the key factor of the development in addition to other factors. However, after the 1990s, scholars started to describe the development from the human perspective too. The human perspective of development basically, focuses on capacity, opportunity, and needs. In other words, it advocates the improved human capacity, improved environment for opportunity

access, and the quality of the life. The human development index (HDI) is a key measure of human development. Furthermore, HDI provides the rank of countries in the world. Our country Nepal lies in 147th rank out of 189 countries (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2019, p. 306). This indicates that Nepal is also in a lower rank in the world. Other human-related indicators are also poor in Nepal. Therefore, the development of Nepal should understand from the human perspective too.

Different perspectives mentioned above indicate the multiple aspects of development in the context of Nepal. In addition, Nepal has also incorporated the latest development agenda with multidimensional targets. The internalization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are two examples. Following this trend, we should consciously ready to understand the development in the multiple perspectives in the future in the context of Nepal.

The Interrelation Between the Dimensions of National Security and Perspectives of the Development in the Context of Nepal

Both the dimension of national security and perspectives of development are now interrelated topics. No one can broadly understand these phenomena separately. Furthermore, there is a two-way relationship between them. Scholars show the positive relationship between national security and development (Baral, 2017, p. 15; Donadoni, 2018, p. 5; Ebeh, 2015, p. 12; Fjäder, 2014, p. 128; Otto, 2012, p. 6769; Stewart, 2004, p. 24; Zingel, 2010, p. 81). Under a two-way relationship, both phenomena associate with each other, one affects another or vice versa, and some third variable influences both

phenomena. Furthermore, several disciplines define the relationship under multiple domains such as Economic, Political, Sociocultural, Environmental, Information-Technological, and others. Although there are common domains of relationship, the country-specific relationships vary from each other. The case of Nepal is critical in this regard because it should take care seriously of the issues of both national security and development. Furthermore, Nepal should include both security and development issues to fulfill the national interest (Basnyat, 2017). The following domains describe the two-way relationship between the dimension of national security and perspective of development in the context of Nepal. Furthermore, the domains point out the need for an integrated approach between national security and the development of Nepal.

Political Domain of Interrelation

The political domain of relationship primarily focuses on political security and political development. The issues of state sovereignty, internal stability, national unity, the political power of the nation, corruption, and others are key subject matters of interrelation. As a two-way relationship, political security makes the environment of political development whereas political development enhances political security. In addition, the integrated efforts between political security and political development increase the political power of the country in the world. The political consensus among political parties, political will, people's participation in state politics, level of democratization of state institutions, etc. are some issues with regard to political stability and power. As an illustration, a country with a stable political situation indicates that the country is sound in both political security as well as

political development. In the case of political instability, no country can maintain political security as well as political development. According to Stewart (2004), political unity and democratic mobilization among the people secure the country against threats. On the other hand, underdevelopment always threatens peace (Donadoni, 2018, p. 5). Nepal is also facing political instability with regard to the frequent change of governments, weak level of consensus among political parties, political conflicts, etc. It means we are weak in both situations. Therefore, Nepal should focus on the integrated interrelation between political security and political development.

Economic Domain of Interrelation

Economic interrelation primarily focuses on the economic aspect of national security and the economic perspective of development. In other words, there is an integrated economic relationship between national security and the development of the country. As a two-way relationship, the economic security of the nation creates a good environment for economic development whereas economic development strengthens economic security through stable economic sources. In addition, the nation's economic scenario influences both economic security as well as economic development of the country. On the other hand, national security is a good example of the public good, an interesting topic of public economics. Like political interrelation, economically sound countries are economically developed and secure whereas the countries having weak and vulnerable economic situations are also weak to protect their economy from shocks. Nepal is trying to become an economically independent country but some inherent features are disturbing. More specifically, Nepal is a landlocked country, which makes the country dependent

on border countries to make trade. In a similar fashion, a significant part of the Nepalese economy is still contributed by foreign aid. There are some internal economic issues in the country such as economic exclusions, income gaps, unemployment issues, etc. Both external and internal events play a key role to secure the Nepalese economy on the one hand and economic development on the other hand. Therefore, Nepal should step forward through the integration of the interrelationship between economic security and economic development.

Socio-cultural Domain of Interrelation

The socio-cultural security of the country influences socio-cultural development and vice versa. In a similar fashion, sociocultural norms, values, and levels influence both. More specifically, the level of sociocultural understanding among the citizens plays a key role to protect the sociocultural dimension of national security as well as the sociocultural perspective of the development of the country. According to Stewart (2004), inclusive development leads to greater national security. Nepal is now in the phase of democratic socialization. Some misunderstandings among the citizen with regard to ethnicity, gender, language, etc. are still in practice. Such types of misunderstandings are hampering both the national security and development of Nepal. Therefore, Nepal's further efforts should concentrate on the integrated interrelation between the sociocultural dimension of national security and the sociocultural perspective of the development.

Environmental Domain of Interrelation

The environmental externalities are key factors that play a key role in both environmental security and environmental development

of the country. As a two-way relationship, environmental security positively supports environmental development and vice versa. In addition, environmental prosperity significantly influences both environmental security and environmental development. Although environmental issues are global, their influence is significant for the specific countries also. For example, global warming, climate changes, industrial emissions, etc. are global externalities that have influenced most of the nations in the world. Nepal has also faced national environmental problems caused by global environmental externalities. More specifically, environmental degradation has threatened the country Nepal in multiple dimensions such as human, agriculture, tourism, and others. In these scenarios, the environmental vulnerability of Nepal is now becoming a challenge for both national security and development. To address such types of environmental issues, Nepal has taken some actions for some decades such as legal, administrative, planned, and financial. However, the actions are isolated rather than integrated. Therefore, we should protect our environment against possible threats and we should enhance our environment for the national requirement. It needs an integrated interrelation approach.

Human Domain of Interrelation

A human being is the living domain of both national security and development. As a two-way relationship, human security is an essential part of human development whereas a certain level of human development indicates the status of human security. In addition, happiness, good quality of life, good health, better capacity, etc. are the integrated objectives of both human security and human development. As an illustration, countries with better human security have better human

development status. More specifically, there is a two-way nexus between the achievement of better quality of human life and the achievement of a better human security (Donadoni, 2018, p. 5). In the context of Nepal, there are still several vulnerable groups with regard to human security and development although some indicators show improved situations. More specifically, women, children, adults, privileged groups, disabled groups, etc. are in the vulnerability zone in this regard. On the other hand, the services provided by the public and private sectors are not of good quality. Nepal has acknowledged the human issue in national security and national development for some decades but the indicators are still poor. Therefore, Nepal should run human security and human development under an integrated interrelation approach.

Information-Technological Domain of Interrelation

Both national security and development have entered the age of information technology in the world. More specifically, information technology has become the dimension of national security as well as the perspective of development. As a two-way relationship, the development of information technology in the nation directly relates to the security of the national information technology system. On the other hand, the development of information technology has challenged the protection from its misuse. In recent decades, both developed and developing countries are now facing such types of challenges in the world. The case of Nepal is also similar to other countries such that the level of information technology and the security issue are still poor. In addition, there are no specific researches and proactive practices about the ICT related to national security

and development in the context of Nepal. It needs an integrated concentration on the balance between the information technology dimension of national security and the information technology perspective of the development.

The domains of interrelation mentioned above separately focus on the political, economic, sociocultural, environmental, information-technological issues of Nepal respectively. However, the cross-interrelation among the domains should also be kept in mind in the broader sense.

Conclusion

As a multidimensional phenomenon, national security focuses on the protection of the country against multidimensional threats such as military, political, economic, sociocultural, environmental, human, and others. Furthermore, all of these dimensions are generally common for all countries of the globe. However, the weightage of each dimension varies from one country to another with respect to the inherent features of the countries. In a similar fashion, the perspectives of development also common in all countries but vary from one country to another. As a buffer state, the concentration of Nepalese national security lies on its border and culture whereas as a member of the globe the concentration lies on its economy, politics, environment, human, and information technology. On the other hand, common perspectives of development in the world are generally applicable in the case of Nepal. The development modalities practiced in Nepal are evidence in this regard.

Development demands security whereas security provides the basic environment for the development. In other words, there is a

direct and positive two-way relationship between security and development. Furthermore, the relationship between national security and the development of the country lies under multiple domains. Some common domains are political, economic, sociocultural, environmental, human, and information-technological. All of these domains of interrelation are also applicable in the context of Nepal because of its own inherent features and latest developments. In other words, history, culture, political system, economy, environmental issues and information-technological issues of Nepal significantly tie-up with both national security and development. It needs a broader and integrated relational understanding of both dimensions of national security and the perspectives of the development for the coming days of Nepal.

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