

Contextualizing Human Security as a Police Mandate during the Pandemic

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The security institutions like the police are at the center stage of health related crisis brought by the spread of Covid 19, placing the police staff next only to the health workers as important agents of the state to render services for mitigating crisis amidst high levels of fear and insecurity in the society. The police forces worldwide struggle to live up to this mammoth challenge to human life and survival in an increasingly risky health environment forcing people to change livelihood norms and lifestyles and compelling governments to restrict human to human contacts through containment and controls over social and economic life. This has compromised usually held public liberties of freedom of movement at the demands of survival, health and safety. The police forces which are entrusted to ensure these liberties are now pressed hard to prioritize restrictions and controls, a challenge in reverse job orientation. However the patterns and practices vary from state to state, depending upon particular social, economic and governance context of each country and the varying degree of the risk factors involved through the spread of Covid 19 virus.

The normative context of Human Security which places health security at a premium is born out of the paradigmatic understandings of Human Development. The normative context of Human Security is further sharpened by another security and governance ideal of the Sustainable Development Goal 16 which prioritizes Human Security, Justice and Strong Institutions for Human Development and Wellbeing. These normative paradigms which were designed to primarily address police and security sector reforms primarily in developing country context now provide holistic understanding of the roles of security institutions in Pandemic Management in all country contexts, as all the countries of the world now face a kind of vulnerability, irrespective of the development category. This highlights global vulnerabilities requiring universally applicable role realization and policy formulations for the police.

The human needs of security rise beyond conflict and violence prevention to require assistance in security from risks related to health and life outcomes which require institutional support from the security and law enforcement institutions. This is rather a new concept which emerged from the theories of Human Development. The concept of Human Security was emphasized by Noble Laureate economist Amartya Sen and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan among a galaxy of other thinkers and global policy leaders in 1994. By the first decade of the present century this approach was soon adopted by countries like Canada, Japan and Norway which were later joined by many other countries to address primarily the needs of security in developing world. The Human security enlarges the concept of National Security and brings

together the 'human elements' of security, rights and development. As such, it is an inter-disciplinary concept that defines security which is people-centered, multi-sectoral, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented. This conceptualization is not just limited to inter personal violence but extends to define security in terms of Economic security, Food security, Health security, Environmental security, Personal security and Community security. The Security Sector primarily the Police organizations across developing world were expected to align their capacity development and job orientation according to this principle.

During the COVID 19 Pandemic the components of Human Security seem so relevant to all countries as the vulnerabilities related to the pandemic and the needs of human survival create conditions which require the security sector and the police to live up to this challenge where the components of Human Security remain relevant to the policing job roles undertaken by police forces of all countries. Starting from the role in implementing lockdowns, or help in essential quarantining, contact tracing, transporting food and supplies to vulnerable people, taking care of the rehabilitation of the vulnerable and drug addicts, responding to the sharp rise in domestic violence, increased need of child protection from home based abuse, protecting the health and municipal staff from stigma related attacks in some countries to transporting dead bodies to mass graves, the role of the police globally seems to have enlarged to an unimaginably high level of emotional and physical work involving risk elements not from the guns as such, but from the vulnerability to the infectious pandemic itself.

The police has to get involved now in reaching out to different aspects of Human security and respond accordingly. All the six elements of Human Security are now relevant to address police capacity. There is a need to address Economic security related issues as more and more people lose jobs and livelihoods and survival needs start defining insecurities, vulnerabilities and potentiality of violence and abuse. Food insecurity in some countries increases with people on the fringe of poverty and homelessness, struggle to get food, rioting for food is not an unanticipated policing challenge for some countries now. The Health security is actually the driver of all other insecurities and the fear of the pandemic, the stigma attached to it, the abandoning of the sick and dead people, the fear of spread of the disease and all other comprehensive aspects of the pandemic has increased police job role in the pandemic. Closely attached, is the Environmental Security as the entire living space, all public spaces become vulnerable to infections. The social distancing has becomes a huge challenge and the entire enterprise to contain the infection is leading to lockdowns resorted by most of the countries, which require police role in enforcement of movement restriction orders; increasing the stress on the police job across to globe and also the vulnerability of the risk of exposure to the infection. The Personal security and Community security with which police is more familiar, has started throwing newer challenges worldwide as the Human Dimension of insecurity gets

accentuated by increase in domestic violence and gender based violence. The child abuse and elder abuse has increased as victims remain restricted to abusive homes and buildings. The increase in the use of drugs and intoxicants inside abusive homes further increases the vulnerability. The increase in newer kinds of abuse at the social media, cyber attacks of various kinds and frauds over cyber space throw newer challenges to policing crime and criminality. The inter community mistrust has grown with the Pandemic with individuals and communities holding increasing prejudices due to the disease which are linked to inter community doubts about ethnicity, lifestyles, living habits, food habits and above all religious and cultural practices. This leaves a greater potential for inter community clashes, racial and ethnic violence and related vulnerabilities. All these Human Security needs challenge the police capacities to respond to a heightened demand on Police Services, Police Time, Energy and Skills. This doesn't just require greater capacity building and risk resilience efforts but also highlight the need to have national, regional and local strategies for police resource mobilization, effective leadership and an urgent need to define policy objectives by the state.

These challenges bring another related normative standard to become very relevant for the global rise in the demand of police capacity building, resource mobilization, effective leadership and police motivation. This is related to Sustainable Development Goal 16 which requires the states to take a focused approach in considering effective Security, Justice Institutions and Strengthening of the police services as a prerequisites for the development and wellbeing of the people in a country. This Goal is a normative principle to building security sector capacity and it was introduced fairly recently in 2015, and adopted as a guiding principle by the United Nations and all its member countries. Although rising from a developing country context, now when the Pandemic related vulnerabilities have increased the demand for effective response to human security needs the strong institutions of policing and law enforcement have become the relevant for all countries. The human survival and human frailties define all policing needs, irrespective of the development context of the country.

The police forces worldwide struggle to live up to this mammoth challenge to human life and survival in an increasingly risky health environment forcing people to change livelihood norms and lifestyles and compelling governments to restrict human to human contacts through containment and controls over social and economic life, compromising liberties at the demands of survival, health and safety. The patterns and practices vary from state to state, depending upon particular social, economic and governance context of each country and the varying degree of the risk factors involved through the spread of Covid 19 virus. This uniquely affects the job role of the

police, the orientation of its service delivery and ethics of its practice, demanding almost daily shifts in strategies, methodologies and policing priorities.

The police is at the center stage of this health related crisis, placing the police staff next only to the health workers as important agents to render services for mitigating crisis amidst high levels of fear and insecurity in the society. There is an urgent need to address policy requirements to improve police capacity. Utilization of the concept of Human Security and the normative goal of Sustainable Goal 16 to address policy needs is most relevant and feasible as almost all nations of the world endorse these internationally held principles through formal agreements. The need is just to extend their relevance to inform policies in police capacity building in all countries irrespective of the categories countries are placed into as vulnerabilities due to the pandemic have created similar policing needs across the globe.

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