



- Security Beyond Borders -

Seminar on “Social and Environmental Insecurities in Mumbai: Developing a Sociological Perspective on Vulnerability”

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17 October 2008

RSIS Conference Room 1

In this seminar Prof. Parthasarathy offered a sociological perspective in looking at the issue of vulnerability with regard to climate-related disasters. The speaker sought to address the issue of vulnerability caused by environmental insecurity and the way society dealt to mitigate and manage these risks. The speaker based his case study on Mumbai as India’s largest city in terms of population size, its commercial and financial capital.

Broader Understanding of the Concept of Vulnerability

The sheer scale of impact of disasters over the last few decades and the increasing variety of sources of insecurity had compelled social scientists to study their possible causes and impacts in greater detail. The speaker argued that despite terms such as risk and vulnerability emerging as the two most widely used concepts in disaster and disaster mitigation literature, their conceptual and theoretical development had been limited largely to economic and financial aspects. The speaker offered a sociological understanding of vulnerability to capture



the greater complexity of the social structures of developing countries. A better understanding of the concept of vulnerability would enhance the understanding of classic sociological categories, such as caste, class, race and gender, the interconnections between these, and the larger relationship between forms of inequality and discrimination on the one hand, and exposure and vulnerability to disaster on the other. The speaker argued that there had not been any comprehensive study that link poverty, inequality, and discrimination, to environmental risks in Mumbai.

The speaker was looking at the inter-connections between different categories of inequality and social stratification, the ways in which these played out in urban space, and the relational dynamics between society and the environment were brought to light. In the presentation, the speaker countered popular views which tend to blame state agencies and encroachments for enhanced environmental hazards

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in the city, and instead brought out a more complicated picture of the links between poverty, power distribution in society, discrimination, and environmental changes and shifts all leading to enhanced risk, insecurity, and vulnerability for specific sections of the population. The speaker argued that blaming of authorities could be a cover-up for society's own failures especially in addressing inequality, exclusion, and discrimination issues. Authority blaming could co-exist with scapegoating of the marginalised for society's vulnerability to natural or human induced hazards.

The speaker defined vulnerability as "defencelessness, arising from a lack of means to prevent or cope with damaging loss to life and property, the lack of means triggered or influenced by multiple and intersecting incapacities induced by marginalisation, subordination, discrimination or exclusion". Vulnerability was derived from exposure to risks and shocks, and an inability to manage these risks and shocks (adaptive capacity).

The Concept of Prismatic Vulnerability

By taking the case of Mumbai, the speaker presented the increased exposure and vulnerability of the area to climate change events. He took into account the issue of blaming, marginalisation and vulnerability. He introduced the concept of 'prismatic vulnerability' which argued for the need to explain culturally driven processes of social construction of risk, risk perception and allocation of blame, analyse the refraction of inequality and discrimination in quite different ways by different forms of vulnerability to disasters, and draw out the implications of the emergence of a risk society in a deeply hierarchical social structure which further strengthens social cleavages in terms of risk management and mitigation strategies as well as post-disaster relief and rehabilitation strategies. The presentation was focused on relationship between forms of marginalisation and dis-privilege, and human insecurity that created conditions of risk and vulnerability. Prismatic Vulnerability was defined as "outcome of refraction of various inequities and adverse factors in society through a particular hazard such as flooding, war, or epidemic".

Exposure to risk was not considered the same with vulnerability. The speaker argued that vulnerability

depended on type of risk that one was unable to cope with or adapt to, types of discrimination one was subject to, one's social and political status in a context of social and spatial marginalisation and exclusion. Vulnerability outcomes observed in actual impacts of disaster and effective relief, rehabilitation, and mitigation were affected by intersections of different forms of inequality, and particular axis of discrimination that was refracted by the disaster and by relief and rehabilitation measures. Same axis of discrimination or inequality (gender, ethnicity, class, or caste) may get refracted by different hazards into very different forms or levels of vulnerability.

Based on the idea of prismatic vulnerability that different segment of society due to refract through a disaster and result in unique forms of vulnerability, the speaker argued that there should be a unique approach or strategy in addressing this issue. The speaker suggested a participatory planning in mitigating the risk of climate-disasters.

The discussion in the Q&A session evolved around the effort to overcome inequality in relation to disasters, and the role of central and state governments in India, civil society organisations and the private sector in addressing the vulnerability of a society in mitigating disasters.

State of Environment in Indian Cities by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi



The CSDS, CNN-IBN and Outlook survey on State of Environment in Indian Cities was conducted in six selected Indian cities- Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad.

The survey was conducted to find out level of people's awareness, concern, their perception and practice, attitudes, willingness to change and their hope about environment in Indian cities. In order to reflect this, a comprehensive questionnaire relevant to these issues was made for all the cities including specific issues for different cities. In the process of preparing questionnaire, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) also assisted as knowledge partner for the survey.

The fieldwork of the survey was conducted from 9 May to 14 May 2008 in these cities. Prior to the field works of the survey, a one-day training workshop for investigators to be involved in the survey was also held on 7 May and 8 May 2008 in different cities. Altogether 36 field investigators were involved in the survey.

The sample for the survey was selected using purposive sampling technique. A total of 1800 respondents purposively selected on the basis of socio economic status of the colonies were interviewed in 36 locations. In each city, 300 interviews in 6 locations- 2 colonies from each lower, middle and higher income groups were conducted. Out of the 6 locations in every city, 2 were from lower class colonies, 2 from middle class colonies and 2 from richer class colonies. Respondents from different age groups like school children, young, and middle aged were respondents from different age groups like school children, young, and middle aged were interviewed in equal proportions. Beside, the interviews were also conducted on the basis of respondents proportionately divided between both genders in these locations.

The fieldwork was coordinated by Narashima Rao (Hyderabad), B.S. Padmavathi (Bangalore), Nitin Birmal (Mumbai), G. Koteswara Prasad (Chennai), Suprio Basu & Jyoti Prasad Chatterjee (Kolkata) and CSDS central team (Delhi). The team that designed, coordinated and analyzed the survey at CSDS comprised of Yogendra Yadav, Sanjay Kumar, Praveen Rai, Kshetri Rajiv Singh, Dhananjai Joshi, Himanshu Bhattacharya, K.A.Q.A Hilal and Kanchan Malhotra.

ANALYTICAL POINTS OF FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

A: AWARENESS

- Most respondents are aware of more day-to-day issues such as law banning smoking in public places.
- A large section of the respondents are aware of global warming, rainwater harvesting and solar energy, however a relatively smaller section is aware of environmental issues such as bio-diversity, Eco-tourism, and acid rain.

- Looking at a general awareness, metropolitan Indian seems to be fairly well informed on environmental issues.

B: CONCERN

- Overall metropolitan India ranks inflation as the most important problem. But interestingly environmental pollution is second, followed by more popular issues such as corruption and unemployment. Poor transport facilities comes at the bottom.
- Looking at environment problems in particular, air pollution tops the rank followed by lack of green cover while garbage disposal ranks at the bottom.
- Air pollution turns out to be an issue that tops the agenda of respondents from all classes, though when comparing the 6 metros, Hyderabad is the city where air pollution seems to be the biggest environmental issue.

C: COMMON PRACTICE

- In most cases drinking water is mainly supplied by the government and is available inside the house.
- A garbage collector generally collects garbage on a daily basis and most of it is disposed at colony dustbin/municipal truck.
- Attending conferences and seminars is the most common way to participate in activities related to environmental issues.
- Compared to college students, school students are more actively involved in environment related activities.
- Planting trees is the most common practice that cuts across classes.
- Installing a solar heater, rainwater harvesting and energy saving devices, or for that matter not used plastic bags and changed to CFL bulbs is predominantly an upper class concern.

D: PERCEPTION

- There seems to be a subtle class-wise divide among those who feel that giving recourse to private enterprises might be a better way to manage garbage and those who continue to count on the government.





- The survey reveals a clear consensus among respondents that pollution of air, water and noise in cities has increased in the last 5 years.
- A large section of population thinks that discharge of industrial waste is main reason for pollution in rivers followed by discharge household sewage.
- Overall respondents prefer good public transport and metro networks for commuting. This is an opinion that cuts across metros, with Hyderabad standing out as an outlier with a substantial proportion of the respondents being enthusiastic about a fuel-efficient car.
- Lower class and middle class respondents preferred public transport, while the upper classes were most keen a fuel-efficient car.
- The survey indicates that people are generally of the opinion that Indian are not sensitive towards environmental issues. This opinion was strongest in Chennai and weakest in Bangalore.
- Considerably strong support is voiced for a pollution tax on companies and a ban on diesel engine cars. Public opinion calls for development with a special concern for the environment.
- In the absence of a vibrant Green politics in the electoral arena, public opinion seems to be divided among those who will consider voting for a politician who promises a cleaner environment and those who will not buy that as an issue that would influence their voting preference. Majority of respondents from Delhi and Bangalore seem to be positive about such a politician.

E: WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE

- Overall majority of respondents are not ready to pay extra tax for environment protection, but respondents from Kolkata are willing to shell out some extra money for protecting the environment.

F: IS THERE A HOPE?

- The survey reveals a rather pessimistic picture about the future.
- The respondents share a clear consensus that the environmental pollution will increase in the next five years.
- Overall environmental conditions are expected to go worse. Respondents from Kolkata are most

pessimistic, while Delhites seem to be relatively optimistic.

For more information of the survey and other activities of CSDS, please visit <http://www.lokniti.org/>

RSIS Seminar on **“Global Energy Security Challenges Facing the** **New US President”**

Speaker: Mr. Jesse Fairall,
Senior Security Analyst, Corporate Affairs Security,
Shell Oil Company

28 October 2008
RSIS Conference Room 1



This seminar dealt with the global energy security challenges facing the new US President. These challenges are divided into the overarching global challenges as a whole to energy security, and also the domestic issues revolving around energy security in the US, which would be of concern to the new incoming US President. Bearing in mind that Shell Oil Company mainly looked at energy security challenges posed to it and had no role in proposing policy prescriptions to the US Government in this respect, the opinions covered in the presentation were the views of the speaker himself, tapping on his experiences and observations.

An Overview of the Global Energy Security Challenges

With respect to energy, the world is currently in a period of choices – but difficult choices indeed if energy security concerns no longer revolve around the matter of security of supply and have to look into emerging new issues, primarily climate change. From the standpoint of the US, which is one of the largest consumers of energy, the two key areas of challenges to global energy security could be identified as 1) geography of energy resource distribution and 2) the capacity permitted by the existing energy infrastructure.

With respect to geography, the distribution of energy, especially those found in politically volatile areas, as well as sites yet to be accessible using current technology, presented a problem to the security of supply. In addition, geographical constraints also raised the question of cost-efficiency in the transportation of energy supplies.

The speaker also noted the need to cope with the rising demand without necessarily straining the existing energy infrastructure in the long term, a challenge bearing in mind the limitations of present supply chain capacity. Clearly then, investments in modernizing and expanding the energy supply chain would be of paramount concern when tackling energy security issues on the global scale.

Energy Security Challenges Facing the Next US President

The next US President would have to tackle energy security from a multitude of perspectives, the key aspect being 1) domestic issues and 2) increasing primacy of climate change as a topic of energy security debate in the US.

Domestic Issues

Indeed, managing the domestic consumption patterns would represent a huge challenge to the new incumbent in the office, noting that the American society is predominated by a consumer culture. Traditionally, the relatively inexpensive and hence highly-affordable energy prices had encouraged the profligate consumption of energy, in particular in the area of transportation. Private vehicles – a symbol of prestige in the American culture – have been affordable alongside energy prices. Domestic carmakers have traditionally churned out high-

capacity, energy-guzzling vehicles which could not be deemed as energy efficient. These factors resulted in uncontrolled energy consumption, insofar as energy and vehicle prices remain affordable for the American citizens. In order to curb the rising energy demand, the new US President would need to look into ways to overcome the habit-driven consumer culture in the American society. As such, this remains a daunting task ahead. There could be little that the US Government could do to change the deeply-entrenched consumer-oriented mindset of the American society, bearing in mind that it usually took a long time for high energy prices to pose an influence on the demand and consumption patterns in the US. Hence, the primary challenge for the next US administration would be on ways to encourage a ‘bottoms-up’ initiative on the citizens’ part to manage demand and consumption, as opposed to a ‘top-down’ approach.

Climate Change

Until recently, the senior decision-making body within the US Government did not include energy specialists. The growing primacy of energy security in the strategic calculus of the US administration in recent years could be brought about by the increasing recognition that energy was not an isolated topic of concern, but tightly interrelated with a host of other security issues confronting the US. Climate change is one such area of interest which has gained momentum in the American sphere of policy debate. There had been increasing discussions across wide segments of the society over the environmental impact stemming from the use of fossil fuels, notwithstanding energy-related investment projects – mainly in the field of traditional energy sources – in the pipeline. Climate change, once an area of neglect, has slowly but gradually found its way into the American psyche and also entered the political domain. As such, it would be optimistic to note that climate change concerns could bring about concrete plans within the American policymaking body to tackle the demand and consumption patterns. This area of concern, beyond the traditional notion of ensuring the security of energy supply, could not be ignored by the incoming new US President and his administration in the years to come.

During the Q& A session, questions and comments were raised regarding the future of investments in





renewable energy, the issue of persistent Dependency on fossil fuels and the need of making fossil fuels more viable.

Roundtable Discussion on the Expanding Role of SAARC in Promoting Peace and Development in the Region

7th July 2008

Colombo, Sri Lanka

As a precursor to the SAARC Summit held in Colombo in July/August 2008 the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) organized and hosted a Roundtable Discussion on the Expanding Role of SAARC in Promoting Peace and Development in the Region on 7th July, 2008, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Roundtable Discussion was attended by Dr. Palitha Kohona, Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka, Mr. Mir Akram of the High Commission of Bangladesh, Mr A. Manickam, Deputy High Commissioner for India, Ambassador Durga Prasad Bhattarai, of Nepal and High Commissioner Shahzad A. Chaudhry of Pakistan.

In his welcome address, Dr. Rifaat Hussain, Executive Director of RCSS thanked all Heads of Missions of SAARC countries and Observer states and made reference to the SAARC Summit which was scheduled to be held in Colombo later that month highlighting that key focus of the Roundtable Discussion was the expanding role of SAARC in promoting peace and development in the region.

The Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Palitha Kohona made the keynote address and a statement on behalf of Sri Lanka. In his keynote address he made reference to the fact that SAARC has been in existence for over two decades where in the formative years, safeguards with regard to certain issues were necessary but that it was now appropriate to take up all contentious issues and address common problems in the region. Dr. Kohona mentioned development, combating terrorism, poverty eradication, inter-regional trade, global warming and climate change and investments and services as important areas of focus for the future.

Ambassador Nihal Rodrigo, former Secretary General of SAARC made the opening remarks and together with Executive Director, Dr. Rifaat Hussain, facilitated the discussion which was held in two

sessions – the first where representatives of SAARC countries made their country statements while representatives of Observer states made presentations expressing the views of their respective countries on the theme of the Roundtable in the second session. Both sessions were followed by discussions. Issues the region is confronted with, weaknesses of SAARC as a mechanism in addressing these issues and recommendations to improve the organization were highlighted in the presentations and discussions. The recommendations that emanated from the Roundtable Discussion were submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Secretary General of SAARC in Kathmandu and representatives of SAARC Member countries and Observer States as well as the experts who participated in the Roundtable Discussion.

Upcoming Events

Training Workshop on Migration, Globalisation, Security and Development

8 – 15 March 2009

Godvari Village Resort, Kathmandu

SAMReN is organising a training workshop from 8-15 March 2009 at the Godavari Village Resort of Kathmandu, Nepal. The Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS) and the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) are co-hosts of the workshop while the Development Research Centre (DRC) on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty based at Sussex is providing the fund support under a grant from DFID

This workshop is designed to enhance understanding of migration processes in South Asian and international frameworks, and to equip young academics and professionals in migration research and management. It will examine migration dynamics in the context of globalisation, security and development. Furthermore, it will highlight recent issues facing the international migration regime, impact of globalisation on migration, and migration challenges faced by sending and receiving countries.

Teaching will take the form of lectures, seminars, small work groups, and panel discussions. The teaching staff will comprise of:

- ❖ Migration experts from five South Asian countries

- ❖ Faculty of RMMRU, University of Dhaka and epal Institute of Development Studies
- ❖ Faculty of the DRC on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, Sussex University, UK
- ❖ Faculty of the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)
- ❖ Experts from International Labour Office (ILO) and other international agencies working on migration

Deadline for applications by post: 25 November 2008
Applications by email: 30 November 2008

For more information and registration details, visit <http://www.samren.org/Workshop2009/index.htm>

Conference on Pandemic Preparedness

12-13 January 2009

Marina Mandarin Hotel, Singapore

This Closed door Conference on Pandemic Preparedness is jointly organised by RSIS in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs in Singapore.



The conference will examine the various framings of pandemic preparedness and aim to stimulate thinking on some of the possible approaches and mechanisms that the region can adopt. It will examine models of preparedness, identify gaps in planning, and determine indicators that can be used to evaluate effective systems. The conference targets an audience of security analysts, health practitioners, the business community and representatives from civil society groups. The proceedings will explore pandemic preparedness through a series of presentations and discussions on the operational frameworks of pandemic preparedness, the various forms of pandemic interventions that different societal actors can employ, the prospects of regional cooperation and how to improve national pandemic plans to suit particular contexts.

It brings together international experts just from the health sector, as well as government officials, businesses and civil society groups. The keynote address will be delivered by the Guest-of-Honour is Mr. Wong Kan Seng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs Singapore.

Workshop on Social Science Research and Migration

29 Nov -1 Dec 2008

University of Dhaka

Migration has been identified as one of the major socio-economic challenges that requires serious engagement of the global community in the 21st century. The complexity of varied types of migration processes has increasingly become a major area of research and policy intervention, at national, regional and international levels. It is in this context RMMRU is organizing a 3-day Residential Training Workshop on Social Science Research and Migration.

This workshop is designed to enhance research skills of young professionals on migration issues. It further aims at building network among young researchers and professionals interested in migration issue.

Seminar on "Cyber Security In East Asia"

4th December 2008, RSIS Conference Room 1

Time: 3.00pm - 4.30pm

Speaker: Dr. Nicholas Thomas, Research Assistant Professor, Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong

The 13 countries of ASEAN+3 are actively working towards creating a regional community in East Asia. At the same time, the regional countries have increasingly relied on web-based technologies to enable them to more efficiently use their resources. Even as this adoption of technology has assisted states, it has exposed them to new threats; with a growing number of East Asian networks and users now subject to a wide range of cyber attacks. These attacks have occurred within and across national boundaries with the transnational nature of cyber security making it difficult for governments to unilaterally securitize emergent cyber threats. As a result, it is becoming increasingly necessary for East Asian governments to protect their interests by working together. To do so effectively will require the adoption of policies and processes used to foster regional integration in other sectors and transfer them into the realm of cyberspace. Yet, serious questions remain as to the capacity and willingness of Asian states to undertake these activities. In the meantime, the region is left seemingly fragmented and vulnerable.





Recent Publications

Inaugural Issue of Peace Prints: Strategic Peacebuilding - State of the Field

WISCOMP India, with the support of the Embassy of Finland in New Delhi, has recently launched a new biannual South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding for its support to this project.



Academic Papers

- ❖ Lisa Schirch: Strategic Peacebuilding – State of the Field
- ❖ Howard Zehr: Doing Justice, Healing Trauma – The Role of Restorative Justice in Peacebuilding
- ❖ Kevin Kester: Developing Peace Education Programs – Beyond Ethnocentrism and Violence
- ❖ Saira Yamin: Understanding Religious Identity and the Causes of Religious Violence
- ❖ Swarna Rajagopalan: Reconciliation in the Indian Epics

Perspectives from the Field

- ❖ Eirene Chen and Mariam Jalalzada: Gender and Community Peacebuilding in Rural Afghanistan
- ❖ Priya Parker: Reconciliation in Gujarat
- ❖ Alpana Kishore: “Who will tell them this land belongs to your father when I die?”
- ❖ A Journey through Kashmir’s Landscape of Dislocation
- ❖ Leszek A. Cwik: Football as a Tool for Peacebuilding

Book Reviews

- ❖ Ken Booth and Nicholas J. Wheeler: The Security Dilemma – Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics
- ❖ Zahid Shahab Ahmed and Michelle Baxter: Texts and Contexts – Attitudes of Teachers in India and Pakistan

These articles can be accessed online at <http://www.wiscomp.org/peaceprints.htm>

Carbon, Trade Policy, and Carbon Free Trade Areas

Yan Dong and John Whalley, NBER Working Paper, October 2008

This paper discusses both the potential contribution that trade policy initiatives can make towards the achievement of significant global carbon emissions reduction and the potential impacts of proposals now circulating for carbon reduction motivated geographical trade arrangements, including carbon free trade areas. It is first suggested that trade policy is likely to be a relatively minor consideration in climate change containment. The dominant influence on carbon emissions globally for next several decades will be growth more so than trade and its composition, and in turn, the size of trade seemingly matters more than its composition given differences in emission intensity between tradables and nontradables. The paper also notes that differences in emissions intensity across countries are larger than across products or sectors and so issues of country discrimination in trade policy (and violations of MFN) arises.

To view this paper, visit the IWEP, CASS website at http://en.iwep.org.cn/download/xiazai2.asp?file_id=384
Or the National Bureau of Economic Research website at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14431>

China's Reform and Opening up and the Japanese Factor

Feng Zhaokui, *Journal of World Economics and Politics*, 2008, No. 10

During the thirty years of China's reform and opening up, the Japanese factor has largely played a positive role in China promoting a peaceful peripheral relationship for its modernization construction. In China's foreign economic and trade relations, Japanese factor has long been on top of the list of all foreign partners; When China learns from the experiences of foreign economic development, Japanese is the most important source; during the process of China seeking for foreign aid, Japan provides the most among the developed donors. In the future, as China continues to deepen its reform and opening up, carry out the scientific outlook on development, and achieve sustainable development, Japanese factor will still be of positive significance to providing experiences and a win-win cooperation.

Energy Security and Non-Traditional Security: A Tripartite Approach

Collin Koh and Mely Caballero-Anthony, *NTS Insight*, November 2008

"Weighing Issues: Human Security In ASEAN's Fight For Food"

Irene Kuntjoro and Sofiah Jamil, *NTS Insight*, 02/October 2008

Energy Security: Rethinking Market and Governance

Youngho Chang and Collin Koh, *NTS Insight*, 01/October 2008

Food Aid and Food Security: A Necessary Evil?

Nur Azha Putra, *NTS Insight*, September 2008

Japan and the Republic of Korea on the Responsibility to Protect

Research Paper, Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

Thai-Cambodia row a slap in the face of ASEAN Charter

Rizal Sukma, *The Jakarta Post*, 21 October 2008



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