REGIONAL PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY IN SOUTH ASIA: IMPACTS ON NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS IN THE REGION

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Introduction

Regional cooperation and integration has vast potential for accelerating economic growth, reducing poverty and economic disparity within and across the countries involved. Physical connectivity is one of the necessary preconditions for this integration. Importance of regional physical connectivity for economic development cannot be over emphasized. Success of regional connectivity in Europe is the best example where countries got integrated successfully for economic development even after the history of hundreds of years of wars among them. South Asia is still one of the most ill-connected regions of the world despite the fact that, this region has had intensive historical, political, economic, social and cultural relations among the nations from ancient times.
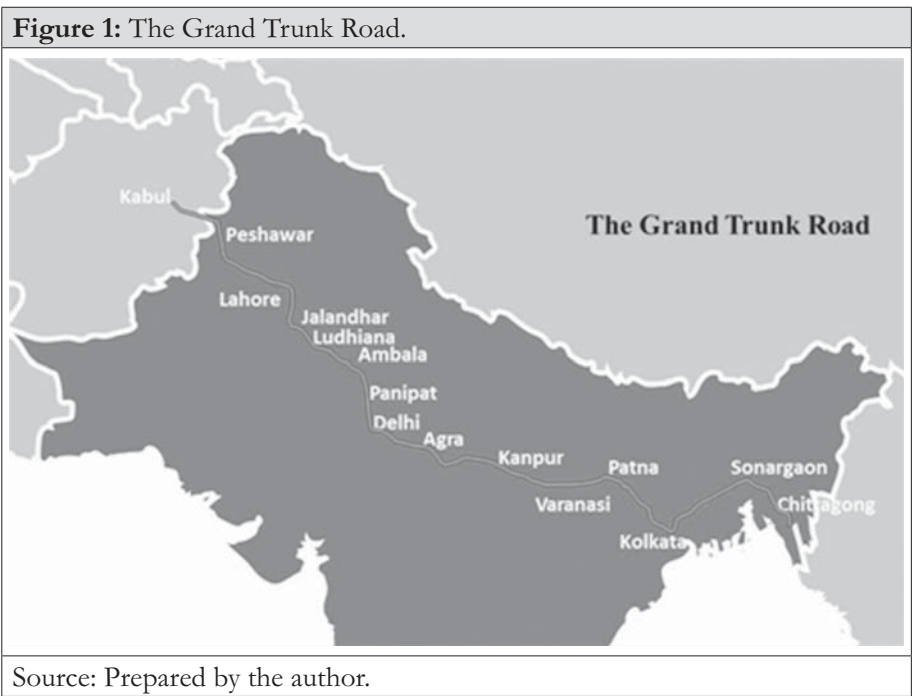
Among the multi-dimensional challenges, manmade non-traditional security threats has emerged in South Asia in such an endemic way that it requires serious concerns to combat the widespread crises the region facing to obtain an integrated South Asia [Rahman, 2014]. South Asia is presently experiencing expansion of manmade non-traditional security (NTS) threats in terms of weapon trafficking, drug trafficking, human trafficking, HIV, insurgency, illegal migration, smuggling, etc. which is a growing concern for member states. These threats are mostly trans-national which usually operate through unconventional routes in order to be safe from law enforcing agencies. Poverty and under development being few of the root causes of nontraditional security threats, regional connectivity might have positive effect being root cause of regional economic development. It is important to find out the effect of connectivity scheme in this region on non-traditional threats, domestic or trans-national.

The regional connectivity, being the key to regional economic development and better border management, could be reducing the very causes of non-traditional threats in South Asia. On the other hand, regional connectivity may as well open up routes of expansion of trans-national threats.

Regional Integration Through Physical Connectivity: South Asia Perspective

Connectivity in South Asia: Historical Overview

The first evidence of road development in the Indian subcontinent can be traced back to approximately 4000 BC from the ancient cities of Harrapa and Mohenjodaro of the Indus Valley Civilization. One of the most famous highways of medieval India was the Grand Trunk Road which is one of Asia's oldest and longest major roads. For more than two millennia, it has linked the eastern and western regions of the Indian subcontinent, connecting South Asia with Central Asia. It runs from Bangladesh to Afganistan, through India and Pakistsan.

Figure 1: The Grand Trunk Road.

Source: Prepared by the author.

The British colonial ruler successfully separated the South Asia by predominantly two religious groups, i.e. Hindus and Muslims, which was the basis of division in 1947 with separate countries based on religious identities, namely Pakistan and India. It ultimately resulted in unprecedented riots and the displacement of a huge population across the political divisions. The region also experiences economic

disparity unlike Europe which has democratic systems, rule of law and high level of economic and social development and capitalism (Karim, 2014,P:306).

Figure 2: South Asia before 1947.

Source: http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au

Regional Physical Connectivity in South Asia: Bangladesh Perspective

Existing Road Network in Bangladesh to Facilitate Regional Connectivity: Bangladesh Sthala Bandar Kartripaksha (BSBK) was in 2001 with a view to facilitate bilateral/trilateral trade with neighbouring countries namely India, Nepal, Myanmar and Bhutan. Presently the numbers of land ports are 20 of which 5 ports are in operation under BOT excepting Birol. On the other hand, Benapole, Burimari, Akhaura and Bhomra land ports are being operated under Bangladesh land port Authority directly (BSBK, 2015).Following road routes may immediately support regional road connectivity:

Table 1: Existing Road Routes in Bangladesh for Sub-Regional Connectivity.		
Serial	**Route**	**Description**
1.	Route 1	Petrapole (India) - Benapole-Jessore-Dhaka-Brahmanbaria-Sylhet-Tamabil-Dawki (India)
2.	Route 1A	Petrapole (India) - Benapole-Jessore-Dhaka-Brahmanbaria-Akahura - Agartala (India)
3.	Route 2	Dawki (India)-Tamabil-Sylhet-Brahmanbaria-Comilla-Chittagong Port.
4.	Route 2A	Dawki (India)-Tamabil-Sylhet-Brahmanbaria-Akhaura-Agartala (India).
5.	Route 3	Kakarvita (Nepal)-Phulbari (India)-Banglabandha (Bangladesh)-Bogra-Jessore-Khulna-Mongla Port.
6.	Route 4	Thimpu (Bhutan)-Phuentsholing (Bhutan)-Jaigon (India)-Chengrabandha (India)-Burimari (Bangladesh)-Rangpur-Bogra-Jessore-Khulna-Mongla Port.
Source: Compiled by author.		

Bangladesh is part of Asian Highway Network (AHN) being one of the 32 member states of AHN. Out of 55 routes of AHN, following two routes are planned through Bangladesh:

Table 2: Asian Highway Network (AHN) in Bangladesh.		
Serial	**Asian Highway**	**Description**
1.	Asian Highway -1	Japan- South Korea- North Korea- China - Vietnam- Cambodia- Thailand- Myanmar-Bangladesh- India-Pakistan- Afganistan- Iran-Turkey (Bulgaria border). The route inside Bangladesh would be Benapole- Jessore-Bhanga– Mawa– Dhaka– Kanchpur– Sylhet–Tamabil (495 km).
2.	Asian Highway -2	Indonesia-Singapore-Malaysia-Thailand-Myanmar-India - Bangladesh-India-Pakistan-Iran (Tehran). The route inside Bangladesh would be Banglabandha-Panchagarh-Bogra-Jamuna Bridge-Tangail-Dhaka-Kanchpur-Sylhet-Tamabil.

3.	Asian Highway -41	Mongla Port- Khulna- Jessore- Bonpara- Hatikumrul- Dhaka- Kanchpur- Comilla- Chittagong-Cox's Bazar- Teknaf- Gundhum (Myanmar) (752 km).

Existing Rail Routes in Bangladesh to Facilitate Regional Connectivity: Though rail network of pre-partition period still exists now, hardly any movement observed between India –Bangladesh and no movement along Pakistan-India line. Existing rail links between Bangladesh and India meet as many as five places namely, Darsana, Rohanpur, Benapole, Birol and Shahbazpur. There is no link to Myanmar. Following existing rail routes would facilitate regional connectivity:

Table 3: Existing Rail Routes in Bangladesh for Sub-Regional Connectivity.		
Serial	**Railway Routes**	**Description**
1.	Railway Route-1	Mahishasan (India)-Shahbazpur-Kulaura-Chittagong.
2.	Railway Route -2	Gede (India)-Darshana-Jamuna Bridge-Tongi-Kulaura-Shahbazpur-Mahishashan (India).
Source: Compiled by author.		

Bangladesh is part of Trans Asian Railway (TAR) network agreement being one of the members of 28 countries. Three TAR routes plans over Bangladesh as following:

Table 4: TAR Routes in Bangladesh.		
Serial	**TAR Routes**	**Description**
1.	TAR Route-1	Gede (India)-Darshana-Ishwardi-Jamuna Bridge-Joydevpur-Akhaura- Chittagong-Dohazari-Gundhum (Myanmar).
2.	TAR Route-2	Singabad (India)-Rohanpur - Ishwardi-Jamuna Bridge- Joydevpur- Akhaura- Chittagong-Dohazari- Gundhum (Myanmar).
3.	TAR Route-3	Radhikapur (India)- Birol - Ishwardi- Jamuna Bridge- Joydevpur- Akhaura- Chittagong-Dohazari- Gundhum (Myanmar).
Source: Compiled by author.		

Existing Marine Water Ways in Bangladesh to Facilitate Regional Connectivity: Bangladesh currently has three sea ports with a deep sea port at Sonadia in planning stage. The ports are at Chittagong, Mongla and Paira. Presently three designated inland water routes are available with very limited use. These Inland Water routes are:

Table 5: Inland Water Routes in Bangladesh.		
Serial	**Inland Water Routes**	**Description**
1.	Inland Water Route -1	Kolkata (India)-Raimongol-Mongla-Barisal-Chandpur-Serajgonj-Bahadurabad-Chilmari-Dhubri (India).
2.	Inland Water Route -2	Kolkata (India)-Raimongol-Mongla-Barisal-Chandpur-Narayangonj-Bhirab Bazar-Sherpur - Karimganj (India)
3.	Inland Water Route -3	Sittwe Port (Myanmar)-Teknaf (through Naaf river).
Source: Compiled by author.		

Existing Aviation Gateway in Bangladesh to Facilitate Regional Connectivity: At present, aviation activities are being carried out from 3 international and 12 domestic airports, about 38 airlines are now operating in and out of the country; about 43 States signed bilateral agreements with Bangladesh. The three International air gateways i.e. Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), Shah Amanat International Airport and Osmani International Airport. There are 12 domestic airports all around the country at Cox's Bazar, Rajshahi, Jessore, Saidpur, Barisal, Tejgaon, Bogra, Shamshernagar, Ishwardi, Comilla, Thakurgaon and Bagerhat.

Regional Connectivity in South Asia: Current Initiatives

At the 16th Summit of South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Thimphu, Bhutan in 2010, member countries declared 2010-2020 as the —Decade of Intra-regional Connectivity in SAARC. Bangladesh and India have made substantial progress in the field of physical connectivity during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Dhaka. Both the sides agreed to open new road linkages and revive the British-era transport networks, especially railways and waterways (Bhattacharjee, 2015).

Land Connectivity Agreements with Bangladesh: Major agreements related to land connectivity are:

- Motor Vehicle Agreement among BBIN on June 2015to facilitate trade, investment and people-to-people contact among the four South Asian countries.

- Bilateral agreement signed by India and Bangladesh forbus services in Kolkata-Dhaka-Agartala and Dhaka-Shillong-Guwahati routes. Efforts are on to open bus services on the Kolkata-Chittagong, Shillong-Chittagong, Kolkata-Khulna, Kolkata-Jessore and Silchar-Karimganj-Sylhet routes.

- The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network.

- The SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Strategy Study.

- BILTS for connectivity within and between South Asia and Southeast Asia.

- Bangladesh-Myanmar Bilateral Agreement of 2007 for a link road i.e. Bangladesh-Myanmar Friendship Road.

- Bilateral Agreement for Motor Vehicle passenger Traffic with India related to Dhaka-Kolkata-Dhaka and Dhaka-Agortala-Dhaka route duly signed in 1999 and 2001 respectively.

- SOP for Movement of Cargo Vessel in Bangladesh-India-Nepal. It allows cargo vehicle from Nepal to enter 200 meters in Bangladesh at Banglabandha.

- Joint Communique by India and Bangladesh on 7 road routes, 5 rail routes and one inland water transport route were identified by this for further regional connectivity.

Rail Connectivity Agreements with Bangladesh: Major agreements related to rail connectivity are:

- Agreement on Khulna-Kolkata Railway Link. India and Bangladesh have shown keen to augment railway connectivity during Modi's visit to Dhaka on June 2015, particularly to revive the links that existed before the 1965 India-Pakistan war. Responding to the popular demand of opening a train service between Khulna and Kolkata, the two sides have agreed to initially operate this once in a week via the longer Gede-Darsana route.

- Agreement on Dhaka- Kolkata Railway Linkinaugurated on 14 April 2008 runs thrice a week between the two countries.

- Agreement on Agartala - Akhaura Railway Link was signed between India's former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina during her visit to India in January 2010.

- Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway (TAR) Network.

Marine Water Connectivity Agreements with Bangladesh: Major agreements are:

- **Agreements with India**

  - Trade Agreement signed between India and Bangladesh of 1972 provides Indian transit across Bangladesh along two designated Inland Water Transport (IWT) Protocol routes.

  - The two countries also signed a coastal shipping agreement to facilitate cheaper and faster cargo movement between them during Modi's visit on June 2015. The new pact will allow Indian vessels to carry goods using Chittagong and Mongla ports; while Bangladeshi ships could now carry goods using the Indian ports like Haldia, Paradip and Vishakhapatnam.

  - Agreements with Myanmar. Bangladesh and Myanmar has signed an agreement on June 2008 to allow shipping companies of both the countries in transportation of sea borne cargo from the ports of both the countries.

Benefit of Regional Connectivity in South Asia

South Asia has a tremendous potential for economic integration through better connectivity but issues on national sovereignty, national security, political tensions, mistrust between countries, etc. have left the region barely connected.

Following are few benefits of better regional connectivity in South Asia:

- Trade Generation.
- Increased Market Size.
- Better Harmony.
- Political Cooperation.
- Employment Opportunities.
- Step Forward for Global Trade.
- Infrastructural Development.
- Accelerated Economic Growth.
- Poverty Reduction.
- Reduction of Economic Disparity within and across the Countries.

Non-Traditional Threats: South Asia Perspective

There are great differences between 20th and 21st century from international security point of view. 20th Century was a century of traditional wars between states. Besides two world wars, more than 250 wars occurred in 20th century. 21st century appeared with different type of security challenges-the Non-traditional Security threats.

The rise of a number of non-state actors, such as terrorist networks, drug traffickers, human traffickers, maritime piracy networks, and intra-state conflicts (e.g. civil wars) are emerging as new-age threats to the national security of states. The technological revolution in the 21st century has have aided the development of cyber-warfare and cyber-espionage, triggering the slow shift of the battlefield to cyberspace (Srikanth, 2014, P:1).Non-traditional security threats of South Asia can broadly be divided as follows (BIISS, 2015):

Table 6: Types of Non-traditional Security: South Asia		
Security	**Domestic/ Trans-national**	**Non-traditional Threat Examples in South Asia**
Societal Security	Trans-national	Arms trafficking
	Trans-national	Drug trafficking
	Trans-national	Human trafficking (Child and Women)
	Both	Terrorism
	Domestic	Political violence
	Domestic	Gender violence
	Domestic	Repression by state apparatus
	Domestic	Death in custody
	Trans-national	Illegal migration
	Both	HIV, etc.
Economic Security	Domestic	Mass poverty
	Domestic	Food security
	Trans-national	Smuggling, etc.
Environmental Security	Trans-national	Climate change
	Trans-national	Natural disasters
	Trans-national	Arsenic crisis
	Trans-national	Deforestation, etc.
Source: Compiled and reorganized by author.		

Manmade Threats to Societal Security: South Asia Perspective

Threats to societal security are generally the manmade and trans-national in nature. South Asia is experiencing almost all types of societal security threats. This research is oriented along three important societal security concerns namely, arms trafficking, drug trafficking and human trafficking which are elaborated in the subsequent paragraphs.

Arms Trafficking: Arms trafficking is of external or trans-national in nature. Though Bangladesh experiences less arms trafficking than what is happening in India or Pakistan, it is a major concern for Bangladesh for its increasing rate and overwhelming impact (BIISS, 2015). Out of the 63 million SALW in circulation among non-state actors in South Asia, the majority is illegal (Humanitarian News and Analysis, 2006). Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand are major sources of illicit weapons for South Asian non-state actors. The widespread proliferation of small arms in Afghanistan and Pakistan began with the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. India supplied the separatist militant Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka with weapons from 1983 through 1987(Humanitarian News and Analysis, 2006). The main causes of arms trafficking in South Asia could be as following (Banerjee and Muggah, 2002):

- Border disputes.

- Lack of effective border management systems.

- Poorly trained and under-resourced personnel in the law enforcing agencies.

- Lack of regional cooperation on the issue.

- Ready availability of arms.

- Administrative negligence in controls.

- Common use of SALW.

- Poverty.

- Under development.

- Drug abuse.

- Unhealthy political culture.

Drug Trafficking: Drugs trafficking is also an external or trans-national type of threat. Drug is indeed a major concern for Bangladesh. Bangladesh is considered as a potential transit route for Yaba to the other part of the region too. South Asia is surrounded by world's largest zones of illicit opium production and trafficking, the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran) in the west and Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia) in the east. Afghanistan alone produces almost 90 percent of the world's illicit opium. Beyond Afghanistan's immediate border regions, a significant portion of South Asia's heroin is trafficked through areas in which Maoist separatists are active in India. The major causes of drug production and trafficking in South are as following (Finley, et al, 2014):

• Inefficient border management.

• Insufficient capacity at border points, seaports, and airports, in terms of improved narcotics-detection gear and techniques, as well as surveillance systems and scanners.

• Deficiency of effective methods for collecting and sharing information on drug traffickers.

• Absence of inter-departmental cooperation at the national level,

• Inadequate coordination at the regional and international levels with regard to border security, law enforcement cooperation, and intelligence sharing.

• Poor framework for mutual legal assistance and extradition.

• Lack of economic opportunities for the drug producers.

• Poverty.

• Under development.

Human Trafficking: South Asia is experiencing the increasing exploitation of women and children trafficking. Child Trafficking is reported in nearly all countries in South Asia. Bangladesh, India and Nepal have more data than the other countries in the region, while only Bhutan and Maldives have more recent information on trafficking (UNICEF, 2009. P:08). Many trafficked persons, especially women and girls, may be unaware of their status as victims of crime or unwilling to report crimes against them to authorities they do not know and do not trust (UNWOMEN, 2013). Following are the social determinants of human trafficking (Perry and McEwing, 2013, P:143-145):

- Poverty.

- Gender (both male and female children, and women are vulnerable to trafficking).

- Lack of policy and law enforcement.

- Illiteracy and low levels of education.

- Ignorance on trafficking (especially among women migrating for jobs).

- Conflicts.

- Various regional cultures (e.g. placing a lower value on women in families, society, and policy).

- Demand for cheap/free labor.

- Open borders, relaxed enforcement, lack of document requirements, and corruption of border patrol agents.

Effect of Regional Physical Connectivity on Manmade Non-Traditional Security Threats in South Asia

Effect of Regional Connectivity on Arms Trafficking in South Asia

The Small Arms Survey, an independent research project based in Switzerland, published in its 2003 report that at least 1,134 companies in 98 countries worldwide are involved in some aspect of the production of small arms and ammunition. The largest exporters of small arms by value are the European Union and the United States. In 2010, the exporters' list was led by the USA and followed by Italy, Germany, Brazil, Austria, Switzerland, Israel, Russia, South Korea, Belgium, China, Turkey, Spain and the Czech Republic (SAS, 2003).

Figure 3: Arms Trade: From Richer Countries to the Poorer.

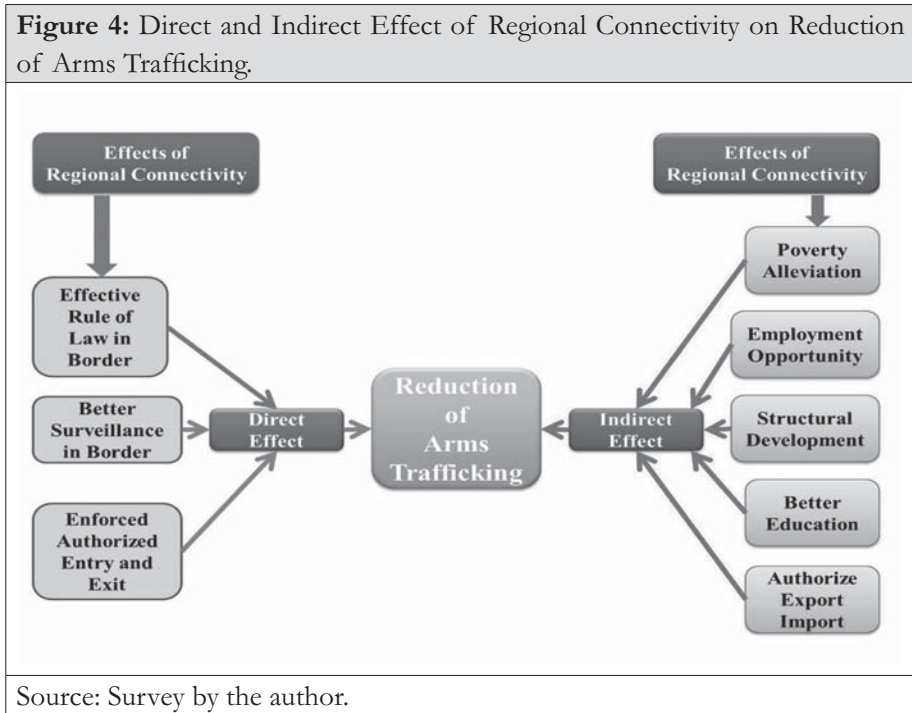Source: Citizenship Education, CSPE.tv<http://www.cspe.tv/id97.html >.

The empirical data also shows that most weapons are sold to armed groups of poorer countries. This means that while richer countries benefit from the jobs and money made in the arms trade, people in poorer countries are victims and sufferer (Citizenship Education, 2015: p 1).Therefore, it can be presumed that, as under-development makes a nation natural victim of illegal arms trafficking, economic development may reduce such vulnerability.

On a survey among military officers, civil professionals and university students, on what effect better regional connectivity may have over illegal arms trafficking in South Asia, 85%-95% of the respondents opined that it would reduce involvement of people in such illegal act.

Answering to another question on what positive outcomes of regional connectivity may directly or indirectly reduce arms trafficking in the region, responses of the survey were very common and may be divided into two heads for better understanding as following:

Direct Effects on Arms Trafficking: Better regional connectivity would result in effective rule of law, better surveillance, ensured authorized entry and exit, etc. in the border which may directly affect the frequency of arms trafficking by keeping it under control.

Indirect Effects on Arms Trafficking: The economic growth as a result of regional connectivity would indirectly reduce the arms trafficking. Most of the respondents opined that this reduction would be materialized through poverty alleviation, employment opportunity, structural development, better education, authorize import-export, etc.

Figure 4: Direct and Indirect Effect of Regional Connectivity on Reduction of Arms Trafficking.

Source: Survey by the author.

Effect of Regional Connectivity on Drugs Trafficking in South Asia

Drug trafficking - the global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws is estimated to be a $32 billion industry (UNODC,2015). Crammed between the 'Golden Triangle' and 'Golden Crescent,' the major global producers of psychotropic drugs, the South Asian region is the principal transit route for psychotropic drugs (Monoharan, 2003, p:1).

Figure 5: Major Drug Trafficking Routes and Cramp of South Asia between "The Golden Crescent" and "the Golden Triangle".

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_drug_trade

The drug affected and trafficker groups on ground are generally poor people of Bangladesh. The Dhaka Tribune reports on 12 September 2013 that, about one in three of surveyed drug users in Bangladesh are illiterate and about six or seven out of ten has different levels of formal education. Although most drug users have some form of occupation, many have modest to poor income. Studies indicate that majority of the surveyed drug users have monthly income between Tk1,000 to Tk4,000. Different studies also indicate that 5% to 18% of the drug users earn less than Tk50 per day (Zaidi, 2013, p:1). Therefore, poverty, under development and poor education remain the key causes regarding drug abuse and illegal drug trade in Bangladesh.
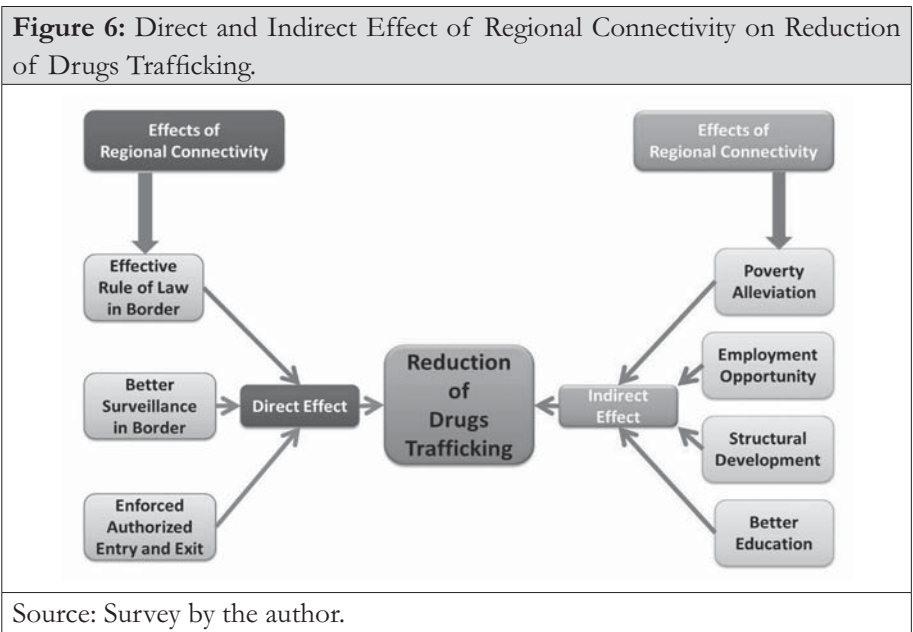
On a survey among military officers, civil professionals and university students, on what effect better regional connectivity may have over illegal drug trafficking in South Asia, 85%-90% of the respondents opined that it would greatly or moderately reduce involvement of people in such illegal act.

Answering to another question on what positive outcome of regional connectivity may directly or indirectly reduce drugs trafficking in the region, received responses of the survey may be divided into two heads for better understanding as following:

Direct Effects on Drugs Trafficking: Greater regional connectivity would present effective rule of law, better surveillance, ensured authorized entry and exit,

etc. in the border which may directly reduce the frequency of drugs trafficking by keeping it under check.

Indirect Effects on Drugs Trafficking: The economic growth as an outcome of regional connectivity would indirectly reduce the drugs trafficking. Most of the respondents opined that this reduction would be materialized through poverty alleviation, employment opportunity, structural development, better education, etc.

Figure 6: Direct and Indirect Effect of Regional Connectivity on Reduction of Drugs Trafficking.

Source: Survey by the author.

Effect of Regional Connectivity on Human Trafficking in South Asia

In recent years, the human trafficking has attracted growing international attention. It is, to a large extent, a symptom of relative and absolute poverty. It is also a consequence of gender inequality and lack of respect for children's rights (SIDC, 2003, p:7). The main countries of origin in South Asia are Bangladesh and Nepal, while India and Pakistan are destination countries. Trafficking inside India is also extensive. Girls and young women from poor rural areas are sold into prostitution and marriage in the cities. Some boys are sold to Pakistan, where they are forced to work on building sites and in agriculture. Boys have also been sold to the Middle East as camel jockeys (SIDC, 2003, p:12). From the data available in South Asia, it appears that the worst forms of trafficking relate to the illegal movement of women and children for the purposes of exploitation in sectors
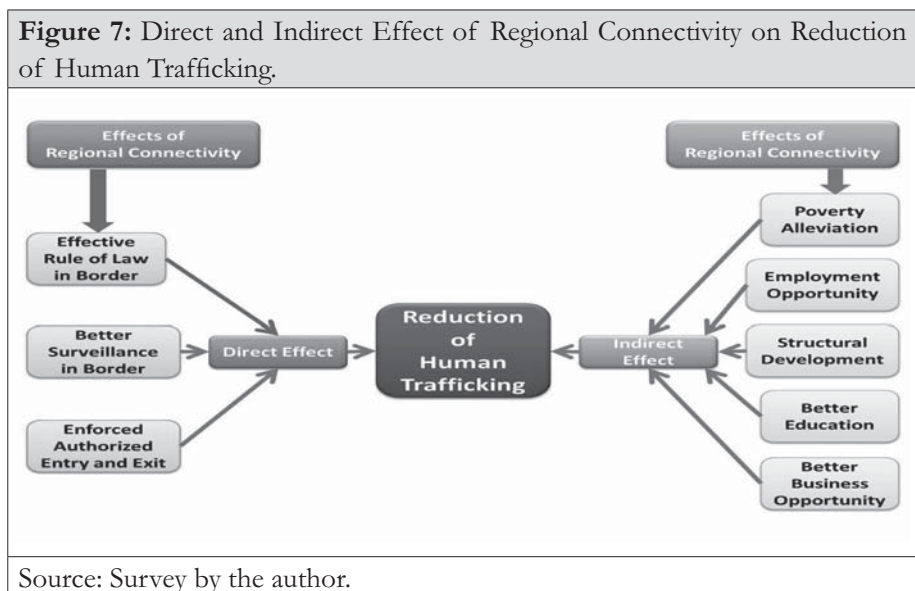
such as commercial sex work, and child labor of all forms (ADB, 2003, p:18).The people become the victims of human traffickers mainly due to poverty and high rate of youth unemployment (SIDC, 2003, p:16,17).

On a survey on what effect better regional connectivity may have over human trafficking in South Asia, 90%-93% of the respondents opined that it would greatly or moderately reduce involvement of people in such illegal act.

Answering to next question on what positive outcome of regional connectivity may directly or indirectly reduce human trafficking in the region, received responses of the survey may be divided into two heads for better understanding as following:

Direct Effects on Human Trafficking: Enhanced regional connectivity would result in effective rule of law, better surveillance, ensured authorized entry and exit, etc. in the border which may directly reduce the occurrence of human trafficking by keeping it under strict observation.

Indirect Effects on Human Trafficking: The economic boost as a product of regional connectivity would indirectly reduce the human trafficking. Most of the respondents opined that this reduction would be materialized through poverty alleviation, employment opportunity, structural development, better education, better business opportunity, better social life, etc.

Figure 7: Direct and Indirect Effect of Regional Connectivity on Reduction of Human Trafficking.

Source: Survey by the author.

Recommendations

Following are recommended:

- Government of Bangladesh should be proactive in pursuing better regional or sub-regional connectivity for economic development.

- Government of Bangladesh should invest for infrastructural development in the ports, road, rail and air ways facilities in order to facilitate connectivity initiatives.

- Government of Bangladesh should take the benefits of physical connectivity at sub-regional or regional level to develop the underdeveloped areas in order to curb the generation and growth of nontraditional security threats.

- Bangladesh being the connecting country between South Asia and South-East Asia, connectivity with Myanmar should be exploited to the best in order to develop the under-developed area around the border, and thereby curbing the illegal arms, drug and human trafficking.

Conclusion

South Asia is one of the least integrated regions of the world despite the recent initiatives taken by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian counterpart Narendra Modi in connecting the countries at sub regional level. Historically this region used to be a single entity, called Bharatbarsha, which was divided by the British colonial power on the basis of religion. Since then the mutual distrust had been the key factor of dis-connected South Asia.

Economic disparity exists at sub regional and domestic level in South Asia due to lack of integration in the region. Indian north-eastern states are unique examples. Due to lack of physical connectivity in terms of road or rail or water networks, the remote areas of the region remained underdeveloped and gave birth to many illegal trades and insurgencies in South Asia.

21st Century is overwhelmed by Nontraditional security threats, unlike 20th century being a century of state to state clashes. While traditional security is mostly concerned with the states territorial integrity and sovereignty, nontraditional security threats are mostly related to human security. Apart from the natural disasters, South Asia is overwhelmed by many transnational and domestic societal non-traditional security threats like, illegal arms trafficking drug trafficking, human trafficking , insurgency, terrorist activities, etc.

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