

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2016 · 20 marks

Why does global human security need to be emphasized along with economic security? Explain with examples.

FLOW SNAPSHOT

how the answer moves

INTRO ROUTES

R1 traditional/economic security is state- and income-centred → human security shifts the referent to the individual (freedom from fear, want, indignity) → the two are not interchangeable • **R2** a country can grow and guard its borders yet its people stay unsafe → income ≠ dignity or safety → human security must sit *alongside* economic security

BODY FLOW

referent shift (state → individual) → **Truong**: economically secure states, insecure people → working-woman example (earns well, faces harassment) → comprehensive dimensions (economic/food/health/environmental/personal/community/political) → **Buzan's** interconnected sectors (threat in one spreads) → **Tickner's** feminist critique + "security paradox" → shift "freedom from fear" → "freedom from want" → global examples (COVID/health, Syria/societal, Rohingya/political, climate/environmental)

COUNTER-VIEW

realist caution: over-stretched concept risks meaninglessness; state resources finite; raises false expectations

CONCLUSION ROUTES

R1 balance: human security complements, not replaces, economic security • **R2** economic security safeguards the aggregate, human security safeguards the person → both needed together

Traditional security thinking measures safety at the level of the state or of income. Human security rejects this. It shifts the referent from the state to the individual and defines safety as freedom from fear, want and indignity.

Economic security and human security are therefore not the same thing and the first cannot stand in for the second. T.D. Truong argues that states may be economically secure while their people face state violence, patriarchy and environmental harm. A working woman may earn well but face harassment at home or work; her income guarantees neither her dignity nor her safety.

This is why human security is deliberately comprehensive, covering economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political dimensions. Barry Buzan, in *People, States and Fear*, shows these sectors are interconnected and a threat in one quickly spreads to the rest. Therefore, economic strength cannot be sealed off from the others.

Ann Tickner argues that traditional, state-centred security is masculine-biased and produces a "security paradox", heightening rather than reducing the insecurity of individuals. The shift is from "freedom from fear" to "freedom from want".

COVID-19 exposed health insecurity, the Syrian refugee crisis societal insecurity, the Rohingya crisis political insecurity and climate-driven displacement environmental insecurity. Strong economy does not prevent any of them alone.

Realists argues that a concept stretched this far risks meaning nothing and that state resources are finite. Therefore the way forward is that human security is a critical lens that complements and not replaces economic security.