

**ARMS RACE AND
SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SOUTH ASIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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POVERTY STATUS OF SOUTH ASIA

South Asia accounts for 23% of globe's population but it accommodates 40% of world's poor.

77% of Indian Population lives on less than Rs.20/- (0.4 US\$) per day
(Aurjun Sen Gupta Commission report 2008)

According to a recent study 6.2 per cent of India's population have fallen below the poverty line due to expenses incurred on health.

More than 40 per cent of the Indian population has to borrow or sell assets for treatment, according to the 2004 National Sample Survey Organisation.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Country	HDI	Rank	Life Expectancy	Adult Literacy	GDP per Capita
India	0.611	126	63.6	61	3,139
Pakistan	0.539	134	63.4	49.9	2,225

The south Asian countries are at high risk for several diseases including bacterial diarrhoea, hepatitis A and E, typhoid fever, dengue fever, malaria, and cutaneous leishmaniasis.

Hovering around 1% of GDP, India's public spending on health is one of the lowest in the world.

Among all the BRICS nations, India's share of public expenditure in the total health expenditure is the lowest. While the yearly average between 2004 and 2009 for BRICS nations as a whole is 2.4 per cent, in India it was a meagre 1.3 per cent. This difference in spending is even more daunting against the background of growth rate of population during the period which was 1.36 per cent for India, but only 0.7 per cent for the BRICS group as a whole.

BUT INSTEAD COUNTRIES OF THE REGION PARTICULARLY INDIA AND PAKISTAN SPEND HUGE AMOUNT ON ARMS

India ranks number one in the arms import in the world.

India imports 12% of global arms.

Country	Arms Imports	Ranks	Per Capita	Rank	%age of GDP (per \$1000)	Rank
India	\$2.375 billion	1	2.199	48	0.716	28
Pakistan	\$344 million	6	2.118	39	0.99	21

BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN HAVE HUGE ARSENAL

Number of Arms In India and Pakistan

Country	Number of Privately Owned Firearms	Number of Registered Firearms	Estimated Number of Illicit Firearms	Rate of Civilian Firearm Possession per 100 Population	Number of Military Firearms	Number of Law Enforcement Firearms with Police
India	40,000,000	6,300,000	33,700,000	3.36	5,704,000 ⁵	1,900,000 ⁶
Pakistan	18,000,000	7,000,000	11,000,000	11.6	2,922,500 ⁵	460,000

SMALL ARMS VIOLENCE HAS CAUSED INNUMERABLE LOSS OF LIFE

Fatalities in terrorists related violence in the state of Punjab in India 1981-1995

Year	Civilians	Terrorists	Security forces	Total
Sub-total	11696	8090	1746	21532

Deaths in last 21 years of armed violence in Jammu and Kashmir

Total	Militants	civilians killed by militants	civilians killed by security forces	policemen killed by militants
43,460	21,323	13,226	3,642	5,369

Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2003-2013

	Civilians	Security Force Personnel	Terrorists/ Insurgents	Total
Total	16430	5074	26092	47596

SRI LANKA

The civil war in Sri Lanka for quarter of a century, claimed around 130,000 lives. The UN estimates that 40,000 civilians alone died in the five months before the war's end in May 2009.

NEPAL

Nepal reports a violent death rate of 6.2 per 100,000 in an average year between 2004 and 2009.

EFFECT OF THE ARMS USE

Human rights violations

Human rights violations by security forces and by the non state actors are rampant. Killing of innocent people, rape and other heinous crimes have been reported in the Kashmir valley.

The terrorist groups indulged in crime against women in Punjab in the form of forced marriages at gun point.

They silence first the people from their own community so that no one speaks to defend the victims of their crime. Political opposition was targeted in a way that barring a few progressive groups most of the opposition parties preferred to close their eyes. The victims were branded as informers so that no one sympathizes with them.



Displacement

During war with Pakistan people were forced to shift to the refugee camps where despite best efforts people could not be provided with basic amenities. In recent ethnic violence in the state of Assam in north eastern part of India, it was difficult to provide health care to people even in the refugee camps because of fear of onslaught by the opposite groups.

Criminalization of politics

Use of arms is steadily increasing to achieve political ends thus weakening the democratic institutions.

Women And Children Are Used To Indulge In Arms



Women and children are worst sufferers. They have to wait for the men who have gone out to work and in such violent situations may never come back.



Mistrust in the society increases under such situations even among the people of same community or ethnic groups.

Hopelessness, Apathy and Stress disorder are common.



Slowing down of economic activity

Activities close down early so the growth and development opportunities suffer.

FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASE IN ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE REGION

Unfriendly Relations Between Neighbours

India and Pakistan have fought four wars - 1948, 1965, 1971 and 1998. In addition there have been intermittent violent conflicts at the border. In the year 1998-99 after terrorist attack on Indian Parliament 130,000 soldiers on both sides stood face to face each other in a high red alert.

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalist forces on both sides want to continue situation of perpetual tension for their narrow political ends. Possession of arms with the non state actors scuttle peace initiatives by the governments and peace groups.



External Intervention

Continued external intervention by the big powers since decades has worsened the situation. These powers do not want the region to be in peace as this will reduce their sale of arms.

Arms sale is associated with many economic scandals.

Uneven Economic Development

Poor and uneven economic development in the countries and in different parts of each of the country contributes to the violence and use of arms as many forces utilize this scenario.

Rising economic gaps in the population has further aggravated the situation. These gaps have increased under the neoliberal economic policies being pursued by the governments.

There is violence both for greed, need and desperation.

Political instability

Unstable political situation leads to increase in the violence and use of small arms. Poor governance in this situation further worsens the condition.

Criminals take advantage. Patronage to the drug cartels by some higher ups in the government gives them free hands to use arms.

PRIORITIES FOR SOUTH ASIA

- **Develop mutual trust between nations**
- **Divert funds from arms race to development**
- **Increased spending on Health and Education**
- **Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation Facilities**
- **Food Security**
- **Gender Equality**
- **Economic policies to ensure inclusive Growth**

**Violence is not
our culture**



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