

TERRORISM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT: Violence and terrorism have resulted from irrationality, miscalculation, xenophobia, fanaticism, and religious extremism. Historically mankind has remained in a state of conflict and resorted to violence to bring in changes in the society and in political systems. Over last one decade, terrorism has become the single-most important menace facing the countries across the world. India is even not exempt from this phenomenon. Ironically, India's acceptance of secularism, plurality and tolerance for multiple faiths and beliefs has made it a fertile ground for many terror groups. Thus terrorism must be confronted intelligently, wisely and relentlessly and without fear or favour. It can be fought only by a united people, not by a people divided by religion.

Keywords: Jihad, Fundamentalism, Radicalisation

INTRODUCTION

The word 'terrorism' was first coined to indicate the systematic use of terror as a policy. Terrorism is a dastardly act aimed at the systemic use of violence against government and people for achieving certain political ends.

It is an illegal attempt made towards acquiring and maintaining power by intimidation or unleashing serious violence. Terrorism has become a major threat to world peace and prosperity in recent times, especially since the 9/11 attacks on the US twin towers. It had led to gross violation of human rights all over the globe, necessitating the states to adopt comprehensive policies to confront terrorism in all its forms and to enhance international cooperation in the fight against terrorism

The Sub-continent-

India, with its geographical positioning and cultural diversity, provides an apt target for terrorist activities. It is the world's largest democracy, has a federalist system and the second largest country in terms of population. It is incredibly diverse with over 2000 ethnic groups, 1652 languages and dialects, including 122 languages that have over 10000 speakers. India is home to almost all major religions of the world, including Hindus, Christian, Islam, Sikh etc. It is also the ground for the widest economic disparity, with the poor residing alongside some of the richest billionaires.

In terms of topography, the subcontinent stretches 3214 kms from North to South and 2933 kms from east to west, covering a total of 3287 263 sq. km in terms of area. A total of six countries surround the north and east

stretches including Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. In the south of the country, there is Srilanka. The entire western, southern and eastern portions of the country are flanked by the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal. The rugged terrains on the top with the Himalayan mountain range and the waters of the ocean towards the south provide threat to the security of the nation.

Affected States & Zones-

The region most affected by terrorist incidents is Jammu & Kashmir. To this, other provinces like Punjab, Delhi, and Pune etc. have been added in recent times, though they are more sporadic in nature. Located at the northern tip of India's territory, Jammu and Kashmir has been the focal point of territorial dispute since Independence. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, the State of Jammu & Kashmir has been affected by terrorist and secessionist violence, sponsored and supported from across the border, for more than two decades. Since the advent of militancy in J&K (in 1990), 13,904 Civilians and 4,922 Security Force (SF) personnel have lost their lives.

Terrorist Groups in Operation-

There are scores of insurgent and terrorist groups operating in the country. Those recognized by the U.S. State Department as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) or other "groups of concern" are:

- **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)** a militant Islamist group operating in Pakistan as well as in Jammu and Kashmir. The group reportedly received funding from Pakistan's intelligence services until 2001, when the United States designated it an FTO and Pakistan froze its assets. LeT aims to win sovereignty for Jammu and Kashmir. The group is blamed for some of the most high-profile terrorist attacks in India, including the July 11, 2006 bombing of the Mumbai commuter rail.
- **Jaish-e-Muhammad**, is another Pakistan-based terrorist group operating in Jammu and Kashmir. Founded in 2000, Jaish-e-Muhammed seeks to drive India out of Jammu and Kashmir and transfer control of the region to Pakistan.
- **Harakat ul-Mujahadeen (HuM)**, or the "Islamic Freedom Fighters' Group," was founded in 1985 as an anti-Soviet group fighting in Afghanistan. When

Soviet forces withdrew in 1989, the Pakistan-based HuM shifted its focus to Jammu and Kashmir.

- **Harakat ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI)** was founded in 1980 to fight Soviets in Afghanistan but has since concentrated its efforts in Jammu and Kashmir. HUJI primarily attacks Indian military targets, but it is believed to be linked to the abduction and slaying of five Western tourists in Jammu and Kashmir in 1995.
- **Indian Mujahideen (IM)**, a terrorist organisation, banned in the year 2010 by the Government of India. The group vows to demolish all faiths except Islam in India and has been responsible for several deadly attacks including the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blasts killing as many as 50 people.

Recently, the Government of India has identified 65 terror groups as being active in the country. The list of terrorist groups active in various states shows Jammu and Kashmir has five such organisations, including Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-e-Mujahideen and Al Badr. In the North-east, Assam has 11, Meghalaya four, Tripura two, Nagaland four, Mizoram two and Manipur 34. Babbar Khalsa International, Khalistan Zindabad Force and Khalistan Commando Force are the three militant groups active in Punjab. Various terrorist groups like LeT, IM, HM, HuJI, and Al Badr are also active in the hinterland of the country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi.

Countering Terrorism and Prospective Solutions-

A number of intelligence, military, and police organizations within the Indian Government contribute to counterterrorism efforts. These include state-run police forces, special security forces to guard airports and other high-profile targets, and paramilitary forces that patrol the borders and assist the police when necessary. India has also several intelligence agencies that monitor terrorist activities. The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is the external intelligence agency and the Intelligence Bureau (IB), a division of the Home Affairs Ministry, collects intelligence inside India. A Joint Intelligence Committee analyses intelligence data from RAW and IB as well as from a handful of military intelligence agencies, which usually provide tactical information gathered while carrying out counterterrorist operations.

On the legislative front, a plethora of laws have made its way over the years since Independence. In addition to the Indian Penal Code, 1860, which criminalizes acts such as waging war against the Government of India, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 has been in vogue to curb unlawful activities of associations. In

1980, the National Security Act was enacted for countering the threat posed by insurgency and for maintenance of internal security. The first legislative effort by the Government to define and counter terrorist activities, especially in the light of growing terrorist violence in Punjab, was in 1987 with the passing of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act 1987. Amidst growing concerns over its misuse by the authorities, the Act found little support and was allowed to lapse in May 1995. The Prevention of Terrorism Act was enacted in 2002 with the objective of strengthening anti- terrorism operations in the country. However, the Act met with the same fate and was repealed in 2004.

A significant milestone was achieved with the setting up of a specialised agency, National Investigation Agency, under the Act of 2008. The NIA constitutes an investigation agency at the national level to investigate and prosecute offences affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, security of States, friendly relations with foreign States etc. The last few years have also witnessed notable judicial pronouncements prescribing stern punishments for terrorists including capital sentence.

Prospective Remedial Measures-

It is necessary to examine the prevailing internal environment which has a direct bearing on the growth of terrorism in the country. The realities in this context are the fact that our consolidation as a secular, federal and democratic state is still evolving; and that the diversity of our multi-ethnic / multi religious society is often exploited by fundamentalist forces. The absence of adequate employment opportunities and unequal development, the resultant poverty and the accompanying frustration has encouraged unemployed youth to take up criminal acts.

The involvement of huge money is a specific inducement to take to militancy. The other significant points accelerating terrorism are:

- Ineffective Anti-Terrorism legislation and misplaced judicial-activism.
- Uneven socio- economic development.
- Demographic Displacement resulting in social / ethnic tension.
- “Structural” inadequacies in the state apparatus, namely:
 - Weaknesses in the intelligence structure – human as well as technical.
 - Inadequate modernisation of Police, PMF and Armed Forces.
 - Unimaginative media management and coverage.

- Reactive response and slow governmental decision-making, lack of clear strategy and policy on Internal Security.
- Amongst the existing external environment, the regional / sub continental realities that merit consideration are:
- Our situation between the 5Golden Crescent and the 5Golden Triangle leading to a heavy influx of drugs and arms.
- A hostile nuclear Pakistan with a land border of 3,400 km, who sponsors 5state-terrorism and fundamentalist forces.
- The unresolved border with China (5,800 km), a country that has active military and nuclear co-operation with Pakistan.
- A long sea border (7,700 km), prone to pirating and smuggling.
- A contiguous and porous border with unequal smaller SAARC nations such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, with accompanying problems such as illegal migration, trade and smuggling in the border belt and the resultant social tensions.
- It is clear that a long-term strategy is required to counter terrorism. It has to be comprehensively addressed on all fronts, political, economic, social and military. This strategy needs to be evolved from our national aims and objectives to protect 'core values':
- Consolidate as a secular, federal democratic state with freedom of speech, equality and justice.
- Protect sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Promote socio-economic growth and development.

CONCLUSION

Justice Krishna Iyer opined "the true cause of terrorism is the struggle between social justice and systematic suppression". Terrorism needs to be condemned and countered by the States and India has taken necessary measures over the years towards that end. The State has also initiated welfare measures to address the socio-economic inequalities and imbalances plaguing the country but more needs to be done. "The responsibility

for the security of our land, and the fight against terrorism, are patriotic duties and the integrity of the state must be preserved and terrorism – the sworn enemy of civil society – which respects neither life, nor law nor any human rights, must be suppressed. Yet we must fight this just war using means that are righteous, that is in conformity with our Constitution, our law ... This is no easy task. But then it is never easy to live by ideals and it is the ideals that distinguish civilized people from barbarians."

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