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Terrorism in India: Domestic and External Influence

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Abstract

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, Ethno nationalist, Fundamentalism, Radicalisation

Introduction

Conventionally prepared to escort the tight security border and people from the organised military and intruders is a decades old threat to the nation. Same nation is now being persistently challenged to defend themselves against virulent ideologies and individuals. Terrorism has the capability to cripple economies, social order and create un-expectable global crises, even dragging countries into wars. It is not as if there are no precedents in history. The first incident of terrorist attack occurred when a Serbian terrorist murdered Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and plunged the world into World War I, one of the bloodiest war in human **history**.¹ Emergence of modern terrorism has been a complex phenomenon which is arising due to political, religious, ethnic and ideological differences among countries.

India is not exempt to this phenomenon. Ironically, India's commitment to multi-diversity, plurality, secularism and tolerance for multiple faiths and beliefs has made it a convenient target of many terror **groups**.² India is sole witness of violent internal and terrorist outfit for last three decades. Jammu and Kashmir is a hot spot for Islamic separatist and jihadist, ethno nationalist are claimed to be in north-eastern states of India and importantly Maoism are rampant in the core areas of country's east, west and south who have been persistently demanding the incumbent government to pursue their **mandate**.³

Emergence of catastrophic terrorism in India

Accompanying with India's growth in economy, population and military, the country also witnessed the presence of insurgency. Although, India faced insurgency issues in the North East in Nagaland in the early 1950s just after independence of India, but current terrorism dates back to 1980s when the movement took its place in Khalistan. It was a Sikh religiously motivated separatist movement which wanted a separate state for the them called **Khalistan**.⁴ This period, which saw the birth of modern terrorism in India, gradually transmitted to grasp in other parts of India like Jammu and Kashmir, the North-East states and the western, central and eastern parts of India. Overall, it was endemic across in India. Most of these movements seek independence from India while some sought to destabilise the Indian government. External support system of India's immediate neighbourhood was one of the vital factor which helped these rebellious groups to rejuvenate and aggravated their campaign against the government.

The external support for terrorists comes from Pakistan, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh. India shares land borders with all these countries. Of these, Pakistan has been the most active and vehement supporter of anti-Indian groups with even

elements from the Government-owned Intelligence wing actively involved in aiding and abetting these groups. It is known to have supported Sikh militancy in the 1980's in India and gradually created support structures for Islamic militancy in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir.⁵ It is now documented that it is also supporting some groups in the North Eastern region of India. Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan have also known to have provided safe haven to North Eastern Insurgent groups.

Prevalence of Major Incidents in India

Terrorism is a global phenomenon which has raised the eyebrow of all nations. So in this context India is not exempt from such catastrophic menace which has drag it to the negotiation table with other nations to vanish it from the social scenario. India is a country which confronts several types of threats from the insurgents. It may be categorised into mainly four types: those are 1. Relating to insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, 2. Relating to separatist movement in north eastern regions, 3. Continuance violence prevailed by the left wing extremists and 4. Terrorist incidents in urban and semi urban area in India.⁶ Let's begin with the terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir. In order to understand critical condition of Kashmir it genuinely needs to overlook the historical background. During independence of India, Jammu and Kashmir was a princely state and it was accessed by the then maharaja Hari Singh on 26th October 1947 with the approval of govt. of India act 1935 and Indian independence act of 1947 and international law and was complete and irrevocable. But Pakistan consistently violate the U.N. reorganization of Kashmir to India. Even in 1963 Pakistan also offered a part of its POK territory to china. So there was a demographic change in Pakistani area and allowed non-Kashmiris to settle in that place. Moreover when the terrorist activities was sponsored by Pakistan, all the Kashmiri pundits were forced to fly to Jammu and other part of India. Being adamant on its points Pakistan has already taken four times initiative to annex Kashmir with him since 1948. And this is the pivotal reason for all volatility in that region.⁷

Importantly in 1999, Indian solders successfully expelled all Pakistani intruders from Kargil area. In 2000, the state Assembly adopted a resolution accepting the report of the State Autonomy Committee that recommended greater autonomy. It was summarily rejected by the Central government. In 2000, the Hizb-ul Mujahedeen offered a ceasefire to facilitate talks with the Central government.⁸

Later that year, the security forces suspended combat operation against rebels during the holy month of Ramadan. The ceasefire continued for six months till 23 May 2001. All these turmoil, violence and riot subsided from 2002 onwards. But again the state entered into the civil unrest when the state government decided to transfer 100 acres forest land to Shree Amaranth shrine board in 2008. The civil unrest broke out again in 2010 between civilian protestors and security forces and lasted over three months (June to September) killing over 150 people, mostly civilians.⁹ Syed Ali Shah Geelani-led faction of the all Parties Hurriyat Conference was the mastermind of that unrest. Following the violence an eight point peace formula was adopted by the central government. This was followed by the appointment of three interlocutors to begin "sustained and uninterrupted dialogue" with "all shades of opinion" in the state towards a resolution of Kashmir problem.¹⁰ Separatist movement in north eastern region profoundly endemic in Mizoram and Nagaland since mid-seventeens. The goal of the separatist movement is to form a new state or join with other being toppled the existing state government.¹¹ The first movement in northeast broke out among Nagas. Concentrated mainly hilly areas of the eastern part of Assam and quite vicinity of Burma was mostly Christian limited to 200,000 of population which was divided into sixteen tribes.¹² Being a different ethnic group, they staged protest since 1954 against the Indian government for recognition of a new state like Pakistan. Determined to wage war they adopted the guerrilla tactics. After a long hiccup between Nagas and Indian government a ceasefire come to in 1964. Despite of prolong violation and violence the insurgent subsided in 1975 when the Nagas accepted the territory and the constitution of India.¹⁴

Originally Mizoram was a part of Assam which ultimately separated from it. But unlikely Nagaland, it did not initially seek independence. Rather it demanded for autonomous and financial aid from the Indian government to uplift its marginalized class. Their contentious accrued when the state government decided to accept Assamese as the state language. Armed insurrection took place in the mid-1960s and carried on for the next two decades before a peace agreement signed in 1986 between the insurgents and the central **government**.¹⁵

The final and most dangerous one is the left wing extremism called Maoism and naxalism which inherent the devastating ideology from Mao of china. These groups are so active in central and eastern part of **India**.¹⁶ Above all, these groups have adopted divergent approaches to destroy the society. While religious fundamentalism aims at to attack on the life of civilian and the common property on the other part some extremist groups demand their rights and privileges through circumventing the **laws**.¹⁶ And the Maoist are being deprived from their status accept anti-nationalist approaches to topple the state apparatus.

Though it is unnoticed but the urban and semi urban areas have registered the highest loss of life and property by the terrorist and armed revolution of the state. From March 1993 to the end of 2010, 62 incidents were recorded. A total of 1467 persons were killed and 4497 persons were injured in these **incidents**.¹⁷ All these incidents primarily occurred in the states of Andhra Pradesh (A.P.), Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, New Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and West Bengal (WB). Delhi, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh drew 70% of incidents occurred in these **states**.¹⁷

Influence of domestic terrorist group

Indian society is broadly splited into several religion, culture, ethnic groups and language community. All these factors provide a conducive fertile ground for domestic terrorism across India. Among all, religious groups and political party use it as the safety weapons to satisfy their self-interest. Looking at the domestic terrorist incidents happened during 1998 to 2006, India ranks on third next to Iraq, Israel and Palestine. In terms of victims of domestic terrorist attacks India ranks second than to Iraq with 10,926 casualties. Currently 74 terrorist groups are active in **India**.¹⁸

In countries with deep social segmentation, parties plays polarization and radicalization instead of moderation and inclusion. Mainly parties and political systems generate such condition under which the local politician urge violent and terrorist activities and help to shape their **fate**.¹⁹ The root cause of domestic terrorism in a democratic country is the lack of liberties, segregation of power distribution and poor rule of law. More often the power vacuum in a state is exploited by the terrorist group to foster their training and maintain safe haven for launching terrorist **campaign**.²⁰ Moreover, rapid growth of modernization, privatization and industrialization give a scope for emergence of ideological terrorism. It normally brings a drastic demographic changes in one generation, where people those who adore the glorious past and become nostalgia immediately turns to **terrorist**.²¹ Illegitimate and corrupt government often gives rise to terrorism. Importantly the unwillingness and failure of the state to coordinate the dissident groups often propels to pursue the extremist path. Large group of highly educated people with few scope for employment within the blocked system tend to feel alienated and frustrated. So these socially excluded groups being harassed by the state entered into the hell of terrorism in search for better alternative carer.

Religion and terrorism share an age old history. Terrorism basically on religion basis has two dimensions. One is secular terrorist and other one is religious terrorist whose constituent and ideologies are contradict to each other. Secular terrorist on one hand regard indiscriminate violence is immoral and unproductive and religious terrorist consider this violence is not only moral but also indispensable for attainment of the **goal**.²² However the home-grown terrorist group in India can be traced back to 1993 but reached a considerable momentum in 2007 when a group of Muslim insurgent youth named Indian

mujahidin (IM) claimed responsible for the bomb attack on U.P. court. Following the incident there were several disastrous riots occurred in 2008 mainly at Jaipur (May), Bangalore (July), Ahmedabad (July), and New Delhi (September). These inhuman act is not constraint only in IM rather expanded to LeT, student Islamic movement of India (SIMI) and even Pakistan's ISI has also a good rapport with this heinous activities. It normally throws a light that the presence of radical groups in India is an alarming rate.

External terrorist linkage in India

Pakistan is the highest antagonistic neighbour which share half of the border of western side of India. Among all the neighbouring, he is the most disturbing state that always create unrest in the nation. Many terrorist groups are being nurtured in the border of these two nations. LeT is the most furious organization which has created a havoc across the world generally and in India particularly. Other radicalist groups which have been intriguing to jihad in Kashmir are JeM, Al-Qaeda who are prominently active in [India](#).²³ The presence of operational Islamic terrorist in states outside Jammu and Kashmir shows the spread of jihadi terrorism to areas of J&K. it is also proved that in this gruesome jihadi, Pakistan's main inter service intelligence (ISI) has joined hand to give the final shape. Which is likely to have facilitated the creation of LeT and its early [activities](#).²³

Apart from Pakistan sponsored terrorist, India also faces the same worst situation from the north eastern side. Terrorist from north-eastern have established their camp in Bhutan. There are 30 largest terrorist camp in that small country with the united liberation front of India (ULFA) itself owning 13, the national democratic front of Bodoland (NDFB) has 12 and Kamtapur liberation organization controlling 5 camps (Banerjee: 2004). The Bhutanese government has attempted many times to flee these anti-Indian terrorist groups from their land but could not succeeded yet. Although some fled from the land finally took the shelter in Bangladesh and Myanmar who has already been hosting some other extremist group in their territory. Bangladesh on the other hand has given refugee to anti-Indian insurgent as early as 1985 groups like ULFA. China is also not in the back foot to create adversary condition for India by pledging anti-Indian action with other neighbouring countries.

However India's neighbour support to terrorism against India for several reasons. Pakistan assist terrorism as a state policy, where Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar like countries allow the refugee out of their domestic political compulsion.

Conclusion

It needs a strong determined and challenging task to fight against terrorist. For which devoted efforts are required by various responsible agencies, both national and international. To fight a successful war against cross border terrorism, an international political support and cooperation and coordination among the neighbouring States is dire required. But it is bizarre that instead of prohibition various states are fostering cross border terrorism. And even the International Law regarding the restriction and annihilation of these acts are not as strong as it should be. India-Pakistan relations have already deteriorated over period of time even though consistent efforts by both nations are being initiated for peace, harmony and tranquillity. However, due to ideological, religion and historical differences not much has been gained by both sides. More importantly, Pakistan policy to degrade India's conventional superiority is the main stumbling block in all peace process. And ISI of Pakistan is laying a rivalry role and urge one point agenda of spreading terrorism in India by all means, and unless India takes all necessary actions to check its activities now, the threat of nuclear terrorism looms ahead.

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