

Terrorism: Basics and Essentials

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Terrorism is a term that is seen in the news regularly. It is a broad term encompassing a wide variety of events and concepts. Terrorism affects the world deeply and India particularly has been a victim of various terror acts perpetrated by different groups. The term terrorism is very broad and there is no single definition of the term. Different people and organization have come up with their own definitions of what constitutes terrorism.

Generally the term terrorism indicates a criminal and violent activity performed by an individual, group of individuals or an organisation in order to strike terror among the general public, and send messages to the public and government to fulfil a certain goal. Although the victims of the terror act may be a few people (depending upon the event), the intended target is usually larger than the number of victims. The terrorists' purpose is to send a strong message to the larger public and the government. They generally claim responsibility after conducting a violent act so as to let people know of their power and capacity and inflict terror upon people.

Terrorist Activities

Terrorists indulge in a variety of activities for primarily 3 things:

- 1) Generate fear among people.
- 2) Create publicity for their causes.
- 3) Try to convince people that the government is powerless against them.

Terrorists and terror groups indulge in random killing/assassinations, bombing in public places, suicide attacks, kidnapping, extortions, destroying public property, infrastructure-hijacking, cyber-attacks etc.

They also engage in armed insurgencies against governments. The aims of political terror groups include toppling established governments, having a better representation for group of people, seceding from a country, acquiring a share in the government etc. Many other terror groups exist solely for making money and expanding illegal criminal empires. Many groups of organised crimes are also labelled terrorist groups.



Terrorism: - Origin of the term

The term 'terrorism' has been derived from French 'terrorisme', meaning 'dread', related to the Latin verb 'terrere'. The word was first used in the context of the French Revolution in France, especially in reference to the 'Region of Terror'. Many cite the Irish Republican Brotherhood (1848-1929) as the first organisation to use modern terrorist techniques.

Types of Terrorism

Although there are several types of terrorism, we can classify terrorism into the following brand types:

1. Dissent Terrorism: - Groups that rebel against the government of a country, for example the LTTE in Sri-Lanka.
2. Left wing / Right wing terrorism: - Terror groups that adhere to ideological leaning on the extreme end of the Left-Right political spectrum. For example, Left-Right extremists in India.



3. Religious terrorism: Terror groups based on religious ideology. For example ISIS.

4. Criminal terrorism - Terror groups engaged in terror acts for criminal profit.

Terrorism can also be classified on the basis of mode of operation, such as cyber terrorism, inter-border terrorism, bio-terrorism etc.

Cross-Border Terrorism

Cross-border terrorism is when the soil of one country is used to create terror or engage in terrorism against its neighbouring countries across the border.

India is a victim of cross-border terrorism, whose source is Pakistan.

Factors Favoring Cross-Border Terrorism

1. Porous borders: These indicate borders, which are not highly protected. India's border with its neighbours cannot be physically sealed or wired due to extreme terrain and other factors. Terror groups take advantage of such porous borders and infiltrate into other countries.

2. Support from non-state actors:- India's troubled relationship with Pakistan fuelled the latter's secessionist groups, which are provided financial support, weapons and training by the establishment in Pakistan.

3. Internal Support - Many times terrorist find support from the local population due to varying reasons like ideological or ethnic affinity, fear monetary etc.

4. Corrupt Officials: - Unfortunately, many officials in the establishment of a country can abet terrorists and allow their illegal entry for terror activities, purely for financial benefits.

Terrorism In India

The current law in India enacted to tackle terrorism of all kinds is the Unlawful Activities (Preventions) Amendment Act. India faces terrorism from secessionists in Kashmir, the Northeast and Punjab, ranging from left-wing extremist groups in Central, Central-eastern and southern India. India is one of the country most affected by terrorism in the world. According to the Institute for

Economics and Peace, India was the most affected country in 2018;

- From 2001 to 2018, more than 8000 people have died in terror attacks in India.

- Jammu and Kashmir is the region most affected by terrorist activities in the country.

- The Global Terrorism Index 2019 also placed India on the 7th rank in terms of the most affected countries by terrorism.

It was after the 26/11 attack on Mumbai by terrorist groups that the government formed the in National investigation Agency (NIA). India has a network of intelligence agencies such as the Research and Analysis wing (RAW) the Intelligence

Bureau (IB) etc. which are involved in fighting terrorism both inside and outside the country.

India is also a member of the FATF (Financial Action Task Force), an organisation that establishes global standards for combating money-laundering and terror financing.

Conclusion

While the exceptional legal measures adopted by the colonial state to suppress 'terrorist' attacks in the 1920s and 1930s attracted the sustained criticism of India's mainstream national-list politicians, these measures did not disappear

when the country gained Independence at the stroke of midnight on 15 August 1947. To the contrary, the spectre of 'terrorism' would haunt the independent nation-states of India and Pakistan - and later Bangladesh - for the next seventy years and beyond.

