An Analytical Perspective on the Threat of Terrorism in the Indian Context

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Abstract

According to the latest report, the 9th Global Terrorism Index (GTI), India is ranked 12th among the countries most affected by terrorism. Terrorism has the potential to cause widespread panic and destabilise any nation's established order. Terrorist activity has increased dramatically in recent years, posing a threat to every country. Terrorism's violent activity has not left India untouched. India is more vulnerable to terrorism due to its diverse nature and proximity to enemy countries such as Pakistan. This article seeks to comprehend the impact of terrorism on the social fabric and democratic values enshrined in its political system. The author conducted a systematic review to critically assess the outcomes of terrorism in the Indian context, focusing primarily on the social and political dimensions. The discussion in this paper reflects that while India has improved in GTI over the last five years, there is still a high possibility of terrorist activity.

Keywords: violence, political disruption, terror groups, fear,

Introduction

In the recent past, terrorism has become an issue of great concern in the contemporary world. Enders and Sandler (2002) defined terrorism as,

> "The premeditated use or threat of extra normal violence or brutality by sub-national groups to obtain a political, religious, or ideological objective through intimidation of a large audience, usually not directly involved with the decision making." (p. 145)

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) is a tool that was developed by the Institute for Economics and Peace to assess the effects that terrorist attacks have had. Not too long ago, the 9th Edition of the Global Terrorism Index was made available to the public. It included a comprehensive summary of the most important global trends for 163 countries (which covers 99.7 percent of the world's population) as well as patterns in terrorism over the course of the past several decades.The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) assigned a score to each nation based on the number of terrorist attacks, hostages taken, and people hurt due to terrorist attacks. This allowed the GTI to calculate the effects that terrorism has had on society. TerrorismTracker is an additional resource that offers complete records of terrorist attacks beginning on January 1, 2007. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report for 2022 states that the number of people killed as a result of terrorist attacks fell by 1.2%, reaching a total of 7,142. This is approximately one-third of the deaths that occurred during 2015 when the number of deaths caused by terrorist attacks reached its highest point. The reduction in the amount of damage caused by terrorism was proportional to the lessening of the number of lives that were taken as a direct result of the terrorist attacks. There were 86 nations that witnessed an improvement, while there were 19 nations that witnessed a deterioration.

On the other hand, there were 5,226 reported attacks around the world, which is a 17% increase from the previous year. Because of this, the typical number of fatalities resulting from an assault decreased from 1.6 to 1.4 over the course of a year. Both Russia and the rest of Eurasia were the regions that went through the most transition during this time period.The *Islamic State (IS)*, *Al-Shabaab*, the *Taliban*, and *JamaatNusrat Al-Islam walMuslimeen* were the top four

terrorist organisations in terms of the number of people they killed in 2021. (JNIM). These four organisations were responsible for 3,364 deaths due to terrorist acts in 2021, which accounts for 47% of all deaths. Since 2007, the vast majority of insurgent groups operating in the context of India have been operational.

Top 20 Countries Impact by Terrorism

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
1	Afghanistan	9.109	↔
2	Iraq	8.511	↔
3	Somalia	8.398	↔
4	Burkina Faso	8.270	↓ 2
5	Syria	8.250	↔
6	Nigeria	8.233	↑ 2
7	Mali	8.152	↔
8	Niger	7.856	↓ 4
10	Pakistan	7.825	↑ 2
11	Cameroon	7.432	↔
12	India	7.432	↑ 2
13	Mozambique	7.432	↑ 4
14	Colombia	7.068	↔
15	Egypt	6.932	↑ 2
16	Philippines	6.790	↑ 1
17	Democratic Republic of the Congo	6.733	↓ 5
18	Chile	6.496	↓ 5
19	Chad	6.379	↑ 3

Figure 1 Top 20 Countries Impacted by Terriorism (Source: Gobal Terrorism Index-2022)

When explaining the emergence of (transnational) terrorism, Krieger and Meierrieks (2011) point out that institutional factors generally appear more important than economic ones.The devastating impact that terrorism can have on the world is illustrated by the far-reaching and protracted aftereffects of the terrorist attacks that occurred in New York City on September 11, 2001.Beck (2008) conducted research to determine whether or not the social movement theory could contribute a necessary conceptual framework for comprehending terrorism. Huddy, Feldman, Capelos, and Provost (2002) researched to determine the extent to which personal and national threats influence perceptions of the consequences of terrorism and potential solutions to the problem. Even though perceived personal and national threats are related, the finding clearly distinguishes between the two types of threats. Although it had little effect on personal

behaviours designed to minimise risk, the perceived personal threat did not influence the perceived economic consequences of terrorism. However, it did affect the perceived economic consequences of terrorism. In general, the findings suggest that the effects of personal threats are limited.Piazza (2009) demonstrates that terrorism is not necessarily the result of low levels of economic development in India by analysing the distribution of terrorist attacks and deaths that are caused by terrorism across the states of India. Instead, it is made worse by political conflicts that have not been resolved and are poorly managed. According to the findings of the study, regions that are home to ongoing political conflicts that are not being resolved effectively have a higher incidence of instances of terrorist activity.Johansen'scointegration analysis was the method that Ullah, Qingxiang, Ali, and Anees (2018) used to validate the hypothesis that there is a correlation in the long run between terrorism in India and unemployment in Pakistan. According to the study's findings, two factors contributing to the rise of terrorist activity in Pakistan are unemployment and terrorism in India. According to

Ross(1993), there are three primary explanations for why terrorist acts occur, which include structural, psychological, and rational. The cultural, environmental, social, political, and economic structures of a society are what, according to the structural approach, are responsible for laying the groundwork for acts of terrorism within that society. The psychological underpinnings of terrorism shed light on why people initially join terrorist groups after carefully weighing the benefits and drawbacks of their actions. Individuals may conclude that it is in their best interest to participate in acts of terrorism, according to the rational choice theory of terrorism.Geys and Qari (2017) researched to investigate the causal effect that the bombings in Stockholm on December 2010 had on public opinion in Sweden. This study found a link between terrorist events and individuals' social trust.Parida, Bhardwaj, and Chowdhury (2015) used annual data spanning 1980-2011 to investigate the impact that terrorist activities had on the amount of foreign exchange that India earned from tourism and the number of tourists who visited the country. The finding indicated an inverse relationship between instances of terrorist activity and the number of tourists visiting India from other countries.

Asthana (2010) highlighted the objectives of terrorist groups, which include the following:

(1) fostering an atmosphere of precariousness all over the world;

(2) accumulating support from communities of a kind that can be found everywhere on the planet.

(3) drawing attention to themselves and garnering publicity by committing acts of violence and enlisting the aid of the media in order to increase the severity of their violent actions.

Piazza (2009) identified the six sources of political conflict that contribute to terrorism in India—

 (i)   separatist movements
 (ii)   ethnic conflict
 (iii) communal conflict
 (iv)   the presence of scheduled castes and tribes
 (v)   high population growth
 (vi)   the phenomenon of stateless areas

Geys and Qari (2017) state that singular acts of terrorism have only a limited and fleeting impact on existing social attitudes. Gaibulloev and Sandler (2009) provide a quantitative analysis of terrorism and civil war's effects on the growth of per capita income in Asia from 1970 to 2004. According to the findings of this investigation, transnational terrorist attacks have a significant impact on growth-limiting factors. It was discovered that transnational terrorism hinders growth by increasing the amount of money that needs to be spent by the government. Furthermore, it was discovered that internal conflict poses the greatest threat to growth, more than twice as much as transnational terrorism. The dominant influence is the crowding-in of government spending due to conflict variables. Conflict variables are associated with lower investment shares and higher levels of spending by the government.

India faced a never-ending stream of challenges from the time it first came into existence in 1947 until the establishment of Pakistan in the form of various insurgency movements and violent acts. Since then, India has developed into one of the most consistently targeted countries in the

world by Islamic extremists. This is because India became actively involved in the war against terrorism around that time, which was just getting started. It is more likely to happen in a democratic nation like India, which is famous all over the world for the diversity of its religious and ethnic communities.Terrorist Activities in the past had both an internal and an external impact on India, disrupting the country's relationships with other nations. The root of national insurgent groups may be connected with an external terror group to create violence and impact the country's development. Terrorist organisations support internal insurgent groups from the outside, providing them with economic funding, arms, and other equipment to disrupt the country's political and social environment. In this way, terrorism can be said to have a global presence and can have effects all over the world.

The Indian Republic appears to be aiming for a sustained and coordinated assault by terrorist organisations that use religious labels and receive support from outside India's borders. The terrorist attack in Mumbai in November 2008, which resulted in the loss of dozens of lives, and the wave of bomb attacks that occurred throughout India's cities in the same year, which resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives, demonstrate how susceptible India is to terrorist acts.Although the Mumbai attacks were the bloodiest in a series of incidents across India, such attempts have occurred at a frequency never seen before in the region's history. While the Mumbai attacks were the most dramatic of the bloodshed, they were not the only ones. One cannot deny that India faces the threat of terrorism from other domestic groups. Among such groups are the Naxalites, Maoists who operate in the states of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, and others; Hindu extremists; and various separatist groups. The Naxalbari movement of militant peasants against wealthy landowners is one of the greatest threats to India's internal stability and security (Prakash,2009; Jain,1995). The Communist Party of India - Maoist, or CPI-M for short, is an Indian separatist organisation under the Communist Party of India's banner. Terrorist organisations have mastered the art of being purposefully unpredictable to have a more significant psychological impact and instil fear and anxiety in the people they intend to victimise. They accomplish this by acting in ways that contradict their stated goals.

Conclusion

The devastation caused by terrorism is felt worldwide and permeates every component of the human community. Because of its violent nature, it contributes to the unease and instability that already exists in society. As a result of recent uprisings in India, the authority of the state and the legitimacy of its rule have come under intense scrutiny. This comes as the problem of terrorism continues to get worse daily. Taking preventative steps against terrorism was given higher priority than addressing other concerns. The effectiveness of ongoing efforts to beef up security in preparation for the emergence of new terrorist dangers is constantly being assessed. Even though these measures have the potential to stop terrorist attacks, there is still a chance that terrorist attacks will occur at some point in the future. It is impossible to overstate the significance of developing a comprehensive and effective strategy to combat terrorism that focuses on its causes rather than its perpetrators. To summarise, terrorism is a fluid, dynamic, and highly complex phenomenon; as a result, for governments to combat it effectively, they require an innovative and multifaceted strategy.

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