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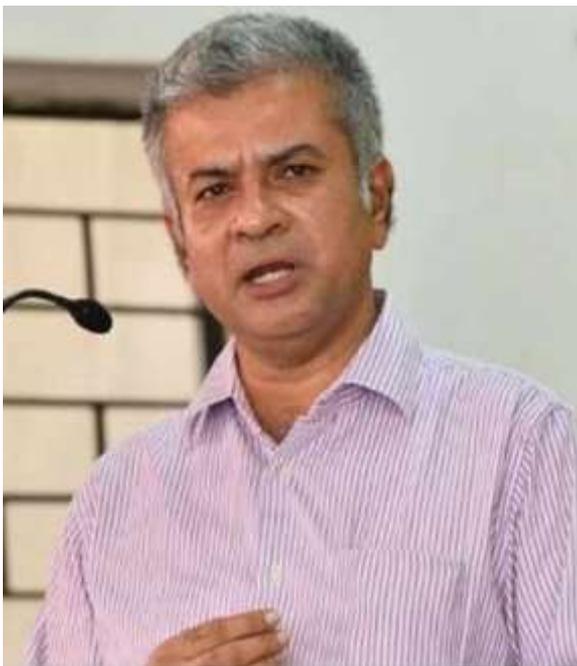
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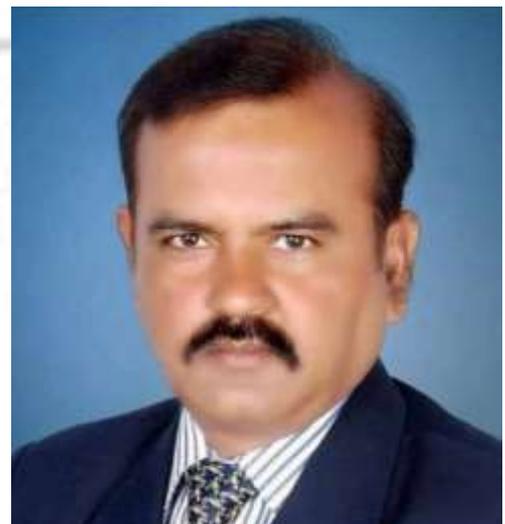
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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provided dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

REASONS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF EMERGENCE OF TERRORISM NAXALISM IN INDIA

AUTHORED BY - VIBHOR CHOUDHARY

ABSTRACT:

The origins of terrorism in India may be traced to the colonial period under British governance, during which divisive strategies like "divide and rule" were routinely implemented to exert control over a large and heterogeneous populace. The most detrimental legacy of this technique was the entrenchment of communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims. The British not only strengthened religious identities inside administrative and political frameworks but also cultivated mutual antagonism through separate electorates and communal representation in governance systems.

Post-independence, the nascent Indian state encountered both immediate and enduring obstacles stemming from the establishment of Pakistan as a distinct Muslim nation. Communalism, which had already established itself during colonial rule, intensified in the post-independence era, resulting in intermittent episodes of communal violence and creating a conducive environment for radical ideologies to arise. The inaugural conflict between India and Pakistan in 1947–48, centered on the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, initiated a protracted and antagonistic relationship between the two nations.

Concurrently, in areas impacted by enduring strife, such as Kashmir and certain districts of the North-East, the sentiment of Indian nationalism started to diminish among segments of the populace. Alienation, along with insufficient political representation and perceived injustices, resulted in the emergence of anti-national attitudes. This climate, characterized by political instability, economic underdevelopment, and socio-cultural alienation, created an optimal setting for terrorist organizations to enlist youth, disseminate propaganda, and entrench their influence.

Terrorism in India is not solely a consequence of cross-border infiltration or religious extremism; it is intricately connected to the socio-political context influenced by historical injustices, colonial legacies, communal tensions, and regional disparities. A comprehensive grasp of this context is crucial for formulating effective counter-terrorism policies that transcend militaristic strategies and tackle the underlying roots of radicalization.

KEYWORDS:

Communalism, Terrorism, Naxalism, Independence, Political, Religious, Neighbouring, Nations, Terrorism in India, Anti-terrorism laws, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), National Investigation Agency (NIA), Counter-terrorism, British colonial legacy, Human rights and national security, AFSPA

INTRODUCTION:

Terrorism has become a fundamental global concern of the 21st century, representing a substantial threat to national security, public order, and economic progress worldwide. It is no longer a limited phenomena; it has evolved into a worldwide crisis, impacting nations irrespective of their geographic, political, or cultural differences. Currently, a minimum of 48 nations are contending with terrorism in various manifestations, enduring its repercussions either intermittently or continuously. The countries most affected are the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, India, South Korea, Israel, Argentina, Portugal, Spain, and Poland. Each of these nations has encountered terrorism-related episodes that have undermined their domestic stability and compelled them to enhance counter-terrorism policies.¹

India has experienced several phases and manifestations of terrorism in recent decades. The origins of contemporary terrorism in India may be traced back roughly 28 years, although insurgencies and violent movements commenced considerably earlier. The late 1970s signified the onset of extensive militant activity in Punjab, characterized by the rise of the Sikh separatist movement advocating for the establishment of an independent Khalistan state. This movement intensified into violent militancy by 1979, resulting in extensive disruption and fatalities. Nonetheless, via a synthesis of military operations, political strategies, and intelligence collaboration, the Indian government successfully curtailed the movement by the mid-1980s, with the threat substantially reduced by 1984.²

Shortly thereafter, in 1987, a new phase of terrorism commenced in the Jammu and Kashmir region, mostly fueled by separatist ideology and bolstered by external actors. This insurgency resulted in the militarization of the region, extensive civilian displacement, human rights

¹ United Nations Office On Drugs And Crime, *"Introduction To International Terrorism"*, 2018.

² Terrorism in India & Successful Counter-Terrorism Strategies, *available at:* <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/terrorism-counterterrorism-strategies-indian-chronicle/> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

abuses, and sustained instability. Although the severity of terrorist activity in Kashmir steadily diminished by the early 2000s, it continues to be a hazardous territory today.

In 1993, Mumbai, the financial center of India, experienced a catastrophic surge of urban terrorism due to a sequence of coordinated bomb explosions that impacted the city. These assaults were executed by multinational mafia syndicates and signified the onset of a persistent menace from organized criminal networks with worldwide influence. This type of terrorism, which combines criminal activity with ideological objectives, remains a significant threat to urban security.³

Concurrently, left-wing extremism, referred to as Naxalism, intensified, particularly in the central and eastern regions of the nation. Naxalite violence, stemming from land rights disputes, ethnic displacement, and economic disparity, has experienced a concerning comeback in recent years, especially in impoverished rural regions characterized by low state presence and weak administration.

The human toll of terrorism in India is immense. Data indicates that roughly 60,000 individuals have perished in Kashmir, 30,000 in Punjab throughout peak militancy, an additional 30,000 owing to Naxalite violence, and 3,000 from mafia-related terrorism, culminating in a total death toll of nearly 99,000. Nagendra Vijay, a distinguished author, has emphasized that the resources allocated to counterterrorism and the lives sacrificed may have facilitated the establishment of a completely new nation.⁴

Contemporary security analysts resonate with this apprehension. K. Narayan, a distinguished national security adviser, recognizes terrorism as a critical element exacerbating India's political weaknesses. Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh accurately cautioned that India faces the dual challenges of terrorism and communalism, with both internal and external entities intentionally attempting to obstruct the nation's trajectory toward peace and prosperity.⁵

³ Fawzan Husain, "How the 1993 blasts changed Mumbai forever", *available at*: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-33713846> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

⁴ Fayaz Bukhari, "At least 20 feared killed in militant attack on tourists in Indian Kashmir, security sources say", <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/one-killed-seven-injured-militant-attack-indias-kashmir-india-today-tv-says-2025-04-22/> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

⁵ Anand Kumar, "The Terror Challenge in South Asia And Prospect of Regional Cooperation", 2012.

Terrorism in India is not a distinct phenomenon; it arises from interrelated historical, socio-political, and economic factors. Resolving it necessitates a comprehensive strategy that transcends mere security measures and aims to tackle the fundamental roots of alienation, inequality, and unrest.

What is terrorism??

Literal meaning of Terrorism:

As a general concept, terrorism can be interpreted as the act of causing harm, intimidating, or harassing an individual or group of individuals. In essence, non-violence is synonymous with peace and harmony, whereas terrorism is the exact antithesis of non-violence; it is the acceptance of violence for the purpose of driving forward particular objectives.

Violence committed by terrorists is often a kind of armed aggression that is both planned and executed with intent. The majority of the time, it is carried out by groups of individuals who have received training, mostly young people, with the intention of advancing political, religious, or communal outcomes. These crimes are not random; rather, they are deliberate attacks that are directed at particular communities, groups, or even nations, with the intention of instilling terror and gaining influence or control over them respectively.⁶

Keeping the same word for an act that instills dread and damage, terrorism is also known as "terrorism" in English. This is a straightforward explanation of the origin of the name.

The term "covert warfare" is used by certain political analysts to refer to terrorist acts. Frequently, it is a covert conflict that is not stated, and it is fought against a hostile state or a community that is in opposition. Terrorism, on the other hand, is not restricted to only terrorist attacks that are carried out in secret, as stated by various points of view, particularly those that were featured in Government Magazine (issue number 88, page 1). As a result of the fact that it encompasses openly committed acts of violence by recognized aggressors, it can be considered both a covert and a public kind of warfare.⁷

⁶ "War and terrorism", <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/war-and-terrorism> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

⁷ Ian Dudgeon, "Intelligence Support to the Development and Implementation of Foreign Policies and Strategies", Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 2006), pp. 61-80.

Terrorism, in a nutshell, is a multifaceted phenomena in which the use of violence, whether through covert or overt means, is employed as a tactical instrument for the purpose of challenging authority, advancing ideological aims, or disrupting the order of society.

Common reasons behind the emergence of terrorism:

The emergence of terrorism around the world can be attributed to a wide range of factors, each deeply rooted in the unique social, political, and cultural landscapes of different countries. In some cases, nations intentionally foster terrorism as a strategic tool to destabilise or harm rival states. In others, terrorism may arise from religious tensions, sectarian rifts, or ethnic and cultural divides.⁸

Often, local communities that feel marginalised—whether due to religious beliefs, ethnic identity, or cultural differences—may resort to violence as a form of resistance. These groups may inhabit specific regions within a country and feel alienated from the mainstream population or government. When such groups perceive injustice, discrimination, or prolonged persecution, the resulting anger and resentment can fuel terrorist activities. In many instances, such movements gain momentum when supported—either directly or ideologically—by sections of the population who share their grievances.⁹

Terrorism isn't always homegrown, however. External actors, including foreign militants or ideologically motivated invaders, can also instigate or escalate terrorist violence within a country.

Terrorism-Naxalism in India:

Terrorism and Naxalism in India are frequently associated with clandestine support from foreign entities, especially neighboring nations with which India has strained diplomatic and strategic relations. Pakistan is sometimes identified as the principal source of indirect support, although China is occasionally referenced in comparable settings.¹⁰

⁸ *Supra* note 1.

⁹ Seema Khan & Costas Laoutides, “*Trapped between religion and ethnicity: identity politics against the Baloch in Iran and Pakistan*”, 2024.

¹⁰ *Supra* note 5.

Intelligence and security assessments over the years have indicated Pakistan's role in promoting and perpetuating cross-border terrorism. This encompasses supplying financial resources, armaments, secure locations, and military-style instruction to extremist factions aiming to destabilize India, particularly in sensitive areas such as Jammu and Kashmir. Numerous terrorist organizations based in Pakistan are thought to have obtained logistical assistance and ideological backing from factions within the Pakistani government or its intelligence agencies.¹¹

Naxalism, a local rebellion stemming from economic inequality and tribal rights, occasionally overlaps with foreign interests regarding weaponry provision and ideological influence. While mostly a domestic worry, apprehensions have emerged over time regarding the potential for foreign actors to exploit internal discontent to undermine India's internal security.¹²

The proliferation of terrorism and extremism in India must not be viewed in isolation. It is shaped not just by internal socio-political circumstances but also by the strategic aims and clandestine actions of specific neighboring nations.

There are mainly four types of terrorism in India.

Major Forms of Terrorism in India

India has encountered several manifestations of terrorism throughout the years, each originating from diverse reasons and arising in specific places. Some of the most notable forms have included:

Terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir:

Driven by separatist ideas and bolstered by cross-border assistance, especially from Pakistan, terrorism in Kashmir has experienced decades of violent turmoil. The area emerged as a focal point for extremist activity, encompassing assaults on citizens, military personnel, and infrastructure.¹³

¹¹ "Pakistan Army and Terrorism; an unholy alliance", *available at*: <https://www.efsas.org/publications/study-papers/pakistan-army-and-terrorism%3B-an-unholy-alliance/> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

¹² "Internal Security Challenges: Naxalism And Counter Measures", *available at*: <https://sleepyclasses.com/internal-security-india-upsc/> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

¹³ *Supra* note 5.

Sikh Militancy in Punjab:

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Punjab had a violent separatist movement advocating for an independent Sikh state known as Khalistan. The movement resulted in widespread turmoil and fatalities before being subdued through tactical counter-terrorism strategies and public collaboration.¹⁴

Left-Wing Extremism (Naxalism):

Naxalism, or Maoist insurgency, is predominantly focused on central and eastern India. This movement, stemming from socio-economic disparity, land rights conflicts, and tribal marginalization, has developed into a continual internal security threat, with militants assaulting government officials, law enforcement, and public infrastructure.¹⁵

Terrorism Linked to International Networks:

Terrorism Associated with Global Networks: India has been a target of international terrorist organizations and transnational criminal networks. These groups frequently possess foreign money, ideological support, and function transnationally to undermine nations.

The Indian government has made significant strides in combating terrorism in Punjab and has notably enhanced the security landscape in Jammu & Kashmir; nonetheless, concerns persist. The Naxalite movement remains a significant danger in multiple states, and the role of internationally financed terrorist organizations and criminal syndicates has increased in complexity.

The Indian government has officially prohibited 32 extremist organizations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, acknowledging the gravity of the threat. These encompass organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), the Taliban, and Al-Qaeda. The prohibition of these organizations is a component of a comprehensive initiative to dismantle terrorist networks, avert radicalization, and safeguard national security.¹⁶

¹⁴ “What is the Khalistan movement? How is it linked to India-Canada tensions?”, *available at*: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/27/what-is-the-khalistan-movement-how-is-it-linked-to-india-canada-tensions> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

¹⁵ Ministry of Home Affairs, “Naxalmukt Bharat Abhiyan: From Red Zones to Growth Corridors India’s Decisive Battle Against Left Wing Extremism”, April 2025.

¹⁶ Centre Updates List Of Terrorist Organisations, Unlawful Groups, *available at*: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/centre-updates-list-of-terrorist-organisations-unlawful-groups-7940279> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

REASONS BEHIND EMERGENCE OF TERRORISM IN INDIA:

1. Political Tension Delhi and Communalism with Neighbouring Nations:

The roots of terrorism in India can be traced to the British colonial period. The British administration's notorious "divide and rule" tactic promoted religious discord, especially amongst Hindus and Muslims. The communal split, exacerbated during the battle for independence, persisted in intensifying in the years subsequent to the country's liberation in 1947.

The partition of India resulted in the establishment of Pakistan and initiated a protracted and contentious relationship between the two countries. Since gaining independence, India and Pakistan have participated in four significant conflicts, commencing with the initial conflict in 1947–48, predominantly regarding the territorial contention over Kashmir.¹⁷

Concurrently, India encountered a substantial border confrontation with China in 1962. The aftermath of that war, along with persistent geopolitical tensions, prompted both China and Pakistan to endorse insurgent and extremist actions in India to undermine the nation internally.

This historical context established the basis for numerous forms of terrorism in India, many of which persist as threats to national security today.

2. Constraints to prevent democratic terrorism in India:

In India, democratic administrations and political parties frequently encounter a challenging equilibrium between safeguarding national security and sustaining electoral backing. Due to the worry of losing electoral support, they are occasionally reluctant to implement prompt and stringent measures against terrorism. This indecision has occasionally facilitated the rise of radical movements. For example, during the demand for an independent Sikh homeland (Khalistan) in Punjab, political leaders, seeking to protect their electoral support, originally offered concessions.¹⁸

¹⁷ Rebecca M. Kulik, "Partition of India", *available at:*

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Partition-of-India> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

¹⁸ Rajshree Jetly, "The Khalistan Movement In India: The Interplay of Politics and State Power", Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 61-75

Previously, Punjab was partitioned to establish the states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh in response to linguistic and administrative requirements. Nevertheless, each political compromise prompted additional demands, ultimately jeopardizing the nation's unity and integrity. Only as the situation escalated did the government ultimately turn to military force to mitigate terrorism in Punjab.

3. Groups promoting terrorism in India. (Religious Mass-Backward Mass)

Terrorism in India has intricate origins, frequently associated with religious extremism and socio-economic issues among marginalized or disadvantaged communities. Throughout the years, numerous organizations—both national and international—have manipulated religious feelings, regional disparities, and economic inequality to advance their violent objectives.¹⁹

1. Religious Extremist Groups

Numerous extremist organizations exploit religion as a means to rationalize acts of terrorism. They seek to instill terror, undermine the government, and advocate for separatist beliefs rooted in religious identity.

Islamic extremist organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Hizbul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) have perpetrated significant terrorist acts. Numerous such groups obtain ideological, financial, and logistical assistance from external entities, notably from Pakistan.²⁰

Sikh Militancy: The 1980s in Punjab saw the emergence of Sikh separatism, primarily via the Khalistan movement. Organizations such as Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) aimed to create an autonomous Sikh state. Although the Indian government has mainly eradicated Sikh terrorism via military operations and political measures, intermittent activities continue through organizations operating outside.

Hindu Extremist Factions: Although significantly lesser in scale, certain extreme Hindu groups have been associated with sporadic acts of terrorism, commonly termed

¹⁹ Nash, Carolyn, “Youth led guide on prevention of violent extremism through education”, 2017.

²⁰ Aersh Danish, “*Deconstructing Al Qaeda’s Terrorist Network In India*”.

"saffron terror." Organizations such as Abhinav Bharat and certain marginal factions of other groups have been scrutinized for their purported participation in bombs and communal unrest.

2. **Backward Class and Tribal Movements**

Terrorism or violent extremism is not solely confined to religious motivations. Socio- economic determinants, historical injustices, and marginalization have precipitated violent insurrections, particularly among disadvantaged and tribal communities.

Naxalism (Left-Wing Extremism): Naxalite factions, mostly active in India's "Red Corridor" (including regions of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh), assert their struggle for the rights of the landless impoverished, Dalits, and Adivasis (indigenous populations). The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is the primary entity driving the Naxalite insurgency, perpetrating violent assaults on law enforcement, governmental institutions, and civilians to advance a Marxist revolution.²¹

These groups frequently discover receptive audiences among the marginalized populations who perceive themselves as overlooked by conventional development approaches. The absence of education, poverty, displacement caused by mining and industrial initiatives, and historical social injustices have intensified their resentment, which extreme organizations manipulate.

3. **External Influence and Support**

Numerous terrorist organizations operating in India have received cross-border assistance. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan has been traditionally said to supply guns, training, and financial support to terrorist organizations that target India, especially in Kashmir. China has been intermittently suspected of indirectly aiding factions antagonistic to India, particularly in the Northeast, as a tactic to destabilize the region. Terrorist organizations occasionally cooperate with transnational criminal syndicates engaged in drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and money laundering to

²¹ Harnetiaux, Keith J., "*The resurgence of Naxalism: how great a threat to India?*", 2008.

finance their operations. Dawood Ibrahim's D-Company exemplifies the connection between organized crime and terrorism.²²

4. Serious threats to civilization. (Sikh Terrorism in Punjab)

The emergence of Sikh terrorism in Punjab during the 1980s and early 1990s was a significant danger to India's internal security, national integrity, and communal harmony. A political movement advocating for increased autonomy rapidly transformed into a deadly separatist conflict aimed at establishing an independent Sikh state known as Khalistan. The repercussions of Sikh terrorism were not only catastrophic for Punjab but also undermined the fundamental principles of India's democracy and secularism.²³

Origins of Sikh Terrorism

The origins of unrest stemmed from a confluence of political discontent, socio-economic disparities, and religious mobilization. Numerous Sikhs experienced marginalization post-Independence, notably regarding matters such as the allocation of river flows, the designation of Punjabi as an official language, and the pursuit of a Punjabi-speaking state. Political groups, such as the Akali Dal, initially articulated valid demands via democratic channels. Nonetheless, over time, extremist factions usurped the cause, advocating for violent methods to attain an independent nation. Religious figures such as Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale arose, amalgamating spiritual discourse with aggressive separatism. Under his influence, the Golden Temple in Amritsar transformed become a hub for armed terrorists.²⁴

The Ascendancy of Violence

Throughout this interval:

Terrorists aimed at civilians, political leaders, journalists, and moderate Sikhs who opposed secession. Bombings, assassinations, and mass murders became prevalent, not only in Punjab but also in sections of Delhi and other northern states. A particularly grim event was the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984 by her Sikh

²² *Supra* note 11.

²³ Hamish Telford, "Counter-Insurgency in India: Observations from Punjab and Kashmir", Vol. XXI No. 1, Spring 2001.

²⁴ Muhammad Ali Raza, "Interrogating Provincial Politics: The Leftist Movement in Punjab, c. 1914-1950", 2011.

bodyguards, as retribution for Operation Blue Star – a military initiative aimed at expelling militants concealed within the Golden Temple. The assassination incited devastating anti-Sikh riots throughout Delhi and other regions of India, culminating in thousands of fatalities and profound communal wounds.²⁵

Influence on Civilization

The ramifications of Sikh terrorism were profound:

Loss of Innocent Lives: Thousands of innocent citizens, including both Sikhs and non-Sikhs, perished during this violent time.

Destruction of Religious Harmony: The violence undermined centuries of communal solidarity between Hindus and Sikhs, two cultures that had cohabited peacefully for generations.

Threat to National Cohesion: Demands for secession and the establishment of Khalistan jeopardized India's unity, establishing a perilous precedent for later separatist groups.

Economic Ruin: Punjab, formerly a thriving agricultural state, experienced significant economic decline. Fear and instability deterred investment and devastated livelihoods.

International Complications: Sikh separatists garnered support from diaspora groups, particularly in Canada, the UK, and the US, so complicating India's diplomatic initiatives.

Government Reaction

Confronted with increasing violence, the Indian government implemented a dual strategy:

²⁵ Sanjoy Hazarika, "Sikh Terrorists Said To Kill At Least 26" *available at:* <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/06/15/world/sikh-terrorists-said-to-kill-at-least-26.html> (last visited on- April 20, 2025).

Military Operations: Initiatives such as Operation Blue Star (1984) and Operation Black Thunder (1986 and 1988) were executed to demolish militant strongholds. The administration aimed to resolve political issues via discussion, developmental measures, and the fortification of democratic institutions. By the mid-1990s, the violent phase of Sikh terrorism was predominantly subdued. Enhanced law enforcement, intelligence operations, and a change in popular sentiment towards tranquility contributed to the restoration of normalcy in Punjab. Sikh terrorism in Punjab serves as a poignant reminder of how political unrest, combined with religious extremism, can present a significant threat to civilization. It jeopardizes lives and disrupts the social cohesion of a nation. India's encounter with Sikh terrorism underscores the necessity of promptly addressing complaints, fostering inclusive politics, and preserving the secular and democratic principles that unify a diverse society.²⁶

Socio-Political Effects of Terrorism-Naxalism:

Following India's independence, a substantial hurdle emerged: a considerable share of the nation's financial resources needed to be allocated to defense and security initiatives to combat terrorism. This resulted in diminished resources for critical development initiatives such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare, ultimately hindering the nation's advancement. Rather than concentrating entirely on constructing a modern and affluent nation, successive administrations were compelled to prioritize national security, thereby undermining developmental efforts across multiple sectors.²⁷

Furthermore, the escalation of terrorism significantly disrupted commerce and industry in the devastated areas. Businesses were compelled to close owing to persistent threats, violence, and instability, resulting in extensive unemployment within the local populace. As industries disintegrated and employment prospects diminished, economic adversity intensified in many regions, exacerbating resentment and unrest.

Furthermore, the persistent fear and oppression imposed by terrorists undermined public confidence in governmental institutions. In numerous terror-affected areas, the governmental apparatus has become feeble and ineffectual. Individuals experienced growing alienation and

²⁶ H.K. Manmohan Singh, Surinder M. Bhardwaj, "Operation Blue Star", available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Operation-Blue-Star> (last visited on- April 20, 2025). ²⁷ *Supra* note 12.

disillusionment over the government's capacity to safeguard them or administer justice. Over time, this discontent diminished the spirit of nationalism in certain segments of society, while in others, it fostered overt anti-national attitude. This milieu facilitated the expansion of terrorist groups' influence and their recruitment of new adherents.

Ultimately, terrorism has obscured the distinctions between religion and politics in perilous manners. In numerous cases, political parties and leaders, motivated by the need to protect their electoral bases, sacrificed national objectives. Instead of firmly opposing extremism, some opted to collaborate or remain silent for political advantage, so further eroding national unity and integrity. This detrimental mix of religion and politics has empowered extremist factions and hindered the government's capacity to combat terrorism effectively.

CONCLUSION

Terrorism in India, deeply rooted in historical, socio-political, and economic complexities, presents one of the most enduring challenges to the nation's stability and growth. Its origins can be traced back to the colonial era, where policies of division and communal favoritism planted seeds of discord that have since evolved into major fault lines within Indian society. Post-independence, these divisions were further exacerbated by geopolitical tensions, particularly with neighbouring Pakistan and China, and by internal socio-economic disparities that provided fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root.

Over the decades, India has confronted various manifestations of terrorism—from the Khalistan movement in Punjab and separatist insurgencies in Kashmir to the persistent Naxalite uprisings in central and eastern India, and the rise of urban terror networks intertwined with organized crime. Each wave of terrorism has extracted a heavy toll in terms of human lives, economic disruption, and national unity, necessitating vast expenditure of resources that could otherwise have been directed towards development.

Despite these challenges, India has demonstrated resilience. Through a combination of military interventions, political strategies, intelligence reforms, and counter-terrorism laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the establishment of agencies like the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the nation has been able to substantially weaken several terrorist movements. However, the persistence of Naxalism, cross-border terrorism, and the

evolving nexus between international terrorist networks and local extremist groups underscore that the threat is far from eliminated.

It is evident that a purely militaristic approach is insufficient. Counter-terrorism strategies must be broadened to address the deep-seated causes of terrorism, including socio-economic inequality, political marginalization, communal alienation, and regional disparities. Policies must aim not only to dismantle terrorist infrastructures but also to prevent the alienation and disenchantment that drive vulnerable populations toward radicalization.

Safeguarding human rights while maintaining national security must be the cornerstone of India's long-term strategy. Strengthening democratic institutions, ensuring fair political representation, promoting inclusive development, and fostering national unity across religious and cultural lines are vital steps in this direction.

In conclusion, India's battle against terrorism is as much a fight for its security as it is a struggle to fulfill the promises of its Constitution: justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. A resilient, united, and inclusive India will be the strongest antidote to terrorism, ensuring that future generations inherit a nation at peace with itself and secure against threats from within and beyond.

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