

# **Contemporary National Security Issues in India**

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#### ABSTRACT

National security is indispensable for a country's survival and growth. Although security has been a complex issue in human history, its complexity has increased in the contemporary period because of technological developments, climate change and various other factors. The complexity of security has led to constant thinking and rethinking about the idea of security, its processes, and dynamics. The security environment in India is highly complex and challenging. It is impacted by the external as well as domestic environment. Since its independence India has faced numerous security threats like cross-border infiltration, terrorism, insurgencies, organized crimes, human trafficking, drug trafficking, the inflow of refugees, interstate disputes, rising intolerance between the castes and religious communities, dwindling economic development, right and left-wing militancy, rising scarcity of water resources, increasing unemployment, corruption, riots between religious communities etc. Other emerging threats include cyber-crimes such as hacking and online attacks, financial fraud, data theft, espionage etc. Given the multiplicity of security challenges that India faces, it is important to investigate the nature and scope of these challenges. This paper focuses on the contemporary challenges to national security and their possible remedy.

**KEYWORDS:** National security, security threats, cross-border infiltration, cyber-crimes, etc.

### INTRODUCTION

Security is one of the most important aspects of human existence. To be secure is to be free from anxiety brought on by threats of harm (Freedman, 2016). According to Thomas Hobbes, without security 'there is no place for industry... no arts, no letters, no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short' (Oakshott, 1946). There is a significant proportion of the world's population that does not enjoy a peaceful or prosperous lifestyle. They are terrified all the time, much as Hobbes was during the English Civil War in the 1700s. We may thus conclude that the term "insecurity" is connected with conflict and the possibility of war, while the term "security" is associated with peace and stability. Since the survival of the human race depends on it, security may be seen as both a personal and political good. This is because security is a prerequisite for human life. Therefore, "security" should be considered the most basic of all human values. It is the foundation upon which we build not just our own lives but also the life of the community as a whole.

#### **CONCEPT OF SECURITY**

Security is a contentious concept. There is considerable disagreement about whether the investigation's main focus should be on "individual," "national," or "international" security, despite widespread agreement



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that it implies freedom from challenges to fundamental values (for both individuals and communities). The bulk of the writing on the subject during the Cold War was influenced by the military conception of national security. Politicians and academics often shared an interest in the military capabilities that their various nations ought to develop to address the problems they faced. However, this idea of security has recently come under fire for being overly limiting and ethnocentric (culturally biased). Instead, a number of contemporary scholars have argued in favour of a broader definition of security that includes a range of additional variables in addition to just national security. Barry Buzan argues for a definition of security that includes not just military aspects but also political, economic, sociological, environmental, and other non-military ones in his book People States and Fear. Baldwin also contends that academics are becoming increasingly interested in redefining the policy agendas of nation-states to include and give high priority to issues such as poverty, trade, economics, human rights, transnational crimes, and the environment, in addition to the traditional concern with security from external military threats (A.Baldwin, 1997).

The conventional concept of security places an emphasis on state security, whereas the non-traditional or broadened concept of security prioritizes personal and community safety i.e. social security. Realist philosophers, who put a strong focus on obtaining military supremacy, witnessed traditional militaryoriented security in international politics from the 1940s to the end of the Cold War. Realists were the traditionalists in charge of 1940s world politics. They were ardent supporters of the idea of "power politics," in which the state assumes a crucial role and the expansion of military force is given more and more importance (Smith, 2020). The traditional conception of security remained the dominant paradigm during the entire Cold War. This was because decision-makers and experts alike persistently upheld the belief that conflict in international affairs is inevitable and that the only viable option is war. It is impossible to ignore or deny this terrible fact (Basrur, 2001). Traditional proponents of security said that their primary goal and concern was to defend the state. In their view, the state is the most important player in international politics, and everyone else-including individuals, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and so on-is either incidental or inconsequential (Brooks, 2005). Realists contend that countries are now facing a security issue that can only be handled via the use of force (Glaser, 1997). The traditional notion of security places a premium on national security and state survival, and every state's foreign policy is built on these principles.

An ever-increasing number of writers who are now active in the present era are looking for what they refer to as an "extended notion" of security, which takes into account a variety of different aspects and considerations. Following the end of the Cold War, the concept of security evolved into a heated subject of debate among academics, economists, strategists, and politicians alike. According to traditional thought, the "centrality of the state as a pivot of political life" has been emphasized; nevertheless, the feasibility of state-centric security as it was practiced during the Cold War was called into question following the end of the war (Hough, 2008). The fast expansion of globalization and the vast contact between countries have proven that the security concerns of states are interrelated and dependent, demanding the involvement and efforts of everyone in order to secure human security. In other words, human security cannot be guaranteed without the participation and efforts of everyone. On the other hand, with the conclusion of the Cold War and the tragic events of September 11, fresh viewpoints on security have developed. Several unorthodox approaches have emerged recently, each of which presents a unique angle on the topic of security. The concept of security nowadays includes more than just defence against military threats. In contrast to the "hard" security that was common during the Cold War, the concept of "soft" security has evolved as a consequence of the major rise in the importance and attention given to threats that are not of a military



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kind. In security studies, the exclusive focus on military concerns, known as "high politics" or "hard security," represents the narrow view, whereas non-military issues, such as the economy, trade, environment, and terrorism, among others, have become a part of "low" politics or "soft" security, which is the current broader view. A new school of thinking that came to be known as the "Copenhagen School" was developed at the beginning of the 1990s. Barry Buzan served as the head of this new school of thought. This school argued for a considerable extension of the notion of security to encompass non-military issues and aimed to include sub-state organizations in security research. In addition, this school was critical of the traditional approach to security analysis.

Beyond the Copenhagen school of thinking comes the 'deepening' approach, which is driven by Pluralists and Social constructivists. Human Security is embraced by this school, which holds that individuals, not states or sub-state organizations, should be the focus of security efforts (Acharya, 2001). In the 1990s, the United Nations Development Program further developed the concept of "human security." The concept of security must shift from an exclusive focus on national security to a much greater focus on people's security; from security through armament to security through human development; and from territorial to food, employment, and environmental security (Kutty, 2016). The ultimate goal of security is to allow individuals to live their lives freely and without fear for their safety and well-being. Therefore, security is not only the absence of war and conflict, but also the prevention of contagious diseases and infections, the alleviation of poverty and illiteracy, and the safeguarding of individuals from unexpected events that threaten their standard of living (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). Drugs, public health, and global warming are just some of the 'holistic security' issues that governments are focusing on more intently these days. The Japanese Prime Minister Ohira invented the term "comprehensive security" in the late 1950s. The idea was supported by the argument that security was comprehensive in scope and shouldn't be restricted to only military considerations. Military prowess was not completely ruled out, however (Arifi, 2016).

The notion of cooperative security emerged later, in the 1990s; it combined elements from previous security frameworks and emphasized group actions to ensure security. The focus of these efforts would be on issues that are vital to the public at large. This concept of security has gained a lot of traction recently due to its emphasis on the welfare of all parties and its pursuit of the implementation of cooperative measures.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

Modern concepts of national security arose in the 17th century during the Thirty Years War in Europe and the Civil War in England. In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia established the idea that the nationstate had sovereign control not only of domestic affairs such as religion but also of external security. For most of the 20th century, national security was focused on military security, but as a concept, it expanded over time beyond what armed forces could do (or not do as the case may be) (Holmes, 2015). National security, which is viewed as a responsibility of the government, is the protection and defence of a sovereign state, including its people, economy, and institutions. National security, which was initially intended to guard against military attack, is now widely understood to also include nonmilitary aspects, such as protection against terrorism, reducing crime, economic security, energy security, environmental security, food security, and cyber security. Similarly, in addition to the acts of other nation-states, national security concerns also include violent non-state actors, narcotics cartels, organized crime, multinational businesses, as well as the consequences of natural disasters.



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### CONTEMPORARY NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES IN INDIA

National security is about maintaining peace within the borders of a sovereign state by upholding the national law and defending against internal and external security threats. In today's context, national security challenges include not only traditional military and nuclear threats, but a multitude of other threats, including terrorism; energy security; cyber security; demographic, ethnic and communal challenges; the proliferation of drugs; and, economic crime. Some of the challenges in the security and strategic spectrum that are likely to acquire greater salience for India in the coming years are discussed in this paper.

India is geographically a part of South Asia, bounded to the northwest by Pakistan, to the north and east by China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, and to the south by Sri Lanka across the Palk Strait. It is one of the most populous countries in the world and the seventh-largest country in terms of area. India is frequently referred to as the world's biggest democracy. Geographically speaking, India is mostly a continental nation. External and internal dimensions make up its strategic environment. Political unrest in the country's immediate neighbourhood and the presence of other nuclear-armed states in the area are examples of its external security dimension. The political systems of India's neighbours, including Afghanistan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, are either unstable or under significant stress, in contrast to India's robust parliamentary democracy. India has nuclear powers like China and Pakistan at its doorstep, a rapidly nuclearizing Iran in its extended neighbourhood, and foreign nuclear submarines making incursions in the Indian Ocean nearby, posing a strategic threat to its external security. The conflict in Kashmir, cross-border militancy supported by Pakistan, the unresolved border dispute with China, and sporadic military confrontations along their undefined borders, including the latter's establishment of a "string of pearls" at Coco Island in Myanmar, Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka, and Gwadar Port in Pakistan, are also factors in the external security environment for India (Stobdan, 2013).

Since its independence in 1947, India has been facing many internal threats whose nature and extent have been changing from time to time. Activities of foreign intelligence agencies, Naxalite–Maoist insurgency, and many separatist movements have traditionally threatened India's internal security. This was further aggravated by terrorism, illegal immigration from neighbouring countries and insurgency in the Northeast of the country (Menon, 2016). India has always been plagued by separatist groups that aim to undermine the country's unity and borders.

The difference between internal and foreign security concerns is muddled by the separatist and terrorist problems in the state of J&K. In fact, the internal and external dimensions working together are part of what makes J&K's security concerns so difficult. The external component results from Pakistan's active participation in harbouring and supporting terrorist organizations on its soil and financing terrorist actions in J&K. The religious radicalization disguised as Kashmiri nationalism's demand for a separate state may be connected to the internal component of security issues. Effectively responding to security threats is a challenge for the Indian state due to the intricate interaction of several linked concerns. According to some academics, the Indian state faces a vicious cycle of security issues due to its geographical defensibility, Pakistan's claim to the same region, and the violent religious nationalism in Kashmir (Khan, 2017). It is not possible to rule out the possibility that China, in addition to Pakistan, is playing a role in maintaining the disputes and bloodshed. It is possible to interpret some incidents involving the Chinese government's issuance of lax visas to residents of Jammu and Kashmir as an effort to undermine India's sovereignty. The continuation of the war in Kashmir is seen as being in China's best interest, according to some



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academics (Singh, 2010). To this degree, the Chinese government is a significant investor in the Kashmir wars, alongside Pakistan and terrorist organizations funded by Pakistan. With Pakistan, China, and terrorist organizations all involved, the security risks originating in J&K are varied and complex. There is a direct assault on the independence and sovereignty of the Indian state. The increasing religious radicalization among J&K's young has lasting consequences for India's secular fabric. The widespread migration of Kashmiri Pandits away from their home region has been facilitated by the rise of Islamic fanaticism. Human security has also been seriously compromised by decades of insurgency and terrorism in Kashmir. Despite a downward trend in the number of violent occurrences and deaths over the last decade, J&K remains one of the most unstable states in India. The Kashmir separatist movement has been one of the longest-running conflicts, costing thousands of civilian lives and a great deal to the military forces. There are still security concerns since several terrorist organizations, many of whom get support from Pakistan, refuse to acknowledge that Kashmir is an inalienable part of India. India conducts military operations in Jammu and Kashmir to maintain peace, maintain law and order, and suppress both domestic and international terrorist organizations. Thousands of Indian troops and paramilitary personnel have died protecting the Kashmir valley (Bose, 2003). Considering the change of guard in the neighbourhood, the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan, and the active role of Pakistan in the process, the Indian state should be prepared for any kind of eventualities in the future.

In the northeast region of India, namely in the states of Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland, there have been separatist movements in the past. They are now, for the most part, under control. These groups self-identify as revolutionary movements, with the goal of toppling the government and bringing about revolutionary changes in both the form and operation of the state (H.Deol, 2000). India's internal security has long been threatened by militancy and violent ethnic disputes in the country's northeastern provinces. These conflicts are divided into three categories by the MHA's Standing Committee: separatist insurgencies that desire independence; autonomous insurgencies that proclaim subregional ambitions; and intra-ethnic conflicts between larger and smaller tribal groupings (Security Situation in the North Eastern States of India, 2018). The militancy that has persisted for a long time in several states in the Northeast may be attributed, among other things, to an aggressive assertion of identity and a feeling of alienation among ethnic groups in different states, both among the dominant ethnic group and the minority ethnic group. The historical causes of estrangement stem from colonial rule's inability to unite these states with "mainland" India still exists today in one way or another. The political elites of the Northeastern states often combine this feeling of alienation with economic sluggishness and a lack of adequate political representation. Additionally, the Indian state is often held accountable for the internal disputes between the dominant and minority communities and is seen as their shared adversary. In addition to this, the external effects on militancy and internal conflicts in terms of supporting them and giving them safe havens in their territory have had a significant impact. Security concerns from militancy and ethnic strife come in many different forms. First, the sovereignty of the Indian state is contested by separatist militant organizations like the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in Nagaland, which includes both the Isak Muivah and the Kahplang factions. The Indian state's territorial integrity and sovereignty are also threatened by the United Liberation Front (UNLF) of Manipur. The democratic and constitutional ethos of India is watered down by the sub-regional ambitions that lead to deadly confrontations among the ethnic groups as is depicted in the recent incident in Manipur. The fact that neighbouring governments like Myanmar and Bangladesh are aiding extremist organizations by providing a safe haven is also quite concerning. Several states in the Northeast have been particularly susceptible to



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drug and people trafficking, in addition to the violent episodes. Particularly hard hit by cross-border drug trafficking are states like Manipur (Cross-border drug smuggling on the rise in Manipur, 2019). The dumping of Chinese commodities in the Northeastern states through Manipur is also a major security threat. The ungoverned areas and militancy in the Northeastern borders are a major security concern for the Indian government (Bhattacharjee, 2021).

India's internal security continues to be seriously threatened by Naxalism. The Naxalite-Maoist insurgency has been consistently changing its strategies to preserve its prior significance despite the best efforts of succeeding administrations. Periodic Naxal violence in the "Red Corridor" of India, which spans the states of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh, is comparable to the flicker of a candle just before it goes out. The capabilities and space of the Naxal militants have been dramatically reduced as a result of persistent counterinsurgency operations. Their cadres' above-ground and clandestine operations have likewise lessened. But it has also led to significant ambushes, hit-and-run manoeuvres, and IED explosions, all of which have given them a chance to avoid direct and protracted conflict with Indian security forces. This continues to be a significant threat to our national security (Pillai, 2010).

A direct result of the caste-based polarization of society is the existence of organized caste-based gangs known as "Senas" in several parts of India. The actions of these "Senas" have a negative impact on how the police and the government operate, and they undermine the public's faith in the government's ability to safeguard their lives and property. These movements in the Border States became separatist due to the backing they obtained from the hostile neighbours. Tribal movements, such as those of the Santhals and Mundas, economic movements, such as those of the Gonds in Madhya Pradesh and the Mahars in Andhra Pradesh, and separatist movements, such as those of the Nagas and Mizos, have all posed serious threats to the nation's security.

In India, fundamentalism and intolerance are on the increase. The greatest danger to India's national security comes from the emergence of these forces. These extremists have stoked a dangerous situation with their fervent religious zeal and prejudice. Fundamentalist forces pose a complex threat. India's social fabric has been damaged throughout time by fanaticism on both sides, including Muslim fundamentalism and Hindu extremism. These organizations exacerbate racial tensions and prevent communities from coming together by stirring up sensitive subjects. It has made the state weaker. Campaigns like the Ayodhya Ram Temple Issue, the beef prohibition, the ghar wapsi movement, and love jihad rhetoric have seriously endangered the nation's social cohesion. Atrocities committed by Gau Rakshak against Dalits and Muslims gave rise to lynch mobs and inflamed widespread discontent with the government and law enforcement organizations that either collaborate with them or fail to uphold the rule of law. The so-called "Jihadis" are being encouraged by groups like Al Qaida and Jaish-e-Mohammed to infiltrate India and disrupt the peace. They engage in nefarious actions and infect Indian folks with fundamentalist infection (Ahmad, 2017).

Each new administration in India has faced a significant obstacle in the form of India's persistently high unemployment rate and lack of joblessness. While India's GDP is expanding at a rate of just around 7 percent annually, the country's employment rate is only rising by 1.1 percent. Young people who are unable to find work have a harder time finding direction in life, making them more prone to all kinds of temptations and excellent candidates for a variety of antisocial behaviours, including militancy. When a country like India, which is surrounded by forces that are hostile to its existence, has rising unemployment together with a growing sense of alienation, the combination produces a volatile and potentially explosive substance. Because there are fewer jobs and more people competing for them, there are more people asking



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to be reserved. These kinds of protests may occasionally result in significant damage to the infrastructure and can interrupt economic activity in a variety of ways, including the creation of traffic jams, the closing of markets and factories, the blocking of roads, and so on. They are detrimental to the country's national interests and constitute a risk to the country's security. The agitation around the Jat reservation led to a series of violent demonstrations in February of 2016, which in turn paralyzed the state of Haryana for a period of ten days. The Gujrat Patidar reservation movement was similar. These examples demonstrate how communities and caste-based groupings seek special status and class certifications in order to guarantee their employment stability. These kinds of agitators, who are intent on gaining the attention of the media, represent a risk to the safety and security of the country.

The phenomena of "flash crowds" was made possible by the widespread use of social media and smartphones. False and unfounded misinformation is spread to tremendous effect via platforms like Facebook and YouTube. False WhatsApp reports about "child lifting" in several locations sparked the killing of innocent people. Due to the turmoil in Myanmar that has caused a major migration of students from locations like Pune and Bangalore, certain anti-national groups have been effective in spreading terror among people of North Eastern descent on social media. A person may now operate their own digital newspaper, radio, and even television station thanks to technology. There are no restrictions on who uses these mass communication tools. The right to privacy and the freedom of speech have been used as arguments against attempts to exert some control over these sources. In its Global Risks 2013 Report, the World Economic Forum listed the use of social media to quickly disseminate misleading information as an emerging danger. Social media is used to recruit terrorists, propagate false news, encourage violence, foster group rivalries, and sow racial tensions that lead to riots, all of which pose serious threats to the nation's internal security.

The term "cyber security" refers to a collection of activities and other precautions, both technical and nontechnical, that are designed to protect computers, computer networks, related hardware devices, software, and the information that they contain and communicate, including software and data, as well as other components of cyberspace, from any and all threats, including those to national security. For the purpose of defending data from cyberattacks Transmission, thermal, hydro, and distribution are the four areas covered by the Sectoral Computer Emergency Response Teams in Power Systems that the Indian government has established. According to information presented in Rajya Sabha by the Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology P.P. Chaudhary, India was the target of more than 27,000 cyber security threat events in only the first half of 2017. According to the minister's (Cross-border drug smuggling on the rise in Manipur, 2019) reply, the types of threats that have been reported include phishing attacks, website invasions that result in data destruction or website defacement, and ransomware assaults. In the days ahead, these kinds of attacks may become more intense and provide our defence data with more significant issues (IDSA, 2012). One of the crucial components of the nation's overall security is the use of cybersecurity measures to preserve data and ward off online attacks. Hacking, phishing scams, and ransomware are some techniques that may be used to maliciously compromise data, websites, or information. Attacks on computer networks and cyber spies are on the rise and pose a danger to national security.

### CONCLUSION

India's national security is in danger both within and outside. The difficulties we have encountered are many and significant. In our strategic context, we place greater emphasis on external security, but internal



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security is just as crucial. Our national security is at risk from several domestic dangers. They cover a range of topics, including those that are violent, nonviolent, psychological, cyber-connected, caste-based, and linked to government planning and policy. It's important to have a broad picture of internal variables that might endanger our national security. Additionally, we need to brainstorm solutions to address these dangers jointly. Because of the size and variety of our community, internal challenges to our security continue to materialize on occasion. It is our shared duty to address them quietly and cordially in order to guarantee the nation's expansion and prosperity.

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