Transnational Security Issues and Its Impact in India: Cross-border Terrorism, Criminal Activities, and Environmental Challenges

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Abstract

Security is a prime concern for every country. That could be traditional or non-traditional. India is not an exception. The growing complexity in the geo-political arena makes it more difficult. The country's location with its two hostile neighbors, viz, Pakistan and China, has always been a matter of concern for the external security. The recent coup in Bangladesh is an addition. The instability in Mizoram is also an internal security concern. There are also some other security threats that hamper the development of the country, such as natural disasters, insurgency, communal tension, cyber threats, etc. These threats have immensely impacted the development of the country negatively. Since all of these threats are transnational in nature, the article tried to focus on the conceptualisation of transnational security. This piece of writing attempted to evaluate some of the traditional and non-traditional security issues in India, like terrorism, environmental challenges, transnational criminal activities, etc. Finally, the article tried to explain how these transnational threats affect the development of the country.

Keynotes: National Security, terrorism, environmental challenges, transnational criminal activities.

Introduction:

Anciently, security was considered as internal and external perspectives. But the growing situation sometimes makes the borderline inconsequential due to globalization. It facilitate the cooperation in terms of communication, economy, etc. Globalisation makes easier for the movement of various resources [1]. This is very advantageous for human beings. But it brings some challenges along with these advantages. The security threats in one country would affect another, making it transnational. The terrorist organisation easily launched an attack far away from their homeland. Revolution in the field of communication makes it easier for criminals to operate their activities. They can easily trap the innocents in human trafficking, drug trafficking, and other criminal activities through the dark web or other cyber means. The ongoing economic activity plays a very important and positive role in the global business. But it also has a negative effect too. It contributes to the increase of global warming and also other environmental challenges.

The environmental challenges also bring a fear of uncertainty among the people. The people living not even in the mainland but also in the coastal region are affected by these environmental challenges. These activities can impact the daily life of innocent people and threaten their peace of mind. Eventually, it hampers the overall growth of human beings and the region. The resources that should be used in human development in the region and the country are used to deal with these issues.

India's development, along with the region, was affected for a long time in a negative way. All of these happen due to such security concerns. The terrorist organisation operating in the neighborhood can easily launch a cyber attack. They can radicalise people by spreading misinformation through social media. The cartels of criminals are also targeting people across the country's borders. The more concerning issue in these kinds of activities is that they affect the future of the country by targeting youths. All of these activities are cross-border in nature.

Transnational security:

Now the question is, what is transnational security? It is basically protection from transnational threats. These threats are those coming from the cross-border activities. Transnational activities are those activities that affect one country from another beyond its borders. However, the life of innocent people is degraded as a consequence. They always live in fear. Sometimes the threats are caused by the state, but it becomes more complicated when the non-state radical groups of terrorists, criminals, etc. enter in the picture. They bypass the rules and regulations. Sometimes they used the loopholes of the legal framework to operate their activities. The Criminals who pose a threat to transnational security use the human rights safeguards. They do whatever they want in the disguise of common people. This is different from the traditional threats. They avoid direct attack on any country. They try to harm in disguise. They don't directly confront the army and government. They try to achieve their objective by harming human development through these kinds of transnational activities. Not only such terrorist and criminal activities, but there are also some other activities too that pose the greatest challenge to humanity. In 2000, Paul J. Smith shared that there are five types of transnational issues. These issues pose severe threats to national governance, human security, and international stability. These five transnational issues are transnational migration flows, diseases and pandemics, transnational terrorism, global environmental degradation & climate change, and transnational crime. All of these are the greatest problems to deal with. These can create a chaotic situation in human life [2].

Cross-Border Terrorism

It is one of the big transnational issues that has affected India's national security for several decades. The list of major inhuman activities cannot be completed without terrorism. It isn't confined to one country or one particular region. Although there is no consensus about the definition of terrorism. It can be defined as the unlawful use of force to create an environment of fear for achieving certain objectives. India has suffered the effects of terrorism for a long time. Terrorist attacks push human life into uncertainty in India as in various parts of the globe [3].

It was 1993, a series of major terrorist attacks occurred in India that killed 257 and severely injured 717 human beings. Pakistan rejected any involvement in these attacks. But during the trial in the Supreme Court, the convict confessed that the training had been provided by Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI. They provide the training on making bombs, operating AK-56 rifles, etc [4]. It endangers the security and stability not only in India but the entire region. It compels human beings to live in fear of being casual or losing their life. It also affects bilateral relations between countries. India and Pakistan relations are a prominent example. The relations became worse due to the terrorist attacks by Pakistan-based groups. Religious extremism is one of the greatest reasons to launch such an attack [5].

According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, more than 24300 attacks launched in India till April 2025 [6]. The Coimbatore Bombings in 1998, Attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001, Attack on Akshardham

Temple in 2002, Serial Bomb Blast in Delhi 2005, Train Blast in Bombay 2006, 26/11 Mumbai Attack in 2008, Assam Bombings in 2008, Pulwama Attack in 2019, were among the major terrorist attacks in India. Recently on 22nd April 2025, terrorists attacked and killed 26 tourists in Pahalgam. A proxy of LeT terrorist group called TRF claim responsibility of the attack. The "Operation Sindoor" has been launched by India in retaliation. There is the involvement of Pakistan in almost every attack through its proxy, intelligence agency, or army. Pakistan always rejected the link between the Pakistan army and the terrorist groups operated from Pakistan. But the recent image shows that a funeral of the terrorist killed in Operation Sindoor have been attended by the Pakistani army personnel [7]. Some of the proxies of Pakistan are LeT and JeM, responsible for the Akshardham Temple attack, Coimbatore bombings by Al Ummah, the Islamist Outfit linked with Pakistani ISI, the serial bomb blasts in Delhi, and the 26/11 attack in Mumbai executed by LeT, and there are so many such incidents where the Pakistani Proxies and ISI are involved to destabilise India. As a consequence, the bilateral relations have deteriorated for a long time [8]. The economic activities are suffering due to such acts from Pakistan.

The recent terrorist attack in 2019 on the CRPF in Pulwama was also a sad moment. 44 CRPF soldiers died in this attack [9]. The terrorist or suicide bomber Adil Ahmad Dar, a member of JeM, has expressed his intention to promote religious extremism in India. He claimed in a pre-attack video [10]. A situation of war had arisen after this barbaric act. The intention was to destabilise the peaceful environment of the country. So, as far as national security is concerned, both religious extremism and terrorism are serious challenges for India. These kinds of activities will generate psychological stress in daily life that hampers the growth of human beings. The economic activities have been affected negatively. The foreign investments are significantly affected. Investors need a business-friendly environment. But such an instability compels them to think twice about their investment. The resources that should be used for the welfare and the development of human beings are used to deal with these kinds of inhuman acts.

Cross-border criminal activities

A society with a complex culture based on the expansion of education, technology, industry, and urban life is called a modern society [11]. They probably misinterpret modern culture and start to follow the harmful practices. Some of the new generation is blindly trying to follow the modern society and its culture. It may have been done because of the increasing stockpile of drugs in society.

The transnational criminal activities, such as human trafficking, cybercrime, smuggling of drugs, narcotics, precious metals, armaments, etc, are trying to destabilise India. A very important location of the country makes it the centre of several such activities. The major sources of heroin in India are countries like Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The synthetic drugs are coming from the Death Triangle (consisting of Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand) through the northeastern border, making the impact more severe. The smugglers use the land, sea, and also the air routes to smuggle such things [12]. These inhuman activities can be treated as harmful diseases to society. It may destroy the structure of society. A large number of people from a new generation in society are addicted to it. In India, the rate of addiction is gradually increasing.

Apart from this, money laundering is also another major issue. It is one of the sources of financial support for all cross-border criminal activities. India has been a major victim suffering for many decades. At the International level, a measure has been taken in the form of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). It was set up in 1989 to control money laundering. Recently, its Asia Pacific Arm has added Pakistan to the enhanced blacklist for terror funding [13]. India has also taken some important measures to deal with this

issue at the domestic level. However, these measures taken at the national and international levels are very important to deal with these inhuman activities. But human beings will suffer until these issues are resolved. A better and peaceful world will not be possible without a permanent solution to these cross-border criminal activities.

Environmental Challenges

The development and protection of the environment should be balanced. The responsibility to protect the environment lies with human beings. Human activities cause environmental damage in different ways. Today, the environment is facing great challenges due to developmental issues. The consequences of environmental challenges are not confined to one country. It affects the globe. The Environmental issues challenge the existence of entire living beings on Earth. Some of these issues include climate change, global warming, depletion of the Ozone layer, heatwave, natural disasters, and so on. The burning Amazon is a new addition to the list. India with its approx. 1.4 billion inhabitants are not immune from the effects. It is suffering from so many natural disasters like *Fani*, *Aila, Titli,* etc. climate change, global warming, Pollution, floods, and other environmental challenges. The Indian coastal region, along with its mainland are facing devastating effects. Cyclones and tornadoes are endangering the lives of human beings and forcing them to migrate from the coastal cities to other parts of India [14]. The rising sea level caused by the increasing global temperature also endangers the coastal cities. They live in fear of sinking due to the increasing sea level. The growing temperature may have a huge negative impact. It impacted the productivity generated from human labour in a workplace. As per a report published in 2018, productivity reduced by 4% if 1 degree temperature will increase above 27 degrees [15].

In the year 2024-25, there are 6 most polluted cities out of 10 in the world are in India. The pollution level of India is rising. It threatened human development and eventually human lives. The tourism and other economic activities are affected by this kind of environment [16]. The chemicals produced by human activities are also a cause of the depletion of the ozone layer. In 2004, Jeannie Allen shared the fact that there is a relationship between Ozone and climate. Both affect each other. The chemicals present in the atmosphere, like humidity, temperature, winds, and various other related chemicals, contribute to the formation of ozone. It, in turn, affects the climate. So, the relations between them are vis-à-vis. The ozone in the atmosphere primarily contributes to increasing the temperature [17].

The reduction of soil moisture and lack of drinking water are becoming a serious concern for India. However, it needs to be noted that forests are very helpful in maintaining soil moisture. The forest covering the land of India has increased from 6,38,804 sq km that is 19.43% of total landmass to 8,27,357 sq km, that is 25.17% as per ISFR 2023 [18]. Despite that, India is facing a great challenge of water crisis [19]. The causes of this crisis need to be addressed. The governmental initiative and agencies such as the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the Scheme of Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs), the Recognition of Environmental Laboratories Under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, etc. are very crucial to address this issue [20]. But gradually, the environmental challenges are increasing.

Conclusion:

A peaceful environment is a basic need. But the continuously growing transnational threats are a very concerning issue for India. Military confrontation with another country may cause damage on a large scale, whereas these transnational threats will steadily damage much more than a direct military confrontation. It didn't not only hampered the economic growth of the country but also the mental peace of the people.

Until such a peaceful environment is created, the people will live in anxiety. That will negatively affect the growth of human instinct.

From an economic perspective, the major investors in the country will be very concerned about their investments. A peaceful and stable country has always been preferred by the business community.

Natural disasters are also very challenging issue for developing countries like India. These challenges put an additional burden on the economy by destroying human lives and infrastructure. These calamities are not in the control of human beings. However, human activities are contributing to increasing pollution, global warming, and other factors that intensify the possibility of natural disasters. At least those activities that contribute to increasing the possibility of such things must be controlled with international cooperation. The Transnational threats are not domestic issues that are controllable by an individual country. The impacts of these threats are felt across the border or the continent.

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