UNIT 10 : TERRORISM

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10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to-

- understand what is terrorism
- identify the factors responsible for the emergence of terrorism
- identify the goals of the terrorist groups

10.2 INTRODUCTION

One of problems which India has been experiencing after a few decades of independence is terrorism. It is an act of organized violence to attain a certain goal. Terrorism tries to target the lives of innocent people in order to bargain with the government to achieve their end. In this unit we

will try to understand this phenomenon called terrorism, its origin and development etc.

According to Ram Ahuja, Political terrorism emerged for the first time during the French Revolution 1793. Groups emerged unleashing violent activities like intimidation, sabotage, abducting and killing. These activities were aimed at influencing the political activities of the state or for attaining political independence from the state. After the French Revolution this kind of terrorism was observed in Ireland against the British domination in the year 1921. After 1960s, with the gradual development of technology and communication, many terrorist groups attained a trans-national character. Terrorist groups are funding money to obtain highly sophisticated arms and ammunition. Thereby modern science and technology has made it easier for such groups to operate in a nation even when they are outside the physical territory of that nation. It also provides an opportunity to form an organized network of terrorism among the groups who share similar ideology and political interest. This is increasing international violence, improved communication and wide scale media coverage of the violent terrorist attacks also serve to psychologically intimidate people across nations.

10.3 DEFINITION AND MEANING OF TERRORISM

The word 'Terrorism' is derived the French word Terrorisme, which is said to be based on the Latin verb 'terrere' which means 'to cause to tremble'. This term was used for the first time to indicate an organized violence by Jacobins during French Revolution when he imposed the reign of terror. However, after he was arrested the word 'terrorist' became the word indicating abuse. In the modern times the word terrorism is distinguished from other criminal activities. The United Nations Security Council, in 2004 defined terrorism as any act. "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an intentional organization to do or abstain from doing any act"

According to the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Terrorism is, 'a method whereby an organized group or party seeks to achieve its avowed aims chiefly through the systematic use of violence'.

According to Bruce Hoffman terrorism is, 'the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change'.

According to Alex Schmid and Peter Jongman, terrorism is, 'An anxiety-inspiring and exploitation method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons….whereby the direct targets of the violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (target of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generation'.

India has experienced terrorist activities directed by the organizations not belonging to India and also from organisations formed inside.Its territory there is a difference between terrorism and insurgency. Accorrding to Saxena, the organized groups of armed rebellion receiving support from the local population to carry out their activities are known as the insurgent group. Such types of groups emerge from within a nation to revolt against the existing government. Those armed groups which do not receive the support of the local population are known as the terrorist groups. A terrorist group may or may belong to the nation in which it operates.

10.3.1 TERRORISM AND OTHER RELATED TERMS

- **Terrorism :** It is a form of organized violence inflicted against people in general. It is a global concept and therefore it affects the international community. It is not restricted to a particular region, community, religion or nation. Terrorism targets all to achieve their goal. Therefore, the recruits into the terrorist groups are also from across the nations.

- **Militancy :** The term militancy is more or less similar to that of terrorism.The Oxford dictionary defines the word militant as 'one who is engaged with the warfare. In other words, militants are those individuals who resort to arms to achieve their goals. The term militant is used synonymously with terrorist.
- **Extremism :** Extremism means the state of being 'extreme'. Extremist movements are said to be led by the intellectual people who hold radical views regarding the existing social and economic aspects of a society. They use both violent and non-violent means to achieve their goals. The Naxalite movement can be regarded as an example of extremism.
- **Insurgency :** Insurgency involves the act of using violent means to revolt against the existing government or regime. The primary criteria to recognize a particular terrorist group as insurgent group is the degree of support they receive from the local population. Insurgent groups are led by charismatic leaders whose objectives are supported by the general population. Support in the form monetary help, logistics, human resources, providing shield against government action etc can be seen as some forms of support on the part of the masses. Some of the popular insurgent groups are:
    a) Naga National Council (N.N.C) operating in Nagaland
    b) National Socialistic council (N.S.C) operating in Nagaland
    c) Mizo National Front (MNF) was operational in Mizoram.
    d) People Revolutionary Party (P.R.A) operating in Manipur
- **Guerrila :** Insurgency and guerrilla are similar terms denoting activities and aims of a small group to achieve political self determination. Both guerrilla and insurgency are organized in military line. They are not widespread globally and generally belong to a territory within a state. Therefore, the problem is related to a nation's internal security.
- **Cross border terrorism :** Cross-border terrorism refers to a process whereby the armed group of one nation stealthily enters

another nation and carry out terror activities with an intention to weaken the cohesion and destroy the infrastructure of a country.

10.3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRORISM

In the previous section, we have learnt that there are different forms of organized use of violence to attain political goals. Therefore, the nature, goal, support from the masses and the geographical area targeted by a group determines whether a particular group is defined as a terrorist group or an insurgent group. But in common day parlance all the activities undertaken by these groups are known as acts of terrorism because the prime strategy of these groups is to inflict terror by the use of violence to attain their objectives. So their area of target, ideology and goals may differ but they all share some common characteristics. Some of those are discussed below. According to Ram Ahuja, the following are the common characteristics of Terrorism:

- Terrorism emerges to attain a political goal.
- Terrorism emerges against the existing government or the state.
- Its activities are recognized as illegal and against the law of the land.
- Terrorist activities are intended to create a psychological impact in the minds of the people at large to attain their aims.

10.4 PERSPECTIVES TO UNDERSTAND TERRORISM

Scholars have developed different perspectives to understand the act of terrorism. Ram Ahuja identified four perspectives to understand terrorism and they are:

- **Historical perspective :** This perspective tries to map the origin and development of terrorism. It further tries to understand the qualitative changes undergone by the terrorist groups during different phases.

- **Political perspective :** This perpective views terrorism as a violent political movement managed by organized political group/ groups at international or national level.
- **Sociological perspective :** This perspective is advocated by scholars like Jordan Paust. While analyzing terrorism this perspective focuses on the following aspects: i) 'the kind participants associated with terrorism, who are the victims or targets of violence etc. ii) the goal of the participants iii) the context in which actual interaction takes place iv) the kind of resources which are at the disposal of the participants v) the strategies utilized by the groups to unleash terror vi) Finally, this approach tries to focus on the consequence of the terror activities.
- **Legal perspective :** This perspective focuses on the kind of laws existing in the national and international level to combat terrorism.

10.5 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF TERRORISM

Different scholars have attributed different factors to be responsible for the emergence and persistence of terrorism. In his book, *'Why Men Rebel'*, Ted Robert Gurr has argued that 'Decremental Discrimination' is one of the primary causes which make people inclined to form terrorist groups. Decremental deprivation refers to a situation when the 'value capabilities of given population decline but their expectations remain the same. He has cited an example that the collective violence inflicted by the Bolsheviks in Russia in1917 was a result of this deprivation. He further argues that the root cause of terrorism is not oppression or deprivation rather it emerges due to the perception that injustice is not natural but imposed. Along with this perception, the gap between the expectations, promises and the stark reality accelerates frustration. This frustration

gradually develops an emotion that there has been injustice which needs to be terminated with the use of violence.

According to scholars different socio-economic factors allure the youth to enter the terrorist camps which had helped towards the persistence of terrorism today. Some of those are discussed below:

- **Poverty :** Many societies today reflect the widening disparity between the rich and the poor. According to A.S. Anand, Retd. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, 'economic inequalities contribute towards the growth of a conducive atmosphere for terrorism. Again, many times the lack of opportunity and the continuous failure in life due to lack of financial support may lead to the derailment of the mind in case of some people. In such a situation, it becomes easier for the 'think tanks' of terrorist groups to allure more and more youth to get them recruited as terrorists in the groups.
- **Illiteracy :** It is generally assumed that literacy helps people to think rationally. When people are illiterate it becomes easier for the leaders of the terrorist groups to brainwash a large number of innocent people to carry out the destructive operations of the terrorist groups.
- **Unemployment :** Despite education when the youth are not absorbed by employment market, a feeling of frustration and deprivation develops. For example, in Assam during 1970s a large section of the employment avenues in the government and semi-government sector was occupied by the outsiders in large number. This led to the development of a feeling deprivation and injustice among the youth which contributed towards the formation of different groups which inclined towards violence to achieve self determination.
- **Regional Disparity :** In a large country like India, unbalanced development between different regions is seen. Thus, in such a situation it is seen that the states in the periphery remain underdeveloped. Also, it is seen that the government tries to develop the 'core' (the main cities in terms of economic activity) at the cost of the periphery. This leads to 'Aspirational Deprivation' according to Gurr. For example, the decision of the then central government to

shift the refinery to Barauni in Bihar caused a huge uproar among the people of Assam. Regional disparity is also one major cause to have fueled the formation of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

- **Political Aspiration :** When the demand and concerns of a particular group of people in a pluralistic society do not find proper expression then they remain discontented. Along with this when they experience perceived denial to participate in the decision making process pertaining to their well being then a feeling of aspirational deprivation develops. This deprivation leads to frustration which promotes terrorism.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1.(a) Who is the author of the book *'Why man rebel'*?

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Q.1.(b) Give an example of extremism.

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10.6 GOALS OF TERORRIST GROUPS

When a group of people organizes itself to attain their objectives by the use of different violent activities then the group is known as a terrorist group. However, the objectives of each terrorist group vary . Some of the objectives are discussed below :

- **Revolution :** Certain terrorists groups emerged with the objective of bringing an end to the exploitation of the poor by the rich. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, certain groups emerged in the countries like Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia and Peru where they resorted to the use of violence to alter the existing political structure of the society and to introduce socialism.
- **Forming a separate territory (state or nation) :** Some terrorist groups emerge when a group of people organize themselves under

the banner of one 'nationality' and use violence to carve a separate sovereign territory by dividing the existing total territory. According to some scholars such tendency develops due to the feeling of relative deprivation. In other words, when a group of people develops a feeling that in the current state of affairs the matters relating to the concern of their community is not given due attention then such separatist tendencies develop. In India, the formation of terrorist groups with the objective of attaining autonomy is very common. During 1980s, terrorism in Punjab became very rampant with such terrorist activities like killing dozens of bus passengers in order to create a separate nation called Khalistan for the Sikh population. Several terrorist groups in the North Eastern states India came up in order to create either a separate state within Indian union or a separate nation in itself.

- **Religion :** Certain terrorist groups in the world have emerged with a notion that 'they are establishing the will of 'God' by massacring people of other religious communities and waging war against the nations following different religion. For example, the terrorist groups the Islamic State (IS), Taliban etc were formed with such an objective.

10.7 TERRORISM IN INDIA

Terrorism involves killing, extortion, kidnapping to extort money to carry out their terrorist activities etc. Terrorist activities lead to disruption of the law and order situation in a society. Most importantly, it targets the psychology of the people in a bid to demoralize the entire population of a society.

India has been experiencing the problem of terrorism since 1960s. The states like Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Tripura and Mizoram are the worst sufferers of terrorism. The government has used several mechanisms to repress the terrorist activities. In some states like Punjab and Mizoram the problem of terrorism is almost controlled now. But in the other states terrorism still continues to exist in varying

magnitude. Terrorism acts as a hindrance is exercising the normal day-to-day economic and social activities. Even schools and colleges are badly affected by the terrorist activities leading to further impediment in the development of the region. On account of the persistence of terrorist attacks in a region or a state outside investors refrain from investing in that particular area.

According to N.S Saxena, the problem of terrorism in India can be tackled by the following ways:

i) One way to uproot terrorism from India is by gaining the confidence of the citizens to attain information about the terrorists.
ii) By reducing the circulation of money so that the money at the disposal of the terrorists reduce drastically.
iii) Reducing the delay in the judicial proceeding and giving prompt judgments on the activities of the arrested terrorists.
iv) Using more effective methods to procure information related to their operations and sources of finance.
v) Upgrading the security measures in the country.
vi) Providing more scientific training to the forces deputed to counter terrorism.

10.8 MEASURES UNDERTAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO COUNTER TERRORISM

a) Armed forces (Special Powers) act (AFSPA) : This act came into existence as an ordinance for the first time in the year 1942 to repress the Quit India movement. This ordinance later became an act in the year 1947 in order to deal with the problem of internal security which was triggered after the partition. Though it was withdrawn it was again enacted in the year 1957 in the north eastern states due to the rise of the insurgent activities. Gradually it was being implemented in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir as well. This act empowers the state and central governments to identify the disturbed areas and grant special powers to the armed forces to conduct search without consent, arrest and shoot on the basis of suspicion and

without warrant. However throughout these years the relevance of this act has been a matter of debate and dissent on the ground that this act causes the violation of human rights.

b) TADA : The Terrorists and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act or TADA is an act enacted by the government of India in the year 1985 to deal with the problem of terrorism. This act recommends the following measures for coping with terrorism and other disruptive activities:

"Punishment for terrorist acts. -

- Whoever with intent to overawe the Government as by law established or to strike terror in the people or any section of the people or to alienate any section of the people or to adversely affect the harmony amongst different sections of the people or thing by using bombs, dynamite or other explosive substances or inflammable substances or lethal weapons or poisons or noxious gases or other chemicals or by any other substances (whether biological or otherwise) of a hazardous nature in such a manner as to cause, or as is likely to cause, death of, or injuries to, any person or persons or loss of, or damage to, or destruction of, property or disruption of any supplies or services essential to the life of the community, or detains any person and threatens to kill or injure such person in order to compel the Government or any other person to do or abstain from doing any act, commits a terrorist act.
- Whoever commits a terrorist act, shall, -
  - if such act has resulted in the death of any person, be punishable with death or imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine;
  - in any other case, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.
- Whoever conspires or attempts to commit, or advocates, abets, advises or incites or knowingly facilitates the commission of, a terrorist act or any act preparatory to a terrorist act, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.

- Whoever harbours or conceals, or attempts to harbour or conceal, any terrorist shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.
- Any person who is a member of a terrorists gang or a terrorist organisation, which is involved in terrorist acts, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.
- Whoever holds any property derived or obtained from commission of any terrorist act or has been acquired through the terrorist funds shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.]
- **Punishment for disruptive activities.** - (1) Whoever commits or conspires or attempts to commit or abets, advocates, advises, or knowingly facilitates the commission of, any disruptive activity or any act preparatory to a disruptive activity shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.

(2) For the purposes of sub-section (1), "disruptive activity" means any action taken, whether by act or by speech or through any other media or in any other manner whatsoever, -

(i) which questions, disrupts or is intended to disrupt, whether directly or indirectly, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India; or

(ii) which is intended to bring about or supports any claim, whether directly or indirectly, for the cession of any part of India or the secession of any part of India from the Union.

Explanation - For the purposes of this sub-section, -

(a) "cession" includes the admission of any claim of any foreign country to any part of India, and

(b) "secession" includes the assertion of any claim to determine whether a part of India will remain within the Union.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of sub-section(2), it is hereby declared that any action taken, whether by act or by speech or through any other media or in any other manner whatsoever, which -

a. advocates, advises, suggests or incites; or

b. predicts, prophesies or pronounces or otherwise expresses, in such manner as to incite, advice, suggest or prompt, the killing or the destruction of any person bound by oath under the constitution to uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India or any public servant shall be deemed to be a disruptive activity within the meaning of this section.

(4) Whoever harbours or conceals, or attempts to harbour or conceal, any disruptiionist shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may be extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine."

Source: (The) Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987



10.9 LET US SUM UP

- Terrorism is an organized act of violence to attain political goal.
- Terrorism emerged for the first time during the French Revolution 1793.
- Groups emerged unleashing violent activities like intimidation, sabotage, abducting and killing.
- Extremist movements are said to be led by the intellectual people who hold radical views regarding the existing social and economic aspect of a society.
- Insurgency involves the act of using violent means to revolt against the existing government or regime.
- Primary criteria to recognize a particular terrorist group as insurgent group is the degree of support it recruits from the local population.
- Insurgency and guerrilla are similar terms denoting activities and aims of a small group to achieve political self determination.

- Cross border terrorism refers to a process whereby the armed group of one nation stealthily enters another nation and carry out terror activities.
- Terrorism emerges due to the feeling of relative deprivation.
- Increased economic inequality develops the breeding group to flourish poverty.
- Unbalanced regional development leads to developing the feeling of relative deprivation.
- Certain terrorists groups emerged with objective of bringing an end to the exploitation of poor by the rich.
- Some terrorist group to carve out a separate state or nation.
- Some terrorist groups emerged to destroy other religions.



10.10 FURTHER READING

Ahuja, Ram.1997. Social Problems in India. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

Kumar, Ashok.2014.Dynamics of Global Terrorism. New Delhi: KK Publications.

Weinberg, Leonard. 2006. Global Terrorism: A beginner's guide. England: Oneworld Publications.



10.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No. 1(a). Ted Robert Gurr

Ans to Q No. 1(b). Naxalite movement.



10.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1. Define terrorism.

Q.2. What is meant by extremine.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1. Discuss the factor responsible for the evergence of terrorism.

Q.2. Explain the goals of terrorist groups.

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