# UNIT 8: TERRORISM

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

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## 8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Know what is terrorism and terrorists.
- Know what the features of terrorism are.
- Know what freedom fighter is.
- Know what the difference between terrorists and freedom fighters is.
- Know the analysis of terrorism.

## 8.2 INTRODUCTION

Terrorism refers to violent act that spread terror or fear between the masses and also involves killing the innocents for political purpose. In this chapter, we shall discuss what terrorism is and how it affects the lives of the individuals. We shall also see whether the individuals are born terrorists or under what circumstances they adopt terrorism. This chapter also deals with the attitudes of terrorists and what are the characteristics of terrorism.

On the contrary, a freedom fighter is one who fights for the nation for the rights of the individuals. It does not force anyone to join the freedom

movement. Unlike terrorists, the freedom fighters do not spread fear among the masses. We shall discuss these differences in this chapter and also analyze the concept of terrorism.

## 8.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

Terrorism means violent acts, especially for political purpose. The supporters or participants of terrorism are called terrorists.

Terrorism uses terror in a systematic way with forceful means. It creates fear, attack and destroys life. It is also against law which involves violence and war. If we check the historical background of terrorist organizations we can see that they do not involve in terrorism for political effectiveness. Individual terrorists are influenced by an urge for social unity with other members of their organizations.

The term 'terrorism' is difficult to define as it is changed politically and emotionally. This concept itself is controversial as it creates terror against political or foreign opponents and at the same time it creates violence against the state. Terrorism has been practiced by nationalistic groups, religious groups, political parties, etc.

The word terror means 'to frighten'. The word 'terrorism' was first used to describe the actions of Jacobin Club during the 'Reign of Terror' in the French Revolution. According to Jacobin leader Maximilien Robespierre, 'Terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible'.

Terrorism also refers to violence which is influenced politically which are committed against pacifists by sub-national groups or secret agents to influence a crowd. The term 'international terrorism' means terrorism between citizens of more than one country.The term 'terrorist group' refers to a group that practice 'international terrorism'.The terrorists are not themselves part of a government, who create violence for political considerations against non-combatants.The terrorists' acts involve crimes. These are also against law. It also involves violence with specific demands. Their want or the motive is political. They mainly target civilians. They are the members of an organized group and often seek credit for their acts.

According to Noam Chomsky, 'the term terrorism has come to be

applied mainly to retail terrorism by individuals or groups. Thus, it can be said that terrorism is a violent act by individuals or group of individuals for political purpose. Now the question arises “Is anyone born a terrorist?” the answer is ‘No’. No one is born a terrorist. No one is born corrupt. Even the terrorists were innocents by birth. But gradually, the circumstances lead them to drive towards easy way to earn money. Then slowly they become corrupted from which it is difficult to escape. Out of greediness and corruption they become ignorant towards others who suffer from poverty, unhappiness and misery. Those who take active part in terrorism or those who support terrorism are called terrorist. According to David Rapoport, the terrorist not only create violence but also make decisions regarding issues that are troublesome. The terrorist are willing to die or sacrifice himself to fulfill their motives.The attitudes of terrorist can be drawn in the following ways:

1. A terrorist can sacrifice even his own life to fulfill a cause which is considered to be transcendent in value.
2. A terrorist performs his duties as an avocation.
3. A terrorist involves in violent acts and spread fear for political purpose.
4. His act of assassination is systematic rather than random.
5. Terrorist use forceful activities against another party to act in an involuntary manner.
6. A terrorist does not have an ideological persuasion.

## 8.4 DIFFERENT ANALYSIS OF TERRORISM

Terrorism has been treated differently by various states, authors, intellectuals and thinkers. According to Democratic people terrorism is one if the symptoms of unhappiness which result out of extreme materialism, erosion of religious faith, declining living standard, poverty, social inequalities and social justice. Some people believe that terrorism is senseless and mindless act which results out of psychologically disturbed or mentally propagandized individual or group of individuals.

Some people believe that terrorism is a new phenomenon. At some time, others believe that terrorism is as old as hills. As far back as the first century, Jewish Siearii and Zelot movements employed terror tactics against the Romans. The first movements employed terrorism as a major weapon as an 'Assassin sect''. of eleventh and twelve centuries in the Middle East.

Here are some examples to show that terrorism is not a modern invention.

A. 1890- American is Turkey pioneered taking of hostage.

B. 1895- American revolutionaries seized banks in Constantinople.

C. 1897- Large number of bombings in London. Many were killed.

D. 1905-10- Before the first world war there was a great deal of terrorism dominated over Bulgaria, Serbia, and Macedonia before the first world war.

E. Even in India, in the days of Lord Bentinck, bands of Pindaries use murder tactics for personal gains.

Many reasons have been put forwarded for the cause of terrorism such as political history, modern political government policies, ideological reason, cultural tensions and economic trends etc.

As we have already discussed that the most common goal of the terrorist organizations is to achieve political goal. The desire of a group of people in the society to separate from the existing government and top form a new nation can lead them to form a terrorist organization.

Terrorism also results out of alienation or discrimination. When a group of people migrate to other counties for employment or education and settle there may face discrimination from the origin citizen of the country. As a result the immigrants from a group and start terrorist acts against the original citizen and the government.

The 9\11 terrorist attack, in USA is the best example of this type where migrant Muslims, who went to Germany from their native nation for their education, felt discriminated in Europe and created a terrorist group with other conservative Muslims and attacked in USA on 11-09-2011.

Religion also leads to formation of terrorism. This type of terrorism is more dangerous in nature than other types. In this type of terrorism, the

young people are propagandized for suicide bombing by saying that they would be rewarded by God after death. For eg, In Punjab, some Sikh groups have joined terrorism for creation of a separate independent state called Khalistan based on Sikh religion.

Terrorism may also be caused due to difference of economic status of different countries. A group of persons belonging to a poor country may be humiliated, frustrated and victimized by comparing their economic conditions with the citizens of rich countries. This leads the terrorist group to enter into such poor and underdeveloped countries to indoctrinate them to join terrorism.

The grievances against a certain political policy or lack of political participation in state may also lead to form terrorist groups. For eg: The Left and Right Wing terrorists. They do not want to create new state but they want to change the political policy within the nation.

The unequal distribution of resources is the major cause of terrorism. The wealthier countries are prone to terrorist attacks from underdeveloped countries. In India, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar are some examples of terrorism due to economic issues.

## 8.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRORISM

There are certain characteristics of terrorism through which terrorists can be recognized. These are as follows:-

1) Violence: The only general characteristic of terrorism is violence. Terrorism involves violence and threat of violence. Violence can be in the form of war, riot, organized crime or even a simple assault. Initially, property destruction was not accepted as violent crime as it does not endanger life. But now it has been considered as violence and terrorism.

2) Psychological impact and fear: Each act of terrorism has psychologically bad impact on masses and spread fear among them. Terrorists also attack the national symbol in order to show their and attempt to destroy the country or society they are opposed to. They

try to affect the government negatively and try to increase the power and prestige of terrorist organizations.

3) Political Goal: The common goal of terrorist acts are intended towards political purpose. Their intensions are so firm that their failure lead to worse outcome. Tertrorism is also defined as political violence which is created to spread terror and psychic fear through violent victimization and destruction to spread message among masses by the unlawful secret organizations. Their motive is to control the targeted audiences to fulfill their goals.

4) Targeting of non-combatants: It is often seen that terrorists directly targets the non-combatants. Their criminal intensions can be seen when the kill the innocents or injure them. Sometimes, the terrorists target their victims not because they are threat to them but they are specific symbols, tools that are linked with the specific view of the world that the terrorists posses. They are victimized in order to send the terrorists' message to the masses or to fulfill their goals or to create fear among the masses or to fulfill the religious or political agendas.

Horgan draws certain characteristics of terrorism which are as follows:

1) Terrorists usually feel angry, isolated or deprived.
2) They believe that their present involvement in politics do not make any real change.
3) They do not think rationally to sort out the problems and feel the need to take actions.
4) They consider themselves to be the victims of social injustice.
5) They consider it to be necessary to engage in violence against the state.
6) They believe that joining a movement rewards them socially and psychologically.

Besides these characteristics, there are some other characteristics which can be found in terrorists. These can be summed up as follows:

1) There is a higher level of dynamism in terrorist attacks if we compare it with natural or technological disasters.

2) Terrorist attacks are uncertain. The evaluation terrorists' value system and behavioral logic is a very complex task.
3) The terrorists deliberately choose their attack scenarios. They are capable of analyzing the vulnerability parameters and the damages that would take place of the society if the terrorists' actions are successfully carried out.
4) The fear or terror created by terrorism is of greater degree than the fear which results from natural or technological disasters.
5) The nature of terrorists' threat is very complex. They use different methods to attack their targets.
6) Terrorists have the capacity of self-learning of the effect of their next attack by drawing conclusions from their past attacks.

## 8.6 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TERRORIST AND FREEDOM FIGHTER:

As we have already discussed about terrorist, now let us discuss about what freedom fighter is and the differences between a terrorist and a freedom fighter.

A freedom fighter is a person who fights for his own nation and wants his people to have own nation by overthrowing their oppressors. Like terrorists, they also struggle to achieve a political goal. But there are some differences between them. A freedom fighter sometimes may be forced to use violence for the sake of his country but he cannot use indiscriminate violence. On the other hand, a terrorist uses indiscriminate violence to achieve his goal.

Again, terrorists' acts are considered to be of criminal in nature. They do not think rationally and kill innocents in order to achieve their goal. But freedom fighters do not kill the innocents. They try to influence the masses to fight for their own country. They cannot be considered as criminals.

Freedom fighters have patriotic feeling towards their own country. They follow the ideology of "do or die". They can fight and die for their own

country but cannot surrender themselves to their oppressors. But the patriotic feeling is absent in terrorists.

The freedom fighters fight for the fundamental freedom of themselves and of the citizens of their country. They fight and can die to achieve independence of their country from their oppressors. But the terrorists do not fight for the freedom of their citizens. They fight for their political goals to be achieved at the cost of killing other or in fact by sacrificing themselves.

While discussing about terrorist it is already mentioned that terrorists spread fear among the masses. They target the innocents in order to spread message, or fear, or violence among the crowd. But freedom fighters do not involve in such acts. They try to influence their citizens for their own rights. They do not spread fear among the masses.

The freedom fighters do not go beyond the constitution. They do not break laws. Whatever they do for the country, they do within the constitution. But the terrorists break laws and go beyond the constitution to achieve their goals.

Again, the terrorists want a separate state from the country. They fight with a selfish motive for an independent state. But freedom fighters work for the unity of people. They unite the people of the nation against the persecutor. They fight selflessly only for the good of the nation.

If we talk about the attitudes of the terrorists and the freedom fighters then we can see that the attitudes of the freedom fighters are very gentle. They do not force anyone to join the freedom movement for the country. They just influence the people of the nation by showing them the right path to fight for their country. But the attitudes of the terrorists are very harsh. They force people to join their organizations by creating terror and violence among the masses.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q No. 1: What is terrorism?

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Q No. 2: Who are terrorists?

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Q No. 3: What is an 'international terrorism'?

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Q No. 4: Define 'terrorist group'.

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Q No. 5: What does terrorism involve?

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Q No. 6: What is the common goal of terrorist acts?

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Q No. 7: Who is a freedom fighter?

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Q No. 8: What is the ideology of a freedom fighter?

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Q No. 9: What do you mean by the word terror?

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## 8.7 LET US SUM UP

- Terrorism means violent acts, especially for political purpose.
- The supports or the participants of terrorism are called terrorists.
- The term 'international terrorism' means terrorism between citizens of more than one country.
- The term 'terrorist group' implies a group that practice international terrorism.
- A terrorist can sacrifice even his own life to fulfill a cause which is considered to be transcendent in value.
- Terrorist use forceful activities against another party to act in an involuntary manner.
- Terrorism involves violence and threat of violence which can be in the form of war, riot, organized crime or even a simple assault.
- The common goal of terrorist acts is intended towards political purpose.

- A freedom fighter is a person who fights for his nation and wants his people to have own nation by overthrowing their oppressors.
- The freedom fighters fight for the fundamental freedom of themselves and of the citizens of his country.



## 8.8 FURTHER READING

1) Ahmed, Pearl Ali (2010), Terrorism and Terrorist Groups of North-East India: Eastern Book House.

2) Rao, Narayan Singh (2010), Global Terrorism and Security (Volume One): Mittal Publications.

3) Rao, Narayan Singh (2010), Global Terrorism and Security (Volume Two): Mittal Publications.



## 8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No. 1:** Terrorism means violent acts especially for political purpose.

**Ans to Q No. 2:** The supporters of terrorism are called terrorists.

**Ans to Q No. 3:** The term 'international terrorism' means terrorism between citizens of more than one country.

**Ans to Q No. 4:** The term 'terrorist group' implies a group that practice international terrorism.

**Ans to Q No. 5:** Terrorism involves violence and threat of violence which can be in the form of war, riot, organized crime, or even a simple assault.

**Ans to Q No. 6:** The common goal of every terrorist acts is intended towards political purpose.

**Ans to Q No. 7:** A freedom fighter is a person who fights for his nation and wants his people to have their own nation by overthrowing their oppressors.

**Ans to Q No. 8:** The ideology of a freedom fighter is "do or die".

**Ans to Q No. 9:** The word terror means 'to frighten'.



## 8.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

### A. VERY SHORT QUESTIONS

**Q. 1:** What do you mean by freedom fighter?

**Q. 2:** Define terrorism.

**Q. 3:** Who are terrorists?

**Q. 4:** What is the common goal of terrorism?

**Q. 5:** What is the general characteristic of terrorism?

**Q. 6:** What is the psychological impact of terrorism?

**Q. 7:** Define the term 'international terrorism'.

**Q. 8:** what is a terrorist group'?

### B. SHORT QUESTIONS (ANSWER IN ABOUT 150 WORDS)

**Q. 1:** is anyone born a terrorist? Explain.

**Q. 2:** Write a brief note on the attitudes of terrorists.

**Q. 3:** Write a brief note on terrorism.

**Q. 4:** Write a short note on freedom fighters.

### C. LONG QUESTIONS (ANSWER IN ABOUT 300-500 WORDS)

**Q. 1:** Explain the characteristics of terrorism.

**Q. 2:** What are the differences between terrorists and freedom fighters? Explain.

**Q. 3:** Explain the concept of terrorism.

**Q. 4:** What are the causes of terrorism? Explain.

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