# COUNTER-TERRORISM TACTICAL MULTI-AGENCIES IN INDIA

**Arnold Harvey** Research Scholar, pursuing Ph.D. Law from Amity Law School, Amity University Noida, (Affiliated to Amity University Noida, UP, India)

**Dr. Santosh Kumar** Professor of Law, Amity Law School, Amity University Noida, (Affiliated to Amity University Noida, UP, India)

#### **Abstract**

The Constitution of India empowers the Union government to protect every State against any kind of external aggression and internal disturbances, especially in combating terrorism, provided under Article 246 of Part XI - which describes 'Legislative Relations' and Article 355 of Part XVIII - legally describes 'Emergency Provisions'. The counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies in India are firmly strategized by the Multi-Agency Centre-MAC in support of which all final intelligence information output is produced by specialized intelligence agencies, such as the IB, RAW, DIA, DRI, ED, CEIB, NTRO and technically they report directly to the National Security Advisor-NSA and the Prime Minister to look after all classified counter-terrorism tactical information regarding the country. Therefore an effective updated counter-terrorism strategy and better coordination amongst national and international organizations are the need of the hour.

**Keywords:** counter-terrorism, multi-agencies, classified establishment, national security

### Introduction

This paper provides critical insight into the phenomenon of counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies in India. The idea is to understand by critically reflecting on their interaction with each other, and weave these insights into an analysis of the challenges and options facing India vis-à-vis terrorism. In the process the paper unravels, the classified system of intelligence and the law enforcement agencies in the country. Bosworth (2006) analyzed the Republic of India, consistent with a large diversity of various religions, many castes, and many languages. It shares its land borders with China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the north, Pakistan to the west, and Bangladesh, and Myanmar to the east. Since post-independence, it still has major disputes over the issue of Kashmir in India, Pakistan occupied Kashmir in the Line of Control-LoC and the issue of (China on the Line of Actual Control-LAC in Aksai-Chin, 2019), and these problems are still unresolved.

The very large population density, within its vast geographical area, makes the handling of terror crimes extremely difficult to administrate efficiently. The menace of hard-core terrorism and cross-border transnational terrorism has grown its organized network in various parts of India. Umarinikar (2009) analyzed that the center and the state governments have raised their own specialized intelligence, law enforcement, and investigation agencies, to deal with the challenges of terrorism. However, the prompt and quality investigation is the foundation of an effective criminal judicial system.

The various types of terrorist activities, both domestic as well as transnational terrorist groups have repeatedly tried to destabilize the peace of the country. Therefore, to protect the country from unwanted terror and aggression, administering the national security of the country, is a big responsible task before the nation. It is because of this specific reason it has raised a number of specialized counter-terrorism multi-agencies. Therefore the classified subject of counter-terrorism is handled by specialized investigation agencies, intelligence agencies, and other State specialized counter-terrorism sub-agencies in the country.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Every day hardened militant recruits are being picked up from radicalized, fundamentalist youth for undergoing training in Pakistan, to encourage a never-ending proxy war against India. In a very well-

planned strategy, weapons and explosives are being pumped into the country in large quantities, counterfeit is being used to destabilize the economy and this is in pursuance to spread organized crime, extremism, separatism, communism, the militia movement, religious radicalization and desperate terrorism in India. The menace of terrorism is the only problem that constitutes a direct threat to the national security of India. The objective of terrorism is to disturb the integrity, peace, and progress of the country and this remains to be the stumbling block to security and the failure of national development. Therefore effective updated counter-terrorism strategy and better coordination amongst national and international organizations is the need of the hour.

## **Objective of the Study**

- To study the existing, counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies in India and focus on methods to better the national security structure.
- To make a reasonable test of the various national security tactical multi-agencies in combating terrorism, the objective is to legally deal with the menace of terrorism both in India and around the world
- To give valuable suggestions in measuring the strength and weaknesses of counter-terrorism, and thereafter make a comparative analysis with special emphasis on India.

#### **Review of Literature**

Mathew (2003) analyzed that the President of India is the ceremonial head of State, but almost all executive actions are directly taken by the Prime Minister of India, as he is head of the government and he along with his cabinet ministers, exercises most of the executive power. Thereafter, the civil servants are delegated as permanent executives, empowered to take all decisions and implement all direct actions, along with the state executive force.

The seventh schedule of the Constitution of India empowers executive responsibilities between the Center and the States. Furthermore, Article 246 of Part XI – describes 'Legislative Relations' and empowers the Union list, the State list, and the Concurrent list to equally distribute the legislative authority between the Centre and the State governments. The subject of policing is a state executive function, therefore it enforces law and governance by applying the law of the land, but when matters are beyond control, the state may seek central assistance to deal with the problem (Seminar on National Security, 2016). Ajit Doval and B. R. Lall (2011) found the special provision of the Constitution allows a coordinating and counseling role for the Centre in police matters. Balachandran, V and Satish Kumar (2010) analyzed that in addition, Article 355 of Part XVIII – describes 'Emergency Provision' and empowers the Union government to protect every State against any kind of internal disturbances and it ensures every State government to perform its duties by the provision of the Constitution of India. Therefore, the above position of law balances the quasi-federal nature of our country, by setting up specified central police organizations to protect the territorial integrity and national security of India.

The concept of applied counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies is to efficiently administer the national security system and at all times safeguard the internal and external security of the country. A comparative study was made in cases of global terror, it revealed that terrorism had gained tremendous momentum due to modern global connectivity and sophisticated technology can be seen in Figures 1 and 2. Modern terrorist have updated their modus operandi, they are educated, well trained, camouflaged, and fast with a wide range of new technology, therefore this is making it very difficult for counter-terrorism multi-agencies to track them down. The recent terrorism developments in India and around the globe, have exposed the covert activities of the hard-line terrorist and other well-planned criminal activities, such as the 2001 US 9/11 attack and the 2008 Mumbai 26/11 attack, indicates the need for indepth retrospective studies and improvement upon well-equipped counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies to safeguard the country from all forms of terrorism threats.

The specialized counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies in India are very strongly supported by national intelligence agencies, such as the Intelligence Bureau-IB, the Research and Analysis Wing-RAW, the Defence Intelligence Agency-DIA, the intelligence units of various Central police organizations, and the State police special organizations. The other subject-wise specialized intelligence agencies that coordinate with the Central agencies are the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence-DRI, the Enforcement Directorate-ED, the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau-CEIB, and the National Technical Research Organization-NTRO, and these are in-cooperated into a specialized intelligence consortium of a (Multi-Agency Centre MAC, 2019) and together they performed duties to fight against the illegal funding of terrorism, production of counterfeit currency, money laundering and other serious finance-related crimes in the country.

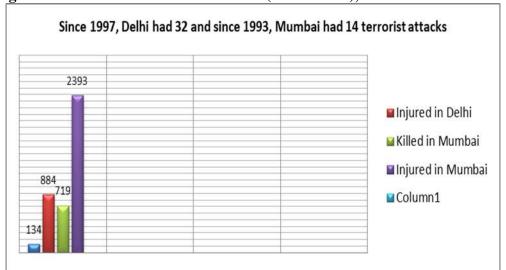


Figure 1: South Asian Terrorist Portal (SATP-2018), India Terrorism Data

### **Research Methodology**

This comparative case study geographically expands in collecting data on counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies in India. It adopts a doctrinal method of case study, by giving information, that is both descriptive cum documentary in nature, the method utilizes all the available literature about the past and the present study on the topic of global terrorism. It would have been better to have adopted an empirical method also, but due to the sensitive nature of the topic, effective classified information could not be collected directly, from government personnel, intelligence agencies, and the investigative police force. Therefore, this research only relies on open source, as it consists of information that is secondary and it conceptualizes a methodology of doctrinal research, on counter-terrorism agencies.

The Limitation of the Study was that direct interviews could not be conducted with any of the respondents, therefore an empirical study could not be inculcated in this research. However, extensive research was conducted by adapting the doctrinal methodology of collecting secondary information from open sources. Therefore due to the sensitive nature of the paper, most of the data was collected from the secondary source, by extensive work analysis of well-known counter-terrorism experts, who are journalists, academicians, retired and serving senior government personnel, and a repertoire of renowned global authors, whose books and articles have given total rounded information in the understanding of counter-terrorism. The hypothesis study is mainly concerned with the comparative study of counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies and the intellectual intention is to take a critical look into the national security systems of India. The intention is to make an effective comparative study of counter-terrorism agencies, from around the world and discuss security coordination within the international community.

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## **Result of Data Analysis**

The administration of relevant counter-terrorism tactical multi-agencies in India is firmly coordinated by the following central intelligence agencies collectively:

The Intelligence Bureau: The IB is the oldest intelligence agency in the country, it was raised in 1835 and it specializes in the collection of intelligence and internal security matters, related to national security, and counterintelligence, including intelligence of political and VIP movements, criminal activities, law and order and all installation security matters in the country. The IB is the prime intelligence agency with sole responsibility to tackle all counter-terrorism activities in the country (Intelligence Bureau, 2019). Samarveer Singh (2009) found that in 1902, the IB was reorganized as the sole Central Criminal Intelligence Department-CCID and in 1920 it was called the Directorate of Intelligence Bureau-DIB. In 1947 under the Ministry of Home Affairs-MHA it was readdressed as the Central Intelligence Bureau-CIB. In the present era, the IB is the prime intelligence agency that deals with all complicated challenges such as terrorism, secessionist separatism, militant insurgency, subversion Left-Wing extremism, and internal espionage, and at the same time it also deals with all matters related to political related intelligence challenges in the country. The intelligence related to counter-terrorism in the country is coordinated by the IB through its specified conglomerate of Multi Agency Centre-MAC. The bureau's expert field officers and technical staff, play a very important role in preventing counter-intelligence of other foreign intelligence agencies, to stop the covert operations of intelligence collection, with special emphasis on Pakistan and China. The dissemination of intelligence data is further passed down to the (National Security Council-NSC, 2019) on a daily basis. The IB has deployed its field officer in every sensitive district, town, and city and it closely monitors all criminal activities around international borders including coastal areas (Intelligence Bureau-IB, 2019).

The Cabinet Secretariat: The most powerful external intelligence agency of the country is the Research and Analysis Wing-RAW it closely monitors all the international activities of crime and the covert activities of foreign nationals. The agency is professionally addressed as the Cabinet Secretariat, as it directly works under the Prime Minister. It has 'hush-hush' officers that operate as classified undercover secret agents, and the agency collects surreptitious intelligence to better the foreign policy of the country. In due course of time, the agency has expanded its international operations, with several other additional duties to meet the intelligence needs of the country. The RAW was established in 1968, especially after the intelligence failure and the poor performance of India in the Indo-China conflict in 1965. The agency collects all border-related intelligence, with field assistance from the Special Service Bureau-SSB. The Cabinet Secretariat staff members are usually elevated from state police services and the armed forces; they mostly work as undercover officers in foreign offices on deputation duty, such as embassy staff, government administrative officers, and ministerial staff. The growing influence of the Muslim ideology of 'global jihad' and extremist radicalization is promoting transnational terrorism activities and this has enlarged the security responsibility of RAW in collecting counter-terrorism foreign nations and monitoring internal intelligence areas (Counterterrorism in India-Council on foreign relations, 2019). The field setup of RAW has its base office in almost all the countries in the world, collectively the principal agent acts as a link between the case officer and other undercover agents and they collect relevant intelligence at the ground level (Life Style of RAW Agents, Training, Recruitment & Salary, 2019). The field officers collect all intelligence-related data from, the border areas within the country (RAW, India's external intelligence agency, 2019). The RAW intelligence agency has been created on the same organizational form as the US, (Central Intelligence Agency-CIA, 2019). The Director of RAW has its headquarters in the Centre, accordingly, it delegates administrative work amongst separate sections, such as an office section for special operations, another section for the collection of foreign intelligence, a section for internal security matters, the section that handles sensitive electronic and technical matters and the general section. The section for internal security matters is administered by two very important exploration subsections, the air intelligence unit for reconnaissance by the Aviation Research Centre-ARC and the border observation specialist the Special Service Bureau-SSB and all special operations are headed by the Directorate General of Security, for internal security (Internal Security-I Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2019). Furthermore, the special branch of RAW has developed several other specialized establishments to closely monitor various internal security matters of the country, such as the All India Radio Monitor Service-AIR, the Electrical and Technical Section-ETS, and the Office of Special Operation-OSO, amongst others that are strictly classified and not accessible. The AIR firmly monitors the radio and television broadcasts from other countries, which could negatively affect the national security of the country. On the other hand, the ARC is the reconnaissance air intelligence wing of RAW, it surreptitiously conducts aerial surveillance on topography monitoring of borders areas, through assistance from the Signal Intelligence-SIGINT operations, and it operates the photo-reconnaissance of flight intelligence-PHOTINT and map imagery intelligence-IMINT. The Electrical and Technical Section ETS is a very specialized department, it surreptitiously analyses, monitors and collects all coded military broadcasts from across the border and other neighboring countries from across the globe. The Office of Special Operation-OSO looks after all special espionage 'hush-hush' operations that are very classified within the RAW itself (11 Facts About India's Research And Analysis Wing, 2019).

Ministry of Defence Administration: The Ministry of Defence in its very own special way administrates a very prominent intelligence network, it raised the Defense Intelligence Agency-DIA in 2002 and it specifically authorized it to collect intelligence, only from a limited radius of 5 km across the borders, from the LoC in Pakistan and the LAC in China and it remains as one of the leading intelligence agency in the country. Praveen Swami (2022) analyzed that the classified operations of the agency coordinate, with other integrated intelligence agencies of the directorates of Army intelligence, the directorates of Navy intelligence, and the directorates of Air force intelligence, under the direct control of the Director General of DIA. It meticulously collects all defense-related information data, thereafter it analyses it, and disseminates all intelligence information with other defense coordinates and it firmly looks after the defence intelligence management and national security of the country. The DIA has a tremendous role in the counter-terrorism operation in Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeast, where it carries out all works as an intelligence support group. These groups will work in close coordination with the IB and RAW to provide coordinated information to the army in the area of operation (Defence Intelligence Agency, 2019). The agency controls the army technical section of signal intelligence, which is responsible for collecting decrypting code information on enemy communication and satellite-based maps, looked after by the special branch of (Defense Image Processing and Analysis Centre-DIPAC, 2019). The Army, Navy, and Air force special directorates together administrate the defense section of signal intelligence, they operate the special communication equipment cell, to intercept the counterintelligence network, and it analyses and disseminates intelligence information to the DIA through other classified directorates of intelligence units. The department of Military Intelligence-MI is the most powerful intelligence unit of the DIA, it directly collects classified intelligence information related to counter-terrorism and national security covert activities from across the border areas.

The Cabinet Committee on Security: The CCS is the top intelligence decision-making body, it comprises the National Security Adviser-NSA and the cabinet Ministers of Home, Defence, External Affairs and Finance, and they are all headed by the Prime Minister. Together they are the core political decision-making group on internal and external security matters of the country; they hold an exclusive position of an all-India jurisdiction. Technically, the Directors of IB and RAW report directly to the National Security Advisor-NSA other than the Prime Minister to look after all classified intelligence information in the country (National Security Adviser, 2019). Samarveer Singh (2009) found that their classified intelligence operations are restricted to national security issues related to insurgencies, law and order, public order, counter-terrorism, foreign policy and defence. The group of ministers on national security recommended the creation of a collective group of intelligence departments, to coordinate intelligence

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data between the Centre and the State intelligence agencies and therefore, a specialized Multi Agency Centre-MAC was raised by the IB on December 6, 2001 (Multi-Agency Centre of the IB, 2019). The specialization of the MAC became most active after the fiasco and intelligence failure of the 2008 Mumbai attack of 26/11, thereafter it took all internal security matters into its hand, especially in matters related to terrorism and counter-terrorism. The MAC later created several sub-operational departments in mostly all the States, which were administered by the central intelligence headquarters. Hereinafter, there is a proposal to build a better National Intelligence Grid-NIG to regularly improve the coordination of intelligence operations between the centre and the state (National Intelligence Grid to be ready by early 2020, 2019). Therefore, the 2008 Mumbai 26/11 failure proposed many drawbacks in the intelligence network of the country and the proposal led to the creation of the National Counter Terrorism Centre-NCTC, now under the administration of the IB and the MHA. The agency operates on the lines of the US intelligence agencies; it focuses on vetting counter-terrorism, by handling actionable intelligence operations and analyzing collected information of various intelligence agencies under one central operation (National Counter Terrorism Centre, What Is It and Why there is the opposition? 2019).

Special Tactical Units: The 1984 massive casualties and damage of the golden temple 'Operation Blue Star' in Punjab saw an urgent need to create a specialized elite force to tackle counter-terrorism activities in India (Operation Blue Star: How an Indian army raid on the Golden Temple ended in disaster, 2019). Thereafter, a comparative study was made on the best special forces from around the world, such as the Special Air Service-SAS of United Kingdom (Special Air Service Association, 2019), the National Gendarmerie Intervention Group-GIGN of France (GIGN French Anti-Terror Unit, 2019), the Border Protection Group 9 from the Federal Police-GSG-9 of Germany (Federal Police-Duties and Organization-Special Forces GSG 9, 2019), and Ami Pedahzur, (2019) found that the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit or Unit 269-SAYERET-MATKAL of Israel, and Charlie Beckwith and Donald Knox (2019) found that the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta-SFOD-D also referred to as DELTA Force of USA.

National Security Guard: The research outcome was the creation of the elite and the best tactical counter-terrorism unit in India, and the NSG was created by the National Security Guard Act, 1986 (The National Security Guard Act, 1986-MHA, 2019). The specialized unit undertakes several roles including covert reconnaissance, counter-terrorism, direct action, and hostage rescue. It was specially created to tackle and defend against very high-intensity terrorist threats; it uses tactical intelligence to execute special surgical operations, against counter-terrorism and hijacking hostage-taking operations in the country (National Security Guard, 2019). The NSG has successfully conducted several specialized operations in counter-terrorism, such as the 1988 Operation Black Thunder I and II in Punjab, the 2002 Operation Thunderbolt or Operation Vajra Sakthi at Akshardham Temple complex in Gujarat, and Operation Black Tornado, in 2008, the 26/11 Mumbai attack (11 Amazing facts that you need to know about the NSG Commandos of India, 2019). The intelligence failure of the Mumbai 26/11 episode, highlighted the very late arrival of the NSG unit from Delhi, thereafter it created four sub-units in Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, and Kolkata to maximize speed in its counter-terrorism operations in the country (NSG hubs in Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Kolkata, 2019). The organization set up of the Directorate of NSG consists of several divisions, the operation division comprises of the Special Action Groups-SAG and Special Ranger Groups-SRG. The specialized commandos of the SAG are drawn from the armed forces, it is sub-divided into SAG-51 for handling counter-terrorism operations and SAG-52 for counter-hijacking operations. The specialized commandos of the SRG are drawn from the Central and State police forces to carry out surveillance and security-related operations. The specialized NSG maintains a database on post-bomb blast studies in the National Bomb Data Centre-NBDC, it is the fifth such specialized institution in the world next to the USA, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia (Believe it or not, India had the highest number of blasts in the world, 2019).

Special Protection Group: Thereafter, the Special Protection Group (SPG) is the exclusive agency constituted for the security of the Prime Minister and his family. The sudden assassination of PM Indira Gandhi in 1984, constituted the Birbal Nath Committee in 1985 to create an exclusive security agency for the protection of Prime Ministers and their family. The SPG was raised under the Cabinet Secretariat and it became completely operational through the Parliament Act, of 1988. The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, added immediate SPG cover to all former Prime Ministers and their immediate family members. The communication branch of the SPG collects and disseminates most of the intelligence information with other intelligence agencies (Special Protection Group India, 2019).

350 310 300 223 250 200 150 100 67 50 0 India 636 Districts ■ Terrorism Affected Naxal LWE (20 States) ■J&K Cross-Border Terrorism ■ NE Militant Insurgency (6 States)

Figure 2: South Asian Terrorist Portal (SATP-2010), India Terrorism Data

## **Discussion of Data Analysis**

The objective of this research paper is to study the existing national security structures in India, to focus on methods to better the system of counter-terrorism, to understand the required substantial law, and collect legal evidence. This is only possible by making a reasonable test and first understanding the various intelligence structures in combating terrorism, to legally deal with the menace of terrorism both in India and around the world. This is possible by collecting valuable suggestions in measuring the strength and weaknesses to counter global terrorism, and thereafter making a comparative analysis on the legal aspect for prosecution, with special emphasis on India.

The research methodology makes a comparative case study by collecting data on counter-terrorism multi-agencies in India and thereafter it expands research for more improvement. It adopts a doctrinal method of case study, by giving information, that is both descriptive cum documentary in nature, the method utilizes all the available literature about the past and the present study on the topic of counterterrorism. Therefore due to the sensitive nature of the topic, effective classified information could not be collected directly and this research only relies on the open-source documentation of counter-terrorism multi-agencies in India.

It is reiterated, there was a limitation in the case study as direct interviews could not be conducted with any of the respondents, therefore an empirical study could not be inculcated in this research. However, extensive research was conducted by adapting the doctrinal methodology of collecting secondary information from open sources. Therefore due to the sensitive nature of the paper, the criteria for the selection of the respondents is irregular, it was collected through interviews conducted from the secondary source, by extensive work analysis of well-known counter-terrorism experts, who are journalists, academicians, retired and serving senior government personnel and a repertoire of renowned global authors, whose books and articles have given total rounded information in the understanding of counter-terrorism multi-agencies in India. The intellectual intention is to take a critical look into the hypothesis study, which was mainly concerned with summarizing the comparative analysis of counterterrorism multi-agencies, from around the world and discussing the lack of security coordination within the international community. It is very difficult to collect legal evidence and concentrate on all the terrorist incidents that took place in India and around the globe. Therefore, a few sensitive terrorist plots in different periods and from different states in India were randomly taken for analysis, the comparative study has been done in no particular year order or seriatim sequence, it just discusses global terrorism as a whole chronic problem and improves upon counter-terrorism measures as a right in rem.

### **Conclusion**

International crime syndicate and global transnational terrorism is a menace not only in India but a major problem all over the world, it is a wrecker of nations and destroyer of societies. The solution is to focus on the future, to build a stronger epitome of globalism so that we can protect the innocent, the poor, and the powerless from being victimized by terrorism. Therefore an effective updated counterterrorism strategy and better coordination amongst national and international organizations are the need of the hour. The future belongs to sovereign independent nations that protect their citizens, respect their neighbors, and honor the differences that make each country special and unique; this status co needs to be maintained. The free world must embrace its national foundations with utmost sincerity. We need much more trust and internal cooperation among nations. It must not attempt to erase or replace them. Arguably the future belongs to the patriots and not the globalists with a chasm of differences.

'Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah' this part shloka from the Mahabharata in Sanskrit means the law protects when it is protected. It implies that a protected 'dharma' protects the protector. Here 'dharma' implies the value system, traditions, and cosmic principles which uphold life in this universe. The principle includes compassion and love towards all, this pure virtue needs to be protected expeditiously.

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