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Terrorist Bomb Blasts' Socio-Economic and Psychological Effects on Survivors' Experience

AMAN KUMAR¹

ABSTRACT

The study researched and used qualitative research to examine the effects of bomb blast on survivors' experience as how he was affected socio economically and psychologically. Results showed that although the event may have taken several years, its effects had yet to wear off on the participants. Those who have survived nonetheless bear scars that serve as constant reminders of their tragedy. They are tormented by psychological issues which, in comparison with the problems and pains due to physical damage, are often harder to deal with for them. The majority of the participants said they had frequent stress-related psychological symptoms, as well as additional symptoms like melancholy, depression, anxiety, impatience, loss of focus in daily tasks, nightmares, and incident flashbacks. Survivors of terrorist bombings have also suffered major long-term socio-economic consequences, including unemployment, concern about their children's schooling, and deteriorating health. In addition, poor government support and insufficient rehabilitative help, together with decreasing social-economic status, are one of the most important challenges facing this group of survivors, who have to be dealt with immediately and appropriately. For individuals, families, children and big groups of survivors and respondents, special strategies are described. Finally, we address how specialists of mental health might be important consultants in community recovery efforts.

Keywords: *mental health, terrorism, trauma, socio-economic effects and psychological effects.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of terrorism is not universally acknowledged, however numerous experts have tried to determine it in a variety of ways. For example, a common definition offered by Schmid and Jongman (1988, p. 28) describes

terrorism as a tactic of recurrent violence that inspires concern and inspires fear and employs (semi-) clandestine actors or group actors on idiosyncratic, criminal or political grounds. Immediate human victims of violence are often chosen from a target demographic randomly

¹ Author is a Student at KIIT School of Law, India.

(targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic objectives) and act as generators of messages. Consequently, terrorism is a way to create fear and worry for different political, religious or ideological purposes by using force and is meant to have psychological and societal detrimental effects aside from physical damage. It focuses on a nation's social capital, cohesion, values and functioning capability (Tanielian & Stein, 2006).

In India's north-eastern states, terrorist activity is on the rise:

India has been the target of hundreds of terrorist attacks in recent decades. According to the Global Terrorism Index, it is the sixth worst terrorist country in the world affected (2014) and 7.35 in (2020). Jammu and Kashmir separatists, East Indian Maoists (Naxalites), and North Eastern State nationalists (Tol- Polar, 2009) are all major terrorist organisations in India, with linkages to tribal, political, and linguistic identities. In particular, many extremist organisations, including the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, the National Socialist Council of Nagalim and the United Liberation Tigers of Arunachal, have emerged from the north eastern countries of this country. This is a result of the desperately attempted protection of their identity, culture, and language by different tribal people and their requirements go from self-determination to secession and sovereignty (Bijukumar, 2013). According to Bijukumar (2013) their sense of alienation from the mainstream national identity and an inequality in the distribution of resources across diverse communities is one of the primary factors

that has aided the emergence of these extremist groups and their periodic insurgencies.

Thousands of civilians have been killed in these terror attacks as a result of these continuous insurgencies. With nearly 1000 terrorist-related civilian fatalities across the country, including over 400 in the north-eastern states alone, 2008 was one of the bloodiest years on record (Srivastava, 2009). Assam has been declared one of the most violent states in the north eastern region in 2008. On October 30, 2008, that single day, Assam was shaken by 13 synchronised explosions that devastated different areas of the state and killed 84 people, including six simultaneous explosives in different parts of Guwahati city. Mob violence ensued in the aftermath of the blasts, with police and emergency responders being attacked. The irate mobs also vandalised several ambulances, police cars, and resuscitation trucks who had witnessed such acts of savagery for the first time, often for the first time in their lives. The Islamic Security Force of Indian Mujahideen (ISFIM), a relatively young terrorist organisation at the time, claimed authority for the attacks. However, the prospect of involvement by other organisations has not been ruled out by the investigators (Srivastava, 2009).

Despite the fact that Assam has been torn apart by repeated terrorist attacks, there has been little academic research on the psychosocial repercussions of such attacks on survivors' lives. The immediate physical needs of victims are prioritised in the aftermath of every disaster, while the mental scars and trauma that such disasters leave in the minds of victims and their

families are typically disregarded. Furthermore, whereas many studies focus on the macroeconomic impact of terrorist operations, few have examined the microeconomic impact of terrorist operations on households and individuals. As a result, this study is a significant step forward in this area, as it tries to increase understanding of the impact of terrorist activities, such as bomb blasts, by using a qualitative research method to analyse the socioeconomic and psychological repercussions on the lives of survivors.

II. SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF TERRORISM

Terrorist operations may have a varied economic impact. Many direct losses are caused, including death and property damage. Terrorist attacks can potentially harm businesses and infrastructure (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2009). In addition, investment in projects aimed at combating terrorist activity has a long-term effect. Terrorism appears to have a number of other effects on economic growth, including limiting investments as well as redirecting direct foreign investment (Abadie & Gardeazabal, 2008), increasing government spending on counter-terrorism security measures, as well as increases in insurance premiums and security spending (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2009). Terrorism on a global scale is thought to stifle per capita growth by 0.038 to 0.048 percent (cited in Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2009). Small developing countries, according to Sandler and Enders (2008), suffer significant macroeconomic consequences as a result of terrorism. However, extensive study on the economic implications of terrorism in India is

lacking (Lama, 2005). Terrorist attacks and explosions in India's financial centres, as well as the resulting large-scale destruction and losses, have been prevalent, according to Lama. According to a draught of a white paper on Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in India, the destruction of public and private property in Jammu and Kashmir alone is estimated to have cost 20,000 million Rupees (298,185,200 US dollars) between 1990 and 1998. In 2003, ULFA terrorists attacked an Indian Oil Corporation storage station in eastern Assam, burning roughly 500,000 litres of motor spirit worth approximately 200 million rupees (2,981,852 dollars) (Lama, 2005). As a result, terrorist attacks and internal conflicts will undoubtedly have serious long-term negative implications for a developing country such as India.

Terrorist activities can have far-reaching consequences for a country's social well-being, as well as a wide range of social consequences. Terrorism's social impacts can be more evident and far-reaching than even economic ones (Waxman, 2011). Many innocent people are slaughtered, leaving their loved ones bereft of power and traumatised. Survivors must also contend with a slew of other challenges aside from mourning the loss of close ones. Such attacks have the potential to disrupt an individual's entire social support system, which could be quite traumatic in and of itself, especially for those who lose their only source of income. They may have to start over in order to rebuild their life, which could have a detrimental impact on victims' socioeconomic status by

limiting their earning potential, educational opportunities, and overall standard of living.

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF TERRORISM

The first focus after the disaster is on reconstruction of infrastructure and victims' lives. Psychological trauma might nevertheless last for an extended period of time or a lifetime. Much research looked at the various repercussions of disasters. Traumatic occurrences are the ones involving actual death or endangered injury and responses to these are fear, impotence, terror, anxiety, depression, sorrow, guilt or wrath, according to the US Psychiatric Association (2000). Terrorist operations, including public bomb blasts, can be extremely distressing, as these attacks will always be quick and unexpected. The most distressing psychology is terrorist attacks and mass violence, which results in serious psychological results (Norris, 2002; Khan, Sahandi, Hussain, Iqbal & Rizwan 2012) as well as a mix of reactions (Khan, et al., 2012). Depending on the magnitude of the damage, the proximity to blowing, brutality of the incident, a manner of handling, and expecting future repeat events, these reactions can range from person to person (Greenberg, Simon, Pyszczynski, Solomon & Chatel, 1992). After a severe experience, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is frequent.

PTSD symptoms can be grouped into three categories according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSMIV); symptoms such as reexperienced symptoms such as flashbacks and

nightmares, avoiding symptoms like being distant from trauma, sleeping difficulty and emotional numbness and hyper-arousal symptoms, PTSD and other behavioural and health disorders, along with other effects following terrorist incidents, have been demonstrated to be the most likely (Galea, Nandi and Wlahov, 2005) and to have psychologically harmed up to two thirds of those directly affected by terrorist acts, (Beaton & Murphy, 2002). Many people acquire anxiety disorders, depression, and substance abuse in addition to PTSD (Abenhaim, Dab, & Salmi, 1992; North, et al., 1999). Even after several months and over long distances, people reported chronically high levels of psychological pain according to studies conducted after the terrorist assault on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 (Silver, Holman, McIntosh, Poulin, & Gil-Rivas, 2002).

As a result, it's clear that being directly exposed to a traumatic event has a bad impact on victims' mental health. Moreover, terrorist activity also gives rise to a sense of social victimisation and increases the negatives and stereotypes of the members of a group to whom terrorists belong, such as a rise in the negative Muslim stereotype in the USA following an assault by the World Trade Center. Following terrorist attacks, these acts are frequently linked to xenophobia and ethnocentrism as an identification and support with higher tolerance of in-group members for the decline of out-group members (Waxman, 2011).

Research methods- The data for this study was gathered through numerous publications, websites, newspapers and different articles

containing several researchers who organised a semi-interview with ten survivors of the terrorist bombing in Guwahati city, Assam, in 2008. Every responder lived inside Guwahati's city boundaries, and was deliberately selected by the researcher and the personal network of his acquaintances. The main criterion for selecting participants were those who had survived the bombing and experienced, witnessed or been severely affected by the bombing in 2008.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The consequences of effects of bomb blast on survivors' experience were the two broad aims of this study, which are explored in detail below.

- **Socio-economic effects-** The bombings' first noticeable influence on the respondents' lives can be seen in their income and social position. They had the support of the family's primary earner, or in most cases, the family's sole earner, to meet their basic needs and assure their well-being prior to the explosions. Because of this economic support framework, they felt socially secure. The family's support structure broke when the family's main breadwinner was gravely injured or died, and a sense of well-being was replaced with anxiety and impotence. The sections that follow discuss four sub-themes within the topic of socio economic ramifications of terrorist bomb blasts, namely children's education, employment, health, and general socioeconomic status decline.

- **Children education-** According to the findings of the scholar interview six out of ten survivors reported enduring serious financial hardships as a result of the bombs, which

threatened to jeopardise their children's schooling. Any government financial assistance was only given when all of the relevant paperwork was completed. In the meanwhile, they had to pay for whatever costs they needed out of whatever funds they had. Parts of medical expenditures, as well as the purchase of cooking supplies and other basic necessities, left very little money for other expenses. In the newspaper TOI a similar case happened with an army wife whose husband died in a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir and she got financially too weak that she was unable to manage education for her 10 year old child. The government provided her payment and a monthly education allowance, but she realises that she and her kid are looking to a dismal future without a safe source of income. 'I don't know how long I will be able to continue in this manner, ' she remarked, fighting back tears. Without a job, surviving in this city is difficult, and the compensation I received will hardly last me a lifetime.'

- **Employment-** According to the UNOCT, (United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism) a 50-year-old widow whose only daughter was killed in the bomb remarked, "My daughter's death took away my family's only earning member." I am now retired, with a monthly salary of 1, 500 Rupees and a portion of the compensation money left over. I don't have any other means of surviving.' According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report, 40% of bomb blast victims' family members acquire steady employment to support themselves, while 60% do not.

- **Health-** It is clear that the bombings' injuries have had a significant impact on a number of people's lives. When the injured person is unable to pay for their own medical treatment, it is apparent that any health-related concerns that their immediate family members face will place them under additional, severe strain. Things are much more difficult for certain victims, and things are only going to get worse because official records will only show them as a family member of a bomb victim, with no chance of receiving any health benefits.

- **In general, people's socioeconomic situation is deteriorating-** When a tragedy such as a bombing results in the death or major injury of the family's main earner, the family may no longer enjoy the same financial security as before the attack, and it is natural for their social position to decline. The majority of the bomb blast survivors indicated that at first, neighbours, community members, and friends sympathised and offered assistance, but that this sympathy and support faded over time as the tragedy faded from public consciousness. With the passage of time, this emotion grows stronger in their minds, especially as they realise that the sympathy in the minds of those around them is gradually being replaced by a sense of stoic indifference.

- **Psychological effects:** The psychological repercussions of the explosions were clear in the bomb blast survivors' testimonies, according to Hindustan Times. The negative psychological impacts were manifested as flashbacks, hyper-arousals, hopelessness, helplessness, and a loss of interest in daily activities, all of which are signs of PTSD and depression. In this work,

however, no official assessment or diagnosis of clinical PTSD or depression was made using standardised methodologies.

- **Mental health related symptoms -** Bomb blast survivors often experience stress-related symptoms such as intrusion, avoidance, and hyper-arousal, according to the UNOCT research. Dread, worry, melancholy, a lack of interest in daily activities, and pessimism were among the other psychological symptoms mentioned.

V. DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to find out what psychological, social, and economic effects terrorist bomb attacks have on victims' lives. This study clearly reveals that, despite the passage of time since the accident, those who survived still bear scars that serve as permanent reminders of their horrific ordeal. They're all coping with psychological issues that are more difficult to deal with than the pain and suffering brought on by their physical afflictions, they say. Sadness, sadness, irritability, a lack of focus in daily activities, nightmares, flashbacks of events, and anxiety are all prevalent stress-related psychiatric symptoms among bomb blast survivors. The findings of this study are consistent with many other studies that have found that the majority of terrorist victims experience chronic and long-term stress-related symptoms (Galea, et al., 2005; Beaton & Murphy, 2002; Tanielian & Stein, 2006). To add insult to injury, this study found that survivors' mental health was impacted not only by the traumatic event itself, in this case terrorist bomb blasts, but also by subsequent socio-economic

and other daily stressors such as financial constraints, social support network breakdowns or unemployment, health deterioration, or lack of access to basic and medical facilities.. These findings support the theory that not only direct exposure to a traumatic incident, but also the socioeconomic milieu in which the victims are exposed to various everyday stresses, is an essential predictor of the survivors' mental health (Miller & Ras-mussen, 2014). The fear that the families of the deceased and injured have had over their children's education access to competent medical facilities, and jobs is a direct result of the terrorist bombings. In most cases, the bombings took away the family's sole source of income. For those who have lost loved ones in the bombing, life has become a path full of doubts and obstacles. The majority of the survivors are having difficulty obtaining work due to their lack of school degrees.

It is not primarily the government's obligation to aid victims of man-made disasters, such as bombings, in getting their life back on track. Neighbors, community members, and society as a whole can all play a role in ensuring their well-being and providing a sense of social security.

VI. LIMITATIONS

India has expressed disappointment with the UN's inability to develop a legal framework to combat international terrorism, claiming that this "lacunae" is hampering enforcement attempts to eliminate safe havens for terrorists and their support networks. The lack of clarity on terrorism, particularly inside the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), has cost India dearly in terms of both economic and human capital.

Indian military continue to die virtually weekly in theatres such as Kashmir in the fight against terrorism. This serves as a constant reminder of the international community's, UN's, and UNSC's deplorable and fundamental failures in attaining their most basic goals of achieving world peace.

Non-state actors are capable of inflicting violence and terrorist acts on any country in the world. Terrorism is best combated by a coordinated national effort aided by foreign and regional partners. As a result, Pakistan's ongoing support and assistance to terrorists is tantamount to admitting that such actions are part of a well-crafted strategy against India, and India's stated and implemented policy rejects any relation between terrorism and peace talks.

VII. FUTURE SCOPE

Terrorists and terrorism will change over time, demonstrating that they are far more flexible than the state in adapting to new methods and technology in order to achieve their objectives. They will change as society changes and as the government reacts to them. The ability to deal with them will also be determined by how society reacts as well as the State's efficiency and agility. Technology will continue to advance and improve exponentially rather than linearly. The next battleground between terrorists and counter-terrorists will be learning to envision, think, and act exponentially. Future battles are unlikely to include huge forces involved in a protracted land battle. Attacks might now be carried out invisibly, masterminded by a computer whiz kid and a science graduate, with the targets being our way of life. The modern-day terrorist seeks to

utilise 21st-century techniques to transport us all back to the seventh century. It's a highly unorthodox conflict that the government wants to fight with solely conventional weaponry and methods. Unless the state learns to be flexible and adaptable, and unless there is broad scope for international cooperation, it will always be an uphill battle with no clear winner." (Vikram Sood, 2010).

The 26/11 Mumbai incident was the deadliest terror strike in history, killing over 160 people and leaving wounds on the city's residents. The government was forced to upgrade its security system as a result of the occurrence.

- According to the Indian Navy, the government has increased coastal and maritime security along the entire coast.
- The government has boosted the number of multi-agency counter-terrorism centres along the coasts in order to share terrorism-related information on a daily basis.
- To facilitate speedy reaction to terror threats, four new National Security Guards (NSG) hubs — each with an operating strength of roughly 250 soldiers — were opened in Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai.

These are the various procedures taken to prevent terrorist attacks, and they are working to some extent.

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