

REFERENCES

1. <http://www.deloitte.com/1>
2. Sustainable Development - Linking economy, society and environment By Tracey Strange and Anne Bayley
3. Inclusive Growth —Vision and Strategy, Planning Commission (2008)
4. Suryanarayana, M.H. (2008): "What Is Exclusive About 'Inclusive Growth'?"
5. <http://www.oecd.org>

Terrorism – Is it all that Religious?

Kanika Tomar- 2nd year

Summary: *Terrorism is becoming a major concern as certain forces seek to topple the world order through destruction and violence. In this catastrophic scenario, one is often led to believe that religion and religious extremism is the be-all and end-all of terrorism. The article seeks to challenge this notion and provides an alternative view that economic and social disparities are the root cause of the backlash we see in the form of terrorism. The author of the article brings out this point in special reference to the Boko Haram incident. The article challenges the conventional mindset we often adhere to.*

'The Fifth Freedom' can be understood crudely, but with a fair degree of accuracy, as the freedom to rob, to exploit and to dominate, to undertake any course of action to ensure that existing privilege is protected and advanced (Noam Chomsky, 1989). Fifth, after freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. I believe that a profound understanding of this fifth freedom can bring about a paradigm shift in the present socio-polity and economy.

In The Name Of God!

Atrocities committed, people butchered, abducted & tortured, children crippled, humanity violated, and all of this was and still is, punctuated with words like God or Allah.

Somehow, if not obviously so, along the way, religious fundamentalism or extremism has become synonymous with terrorism. Not only have we been led to believe or rather chosen to believe (for things are always easier when you can put the blame on somebody else) that religion is a perpetrator but also the reason for the inception of terrorism. This widely

held misperception has led to increasing animosity between communities and has only aggravated communalism, entire communities are held collectively responsible and shamed for the acts of few, and their very existence demeaned.

There is little doubt in our minds that terrorism is nourished through religious extremism. And if there is any, it is washed clean by the unabashed endorsement of the grotesque acts committed by these religious extremists in the name of God.

Corroborated with such evidence our perceptions are seldom questioned. But we fail to see the bigger picture.

What Goes Around Comes Around

What happens is that we perceive what is given to us as the truth sans manipulations, without understanding the underlying processes at work. I have an easy explanation for why, I think, it happens. When an entity takes responsibility of its inhumane undertakings and passionately justifies it through means of divine verdicts or dogmas, we do not imagine there'd be any reasons to lie for they have already owned up to the most heinous acts possible, it'd seem rather naive if not comical. Even though the ideologies maybe religious but were they the reason why the organization in its destructive form took birth? What we don't understand is that even though they are not lying, what they're saying is not the truth in itself. Religious extremism is not causal of terrorism but they are correlated, in the sense that it is never the origin but a means of endorsement or sustenance, even.

Rather I believe that economic oppression and the consequent frustration leads to organized violent backlashes in the form of terrorism. Majority of terrorist acts and organizations, find their roots in

inequality, both social and economic. Moreover, social inequalities are aggravated by economic inequalities and become lethal only in the presence of the latter. Consequently, terrorism is a reaction to economic inequity and oppression, aided and supported by a few other minor ingredients.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram is an Islamist, terrorist, and militant movement active in Nigeria and some neighbouring areas. The organization was consolidated in its current form in the year 2002 and has become increasingly violent since 2009. Boko Haram, meaning “Western education is forbidden”, is officially called *Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’Awati Wal-Jihad* which means “People Committed to the Prophet’s Teachings for Propagation and Jihad”. Due to its radical Islamic propaganda few understand that the organization traces its roots to the post-independence socio-economic degradation. Nigeria gained independence from the British in the year 1960. Under the colonial rule, even though Christian Missions established western educational institutions, Britain’s policy of indirect rule and validation of Islamic tradition stopped them from doing so in the Muslim dominant Northern region. These differences by 1960 had accentuated the difference in access to ‘modern’ education and these imbalances transferred to other aspects of the functioning of the country such as politics.

70% of Nigerians are employed in agriculture. Agriculture used to be the principal foreign exchange earner of Nigeria. The contribution of agriculture to GDP, which was 63 percent in 1960, declined to 34 per cent in 1988, not because the industrial sector increased its share but due to neglect of the agricultural sector. It was, therefore, not surprising that by 1975, the economy had become a net importer of basic food items. The manufacturing sector, which was 10% of GDP in 1980, constitutes only 6.9% in the revised figures. Boko Haram opposes the Westernization of Nigerian society and the concentration of the wealth of the country among members of a small political elite, mainly in the Christian south of the country. Nigeria is Africa’s biggest economy with a GDP of \$521.8 billion, but 60% of its population of 173 million (2013) live on less than \$1 a day.

This Looks Like The End Of The Story; But It Isn’t. The Naxalites were born of the India Government’s

incapability to reduce economic disparity between sharecroppers and landlords. Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), a Christian militant group active in Uganda and central Africa was nurtured in the arms of stark regional disparity and economic deterioration of Uganda, the countless terrorist groups all have in common a history of economic suppression, driven to violence as the last resort to restore some order, or dignity, utilising their ‘fifth freedom’. Yes, religion becomes the brand ambassador, as has always been the case religion is used to justify that which morality cannot, be it casteism or violence. We need to understand where this need for violence germinates from and eliminate that. In 2014, the top one per cent owned 48 per cent of the world’s wealth, up from 44 per cent five years ago. In Africa, the absolute number living on less than \$2 a day has doubled since 1981. These preposterous imbalances aggravated by the unwavering belief in the ‘free market’ are frightening. In the light of this rising inequality, terrorism will only become more rampant as we dehumanise people and abuse their rights to a dignified life.

REFERENCES

1. *Economics and Terrorism: What We Know, What We Should Know and the Data We Need**, Fernanda Llussa& José Tavares
2. *The Culture of Terrorism*, Noam Chomsky
3. *Radical, Religious & Violent: The New Economics of Religion*, Eli Berman (http://www.amazon.com/Radical-Religious-Violent-Economics-Terrorism/dp/0262516675#reader_0262516675)
4. *Religious extremism main cause of terrorism, according to report*, The Guardian (<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/nov/18/religious-extremism-main-cause-of-terrorism-according-to-report>)
5. World Bank Data (<http://www.worldbank.org/>)
6. *An Overview of The Nigerian Economic Growth and Development*, A. H. Ekpo& O. J. Umoh, Online Nigeria (<http://www.onlinenigeria.com/economics/>)
7. *Nigeria’s economic transition reveals deep structural distortions*, Zainab Usman, 2014
8. *In Davos, Worrying About Inequality*, Seumas Milne, The Hindu, 2015
9. Naxalites, Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naxalite>)
10. LRA, Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord%27s_Resistance_Army)
11. Boko Haram, Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_Haram)
12. Nigeria, Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria>)