Terrorism: A Psychological Study

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Christopher Hithens in his polemical debate in The *New York Times* dubbed the September 11 perpetrator as 'slamic terrorism' with a naked face. Leaving the issue of the Islamic nature of September 11 attack to religious Manicheans and clashes-of-civilisations theorists to argue out among themselves, the nature and context of terrorism warrant an understanding of deeper psychological issues involved in its origin and growth. The wide network of bin Laden's Al-Qaeda and an undercurrent of support among the Muslim hoi pollois reveal that the growth of terrorism is more than a mere re-appearance of the spirit of the Crusade or, cross-border terrorism as Indian government claims it out to be. Terrorism has been seen as a manifestation of a deviant group and many analysts have suggested that for any worthwhile explanation of the phenomenon, one must turn to the study of the individual or collective pathological condition or carry out a thorough research on the structural conditions of society. The psychological dimension of terrorism reveals that it is the combination of all these three arguments and even more than these three.

While the causes of terrorism should be situated in the extant structural condition of society, the psychological dimensions provide a deeper insight into the process of the growth of a terrorist and terrorist organisation subsuming within it socio-economic issues as well. The experimental findings and psychological postulations arising out of these experiments on many aspects of human behaviour help in understanding *how* and *why* people turned terrorists and develop organisations to achieve their objectives. The paper discusses these psychological principles which can make a better understanding of the nature of terrorism and on that basis strategies to counter it.

However there are methodological problems in the study of terrorism. Obvious hazards preclude natural observation; content analysis of terrorists' public declarations are more revealing of what terrorists wish to think than of the reality of their experiences; and post hoc interviews with ex-terrorists are methodologically problematic in terms of subjects' selective and reconstructive recall. Nevertheless there are serious attempts to study terrorism. *Political Terrorism–A new guide to actors, databases, theories and literature* is an excellent compilation on many dimensions of terrorism[1]. Yossef Bodansky's *Bin Laden –The Man Who Declared War on America* is a recent attempt to understand the most tangible icon of terrorism in present times.[2]

The State Factor: Legality vs. Legitimacy

Terrorism has been defined (though precise definition is difficult) as the use or threat of violence by small against non-combatants of the large groups for avowed political objectives[2]. This is terrorism from below i.e. concerned with grievances or ideologies opposed to existing state in contrast to terrorism from above, or what in common language is known as state terrorism.

Article 1.2 of the Geneva Convention for the Prevention of Terrorism defines "act of terrorism" to mean "criminal acts directed against a state and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons of the general public.[4] This operational definition posits state as a central factor in the issue of terrorism. Nation state as unit of authority and

hegemony over different groups in a heterogeneous society draws its raison de etre from different sources – from constitutional to contractual, etc. As much as its sources of authority are drawn from constitution or covenant, the metaphysical component of the state i. e. the idea of state acknowledged or accepted by the people highlights the fact that more than legal sovereignty, it is the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of people which provides its *raison de etre* for its acceptance by its citizen. This legitimacy of the state derives from subject peoples' perception that the state as an institution is an extension of their collective selves fulfilling their needs and aspirations. When the state *appears* to fail in fulfilling these needs, there tends to be a crisis of legitimacy. Thus, there is an important distinction between legal authority and norms on one hand and legitimised authorities on the other. In traditional thinking, the legality of authority has its sources in effective control, heredity, constitutional process, foreign recognition and other such tests.

'Legitimised' authority in contrast refers to that authority which is derived from those over whom it is exercised. This, however, should not be construed as applying only to the constitutional process by which subjects select authorities. It implies perceived satisfaction of human needs by those over whom authority is exercised. Thus, the test of legitimacy rests on satisfying needs rather than the process by which authorities are selected or self-selected. Authority–subordinate relationship is characterised by reciprocal gains that flow from such relationship. The role of legitimised authorities is not primarily to preserve law and order. It is to demonstrate an ability to accomplish, planning and problem-solving, to disseminate knowledge and generally perform the role of leadership effectively in the pursuit of values and needs.[5] When the state loses legitimacy a process of distance rather than identification sets in. The first stage in the process of the growth of terrorism is the process of alienation, de-legitimation and distancing of certain groups or people in general from the state.

Deprivation, Crisis of Legitimacy and Alienation

Alienation is a state or a process in which something lost by or estranged from the person who originally possessed it. It is a feeling of detachment from society or state. Alienation is characterised by pessimistic view of the world, strong opposition and a weak sense of commitment and bitterness and anger towards society or state or authority. Specific dimensions of alienation are powerlessness and normlessness.[6]

Alienated state is, first of all, a relatively deprived state in which individual the individual or groups a sense of loss. This is a state in which individuals or groups believe that his/her/their association with the process of governance or state has not paid off. In contrast, the individual or the group views the authority or the existing situation as hostile to his or group's interests. This feeling of loss which alienation breeds may be real or perceived. For example, the whole Muslim world feels bitter about American complicity in Israel's handling of Palestine affair. Its partisan role on the Arab-Israel stand-off, its blindness to the killing of the innocent Palestinians by Israel. This has led to a feeling in the minds of average Muslim mind that America's claims that it stands for democracy is shallow. Further the continuation of autocratic rule in many states of Middle East, lack of democratic space preclude the general aspiration of people coming to fore. And last of all,, these states' acquiescence with America like the role of South Arabia in providing base to US during the Gulf War and afterwards villanised the US in their perception and alienated them from their governments. Osama's shift to radicalism and targeting of America started after the Gulf War when American army stationed in South Arabia during the war and aftermath which he considered as polluting the holy land of South Arabia. Similarly in case of Kashmir militancy, the root has been traced to lack of development,

economic skewdness among the Hindus and Muslims of the state and continuous rigging of electoral machinery of the state and intervention by authorities from New Delhi after Kashmir's merger with Indian Union in 1947. The general people feel that existing government of the state has failed to fulfil or represent people's aspiration. On the contrary, there is a feeling that the existing situation or the system is incapable to meet or redress their problems and aspiration which they consider to be legitimate.

This process of alienation, according to Ved Marwah, goes through three stages of development: (i) crisis of confidence; (ii) conflict of legitimacy and (iii) crisis of legitimacy[7] The feeling of dissatisfaction with the existing system led to alienation from the state. This has also led to a feeling of de-legitimation. Thus they would aspire to ameliorate their situation by creating a *new* world, a *new* society and a *new* state. The feeling of being victims of the system – a system which failed to fulfil their needs and aspirations – and lack of power and efficacy are critical factors in the origin of terrorism. Bandura's concept of *efficacy* is a critical factor in the origin of terrorism. His concept of efficacy – personal and political – highlights the importance of efficacy in the perception and behavioural orientation of the individuals to a situation. Political efficacy refers to a sense of power and belief that one's action and involvement will influence the politics of the day[8]. Self-efficacy deals with one's perceived abilities and competencies to deal with a given task. In a situation where people feel deprived and grieved, they perceive the situation as leading to their inefficacious behaviour. The Kashmiris, for instance, feel that their existential needs and situations are not likely to improve within the existing system – whatever they do. This feeling of inefficacy and powerlessness both at the individual and collective levels lead to some sort of a numbing of the collective self consciousness. Thus alienation sets in and with it an acute sense of loss of legitimate power. This perception of powerlessness is carried over to a would-be terrorist, behind whose violent rhetoric and action lies the pain of powerlessness – a pain which activities perceived as strength can only assuage.[9] This alienation, or the sense of powerlessness are converted and turned towards the *perceived enemy*.

Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

This hypothesis hold that peoples' alienation and frustration are converted to aggression which may be directed inward or outward. In the process of the genesis of terrorism, frustration-aggression is turned towards perceived tormentor – those persons who stand for status quo or it ends up in endless violence.

Aggression is very difficult to define. (Bandura has called such a task as semantic jungle.) It has been described as a motivational state, a personality characteristic, a response to frustration, an inherent drive or the fulfilling of a socially learned role-requirement. Why is that not getting what one wants or expects leads to aggression. According to Dollard's Frustration-Aggression hypothesis frustration always leads to aggression and aggression always stems from frustration.[10] The theory holds that frustrated persons always engage in some type of aggression and that all acts of aggression, in turns, result from frustration. As developed further by Berkowitz[11],the modified hypothesis holds that frustration, when it is strong, unexpected, and illegitimate does not lead to aggression. He notes that the negative feelings generated by frustration do initially produce tendencies towards aggression; but these tendencies are soon modified by higher level cognitive processes. Individuals who have been frustrated may examine the nature of their feeling, attempt to understand *why* they have experienced frustration, consider relative appropriateness of aggression and other possible reactions, and engage in efforts to control their anger and annoyance. Given the unpredictable outcomes of theses processes, it is not always true that frustration would inevitably lead to aggression.[12] Therefore not all people frustrated with and alienated from the system turns terrorists.

The cognitive appraisal of the frustrating situation, aggression as a personality trait and other mediating and external variables interact to produce the mind of a terrorist.

Whom and Why of a Terrorist

Why do some people turn to terrorism? It appears that the misery, frustration, grievance and despair which lead to terrorism have their roots in international and national political, economic and social situation, affecting the terrorists as well as in *his personal circumstances*. Ted Gurr highlights this aspect thus: "The frustration-aggression relationship provides the psychological dynamics for the proposed relationship between intensity of deprivation and the potential for collective violence."[13]

The precise chain of causation of particular act can not be traced with scientific exactitude. As pointed out above, Gurr's model is to some extent based on Dollard's F-A hypothesis, which experimental findings have disclaimed. It points out the initial conditions of terrorism but they are not sufficient causes of terrorism. Rather, *who* turns terrorist depends on specific attributions those people make about the frustrating situation, the alternatives to the frustrating situation, appraisal of the self and situation and various incentives – both internal and external – to become terrorist and the value system of person and culture in general. These causes – personality traits, cognitive appraisal, attribution of causes, incentive system and collective and specific values system – interactively impinge on one another to turn a person who is frustrated and alienated towards terrorism.

Terrorism As Individual Pathology

 Scholars who argue that terrorists are pathological people draw their argument from Frankfurt school political scientist Theoder Adorno's hypothesis on 'Authoritarian personality' is concerned with the fascistic individual, postulates that political and social attitudes formed a coherent pattern and this pattern was an expression of deep-lying trends in personality[14]. This hypothesis also builds on the Freudian perspective, they believed that most peoples personality development involved repression and redirection of various instinctive needs by the constraints of social existence. When aggression against the agents of frustration cannot be discharged directly because of external and internal impediments, it becomes displaced, i.e. directed towards a substitute target. The problem of frustration and redirection of aggression arises when family (main agent of socialisation) fails to strike a healthy balance between discipline and allowing child's self-expression. Frustration and consequent displacement arises out of a kind of familial relationship in which 'authoritarian' father dominates the family. These 'personalities', unable to direct their aggression directly, transpose their hostilities towards the weaker, alien non-combatants. In the context of a group, since frustration cannot be directed towards group members as this will lead to negative consequences (loss of group support, loyalty or punishment in the form of ostracism), the frustration-turned-aggression is expressed towards other groups. Freud once commented that it is always possible to bind together a considerable people in love as long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestation of their aggressiveness.

Other psychologists who treat terrorism as individual psychopathology emphasise on inconsistent mothering, images of the father, etc. Mickolus emphasises on the role of inconsistent mothering in the making of a terrorist.[15] Hogan postulates that since terrorists are zealots who seek aggressive confrontations with the authority in the name of social justice, they are characterised by "low rule attunement, high social sensitivity and low self awareness."[16] Cooper believes that Freudian Defence Mechanism of *rationalisation* is actually at work. Neither politics nor ideology makes terrorists: the politics of sex are more influential in terrorism than Mao, Trotsky, etc. It is just that latter, as a factor of rationalisation seems so much responsible.

Salewisky [17] considers that terrorists are characterised by the following personality traits: (a) their handling of emotions is disturbed, which manifests itself in fear to engage in real commitments and this fear of love leads them to choose violence; (b) their attitude towards authority is disturbed, whereby a principally negative attitude towards the 'old authorities' is combined with a uncritical subjection under the new counter-authorities; (c) they have a disturbed relationship with their own identities: having failed to develop an identity of their own, they try to get one by the use of violence. Kasch,[18] on the other hand, analyses it from the Freudian perspective of "Thanatos" – an urge to destroy oneself and others born out of radical despair, a new form of "disease unto death", which manifest itself by the way of

inability to be a part of community, the loss of capacity to understand reality and an aimlessness due to what he calls "methodological atheism".

While such an explanation in understanding terrorism has considerable appeal, reduction of aggressive behaviour of terrorists to early experiences of childhood has not stood empirical validation. It has been proved that except in few extreme cases terrorists are not pathological but normal persons. According to Crenshaw, the "outstanding common characteristic of terrorist is their normality."[19] Potential recruit into terrorist organisations who seem to be merely seeking danger and excitement are prohibited. Laquer notes that nineteenth century Russian terrorists were in general balanced normal people. Hetchinson points out that in the FLN in Algeria during 1950s, terrorism was a basically a reasonable and considered political choice. Nevertheless the possible non-existence of a "terrorist personality" does not undermine the importance of psychological approach to the problem of terrorism. Brian Crozier highlights this point thus: "…men don't necessarily rebel merely because their condition of life is intolerable: it takes a rebel to rebel. Look at it another way, some men or groups of men will tolerate more than others if one describes the condition of life as intolerable, one begs the question 'to whom?'" [20]

If alienation, de-legitimation, a sense of wrong are the initial conditions, 'whom' aspects deal with individual psychological factors and processes that turn a normal but aggrieved person to choose the path of terrorism.

Individual Psychological Factors

Social learning theory of Albert Bandura has approached aggression as a socially learned phenomenon and has great application in understanding terrorists' terror[21]. Bandura's studies on aggression shows that aggression is imitated by the learner by watching model's behaviour. This takes place even in the absence of reinforcements except the fact the learner views the model as socially significant. Like other learned phenomena terrorist justification, conviction, objectives are socially learned in the same way as aggression and other behaviours. From a very early age on, at home, in school, and religious temple, formally in special training camp and informally, under the intense and unique socio-cultural norms, peers, and role-model and subjected to incentives and reinforcements, the potential terrorist is indoctrinated in the ideals, ways, means benefit of terrorism. The contents of such learning include inculcating belief in transcendental rewards in case of martyrdom, dogmatic and absolutist values, "drilled in the righteousness of their mission; admonished to keep alive their rage and hatred, legitimacy of their demands, convinced that they have been fighting the wrong, assured of the evil of their adversaries and contemporary targets and the needs to annihilate them; indoctrinate in the wonderful pay-off of martyrdom in the service of their cause; tutored in the variety of violent options that could be employed in their holy struggle; and trained in the use of weaponry."[22]

New terrorism of today, characterised by religious fanaticism, can be explained from social learning and other perspectives of learning theories. For example the Madrasa-based education teaches the young to view themselves as 'targeted', who have a mission to save Islam in the face of a hostile world. These learning experiences, of viewing oneself as persecuted individual who has a mission to fulfil is exploited by terrorist organisations who exhort the would-be terrorist to actualise his sense of mission as learnt in the school. As Jurgensmeyer puts it: "When bin Laden and those like him appropriate religion in their view of the world at war, they are not so much politicising religion as they are religionising politics. They are elevating worldly struggle to the grand drama of religion…" He observes further: "Through interviews with violent religious activists, I have come to see their acts as forms of public performance rather than aspects of political strategy. They are symbolic statements aimed at providing a sense of empowerment to a desperate people using religion to provide moral justification for killing and the images of cosmic struggle allow activists to believe they are waging a spiritual war; the religious mores and symbols make possible bloodshed even catastrophic acts of terrorism."[23] Best illustration of such an exhortation to fresh recruits is found in the bag of Mohhamad Atta, the prime suspect of September 11 attack which needs extensive quotation.

> …Everybody hates death, fears death. But only those, the believers who know life after death and rewards after death, would the ones who will be seeking...
>
> You should pray, you should fast, you should ask God for guidance, you should ask God for help…continue to pray throughout night… continue to recite Koran…
>
> Purify your heart and clean it from all earthly matters. The time of fun and waste has gone. The time of *judgement* (emphasis mine) has arrived. Hence we need to utilise these few hours that are left with you in your life. *From there you will begin to live the happy life, the infinite paradise. Be optimistic. The Prophet was always optimistic... You will be entering happiest life, everlasting life.*(emphasis mine) There is no God except Allah, being a sinner, we are of Allah and to Allah we return.[24]

Four critical aspects of the learning environment for aggressive behaviour have been: *Instigation* (the condition that are likely to frustrate, thus heighten the drive level and thereby, presumably sparking aggressive behaviour; *Reinforcement* (the contingent response from the role models and significant others that rewards terrorist behaviour. (discussed in other reinforcements); *Identification* (the process by which values and standards are internalised.);and *Socio-cultural norms*- a content dimension that informs the individual about what beliefs and behaviour are socially acceptable.

Identification, a key concept in social learning theory of Bandura, refers to the more lasting influence one can exert on the behaviour of others. Identification can mean at least two different things as proposed by Leibknecht[25]: It can be: a wish to become or remain like the other (individual or group), or a recognition of existing similarities, good or bad, between the self and object of identification . In the first sense, the other represents highly valued qualities, and the issue is about the acquisition or, preservation of these desired attributes. In the latter case, a person simply recognises that the other individual or group same desired or undesired qualities with his own experienced self.

In a definition of identity, both of these meaning of identification have to be incorporated: A person's identity is defined as the totality of his *self-construal* in which how he construes himself in the present expresses the continuity between how he construes himself as he was in the past as he aspires to in the future.

One rather extreme example of identification is 'Stockholm Syndrome', associated with hostage-taking. Stockholm Syndrome refers to an attitude of trust or effect felt by the person held hostage. It happens when a victim can not escape a person, who is at least, temporarily more powerful and threatening. There is little choice but to focus on the face, voice, and mannerism of the captor and find ways, at least, at the sub-conscious level of pleasing the abuser. These help victim to find and focus on good things about the perpetrator. (This is a coping mechanism.) The most famous instance is of American heiress Patty Hearst who was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army. After some months she rechristened herself Tanya and joined their ranks. In 1974 she joined them in a bank robbery in San Francisco.

The process of identification is thus a part of learning process, an assessment of self and its construal in reference to past and present, a self-empowerment, and a coping mechanism as well. As a concept in explaining self-concept and empowerment, the process of identification with a 'worthy cause' and a 'model' involves a process of self-analysis, which provides a sense of enhancement to terrorists. He believes that by identifying with the model and its behaviour, he can enhances his self-worth in the eyes of the significant other. The process of identification is accentuated in condition of desperation, de-motivation and alienation.

Other Motivational Factors

Apart from providing a sense of mission and enhancing one's self-worth, there are other significant reinforcements – emotional, cognitive, and social – for a fresh recruit. The terrorist is able to satisfy the emotional needs of members to emphasise on action rather than words because of greater command of resources than would be possible for any single individual. Vengeance against enemy may be a strong emotional need shared by many terrorists. Cognitive rewards which come with identification include reinforcement of the sense of mission and self-righteousness in asocial reality that can give, especially the drifting and unsuccessful individual a self-image.[26] The 15-year schoolchild who rammed a two-seat Cessna-172 aircraft into a 42-tower building on January 5, 2002 in sympathy of bin Laden is described as a "lonely, disturbed young man."

This sense of self-righteousness and other reinforcements that a person gets is further accentuated through the process of "groupthink" as has been terms by Cordes et al.[27] They would note that terrorists live in a kind of fantasy world underground, cut off from the most normal contacts with society, and that this kind of existence can produce disturbed perception of the real world. Groupthink reinforces their skewed 'beliefs' about the world and their role in it. Groupthink is a mode of thinking by group members in which concern with maintaining group consensus - or in Janis' term, 'concurrence seeking'– overrides the concern for fair, rational and realistic evaluation of different likely courses of action.[28] According to Janis, when high level of cohesiveness are coupled with several other factors like structural and procedural faults in organisation, powerful pressure towards consensus-seeking may arise. These in turn, can lead to distorted and potentially dangerous trends in decision-making of such groups. Even the message in Atta's box is a striking illustration of the process of groupthink at work. Exhortations like "don't fight among yourselves" aims at suppressing rational judgement and to maintain consensus on earlier made decisions. Other examples of the process of groupthink is to be found in the decision-making in terrorist group in which opinion of the few significants are readily accepted by others who might otherwise hold different opinions. This process ends when there grows a significant opposition (counter-views which can challenge and withstand pressure from significant upper members.)

Other reinforcements for joining terrorist groups include social rewards, material benefits and fear. Social rewards, especially for nationalist-separatist groups, may extend outside the group itself and result increased status and admiration by family and peers.[29] Within the group the terrorist organisations offer mutual solidarity and fellow-feeling which forms an important element, given the illegal and underground nature of terrorist actions. This meeting of important need for belonging to a group to enhance one's personal and social worth coupled with important materials benefits —be it land, money or position of authority —play significant part in the conversion of an aggrieved but normal person to a terrorist. Fear and coercion as negative reinforcements also force people to join terrorist groups. Lakin's study on Malayan terrorism highlight the following factors for joining a terrorist group: fear, a belief in the success of the collective goal, attraction of better opportunities, and the wish to belong to a group fighting for a common cause.[30] Presence of other precipitating factors like discord with the family repressive measures to counter terrorism, etc. may accentuate the process of conversion.

Recruitment Strategies

How do terrorist organisations use these psychological factors to recruit potential terrorists to their organisations. Recruitment strategies of terrorist organisations reveal a specific pattern of cell structure to work towards mass mobilisation. At first, the higher leadership recruits few highly motivated persons to form a cohesive group, followed afterwards by a policy of mass mobilisation. Strategies used in mass mobilisation can be explained from conditioning theories of learning. Once a potential terrorist joins the organisations. The process of mobilisation and indoctrination starts by magnifying the oppression of the enemy; by using 'token economy' in which small favour is done to him or to his family with the purpose of using him in future as a terrorist. Once he is recruited, they manipulate the individual's psychological and his physical environment and channel of communication with significant others (parents, siblings, friends, colleagues) from larger society, in order to isolate the recruit and than particular care is taken to strengthen the bond between him and his immediate surrounding within the terrorist organisation. Then comes the factor of supreme loyalty to the leader of the group. This bonding and sense of loyalty gives birth to the committed terrorist. Bonding is achieved by a number of procedures including:

1. Initiation rites that imbue in the new recruit new set of norms, beliefs, and absolutist values of the in-group;
2. In-group language, chanting, and slogans(death to *kafirs*) that highlights the difference between them and the rest of society, other sects, infidels, or traditional foes;
3. Provision of group heroes, exemplary peers, spiritual leaders with whom to identify;
4. Apply techniques to reduce any strain produced by compliance with the orders to commit terrorist acts:
   - blame and de-humanise human targets;
   - constantly drill and cajole the recruit at a high pitch to prevent logical thinking;
   - dispense positive reinforcements(praise, medal);
   - provide role-models from among the heroes, leaders and other valued groups;
   - And systematically desensitise the recruit to violent acts by simple and direct conditioning.[31]

Individual Extremity Shift and Milgram's Studies

The last technique can be approached from a different perspective of individual extremity shift. Milgam's[32] classic study on *conformity* is highly relevant in understanding terrorist' escalation of commitment to the world of violence. As discussed above, recruitment strategies involve successive shaping of the fresh recruit to the world of terrorism. This involves a phase-by-phase initiation to the world of terror which ultimately result in his higher and higher commitment to violence, irrespective of the soundness of the goal in a changing situation. Milgam's simulated experiment is thus: in his studies subjects, all males are told that they were participating in an investigation of the effect of punishment on learning. Their task was to administer electric shock to another person (actually an accomplice) each time the latter errs in learning. The shock is administered by a 30-switches equipment; each administration is an incremental 15-volt shock so that the end-switch delivers a 450-volt current to 'learner'. In reality the accomplice never received any shock during the experiment. The only real shock used was a mild demonstration pulse from one button (No. 3). The result of this simulated experiment, which later on was conducted in natural setting reveals the following: normal subjects given the role of a teacher will give higher levels of shock to a protesting 'victim' in the role of a learner. The escalation in administering higher level of shock is a shift to an increased extremity behaviour to the sense that higher levels of shock are increasing violation of the norm against hurting an innocent other.

Milgram's studies on Obedience helps us in understanding terrorists' escalation of violence from small assignments to mindless killings which become an end in itself rather than an instrument to attain certain objectives for which they had

joined terrorist organisations. This increasing escalation is explained in several ways. Milgram analysed it as an 'agentic shift' in which the subjects moved from seeing himself as responsible for his actions to the experimenter. A psychology of 'self-justification' sets in motion which Milgram recognised as being consistent with dissonance theory. Dissonance can be understood in Festinger's pure cognitive inconsistency framework or from a perspective of inconsistency between behaviour and a positive self- image.[33] Both reveal a clear dissonance created for a subject who breaks up at the Nth shock after having already N^{-1} shocks. In the context of terrorism lower level violence by terrorist at the initial level results gradually in higher and still higher levels of violence in which any break off at N^{-1} stage is considered as negation of all past actions, or in terms of self-referral at two stages. As Bem says, the most credible and trustworthy source of persuasion on N^{th} trial is not experimenter but subject himself.[34] At this stage there is no agentic shift but self-justification of his commitment to violence.

Hence commitment to authority or leadership and resultant violence committed by terrorists are rather a general phenomenon which is further reinforced in terrorist groups by different techniques. Psychological techniques like persuasion and blackmailing are used to commit the fresh recruit to engage in behaviour that will lead to conformity to group leadership. Further the closer control of individual member bring about greater conformity. The techniques used to gain greater control include: (a) self-criticism sessions; (b)mass meeting; (c) avoidance of discussion of facts; (d) discussion of ambiguous topics as they are easy in changing attitude; (e) lengthy discussions as possible exhaustion makes people more susceptible to change; (f) endless indoctrination which involve (i) emphasis on reiteration of goals; (ii)emphasising role-expectation; (iii) criticising deviationist behaviour; (iv) dissuading excessive personality cult and magnifying 'enemy' excesses to reinforce and strengthen the hatred towards enemy.[35]

Defection

Still defection from one group to another terrorist group or to 'enemy' is rather a regular phenomenon in terrorist groups. The Kashmir militant group Al-badr was formed as a result of growing differences between cadre of the Hizb, who were of Kashmir origin and the insurgents sent in by Pakistani intelligebnce, over issues such as leadership , funding and direction of theiractivities. Similarly Jamait-ul-Mujahideen was the first breakaway faction of the Hizbul Mujahideen, and was born of personality clashes between Ashan Dar and Hilal A. Mir. Azhar Massod's Jaish-e-Mohammad emerged when Masood found himself at odds with the Amir and Deputy Amir of the Harkat-ul-Ansar over finance and influence.

Thus, factors that account for defection include dissatisfaction with the leadership, clashes over ideology, techniques, finance and ego clashes. They include persons who are low in personal commitment, those who are prone to persuasion, people who are ambivalent on joining never resolved their doubts and increasingly questioned the espoused goal of the group. Further counter-promises i.e. the relative valency of counter-incentives act as an additional factor in defection.

Terrorist's Objectives and Targets

Terrorists' objectives can be divided into the following categories: ultimate objectives (which aims at rather qualitative transformation of existing situation) and proximate objectives(which aim at well-being of the group, influencing public opinion, recognition and attention.) Thomas Thornton has developed a typology of the proximate objectives of terrorism:[36]

1. *morale building*: both within the organisations as well as in the element of population which is sympathetic to terrorism
2. *advertisement*: Not only of terrorists themselves but also of their programmes and objectives. The advertisement function is directed towards a mass audience.(both internal and external)
3. *disorientation*: The objective par excellence of the terrorist, removing the underpinning of order is his targets
4. *elimination of opposing force*: elimination of military, counter-insurgents and other authorities. Elimination will not only promote a general disorientation, but also a more specific fear that will be instilled into the group to which victim belongs to.
5. *provocation of counter-measures by the authority*: In combating an elusive terrorist, the counter-measures will affect not only the terrorist but population in general which would lead to further alienation from the authority.

An act of terrorism aims at reaching out beyond immediate victim i. e. act of terrorism is meant to gain attention, which Jenkins would call terrorism –as-theatre or, advertisement function. Thus one finds that most of the terrorists' targets are linked with its communication function. It is, as Paul Wilkinson would argue, a mode of unconventional psychological warfare aimed ultimately at bringing about a climate of fear and collapse in a incumbent regime or target group.[37]

Conclusion

To sum up, terrorist psychology reveals many complexities born out of a complex web of interactions between general socio-economic deprivation and their perception, individual traits, his coping pattern, general learning environment, and learning condition, role of conditioning and model as well as many other motivational variables – both intrinsic and extrinsic. Structure of terrorist organisations have undergone considerable changes – pyramidal, hierarchical organisational structures that were dominant among the terrorist organisations of 1970s. Terrorists are now increasingly part of far more amorphous, indirect and broader movement operating on linear rather than on hierarchical basis. The communication aspects of terrorism and psychological dimensions of counter-terrorism are equally important in our over-all understanding of psycho-terrorism.

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