

Transcending Natural Resource Management towards Clinch of Internal Security: Some Evidences from India

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Abstract

India is indisputably on the advancing front of progress where its hefty natural resources serve the greatest assets to reckon with. The progress of any country is directly dependent upon the quality and quantum of available natural resources with it. For a country like India having vast continentality, these natural resources are catalysts in programs associated with human development and sustainability. However, with the enormous rise of population and dwindling resource pools, the society suffers from critical disturbances in internal security across the country's length and breadth. There exists a proven causal relationship of a significant association between shocks to natural resources and the intensity of civil conflicts in a region. The episodes resulting from a disrupted state of internal security pose a massive challenge to government functionaries in keeping pace with worldwide socio-economic development. The obvious choice of Natural Resource Management (NRM) provides one of the promising keys to handle this menace effectively. The present work explores this meticulous strategy of assuring internal security through an improved pragmatism and judicious use of natural resources in states marred with recurring incidences of chaos and human violence. The planning and monitoring of internal security with peoples' stake depend evidently upon the technical capability of government in handling resources with a vision for Possibilism. NRM, thus, conceptualize a framework of governance where exploitation of resources and sustenance of internal security in India go hand-in-hand prudently. The paper attempts to resolve a deteriorating internal security situation by strategizing a development-cum-sustainability approach to keep a large nation safe and secure.

Keywords: Natural Resources Management (NRM), Internal Security, Sustainability, Governance, Pragmatism and Possibilism

Introduction

India is a vast country which has achieved its unique national identity by successive accessions of its states in its domain over the years across various territories. It has evolved with a varied history, geography, objectives, traditions, backgrounds, interests, attitudes, perceptions, and ideologies. To remain unified by adopting the concept of national integrity above these differentiating forces has always been a security killer of Indians (Manoharan, 2013). Traditionally thought, security threats stemmed from hostile countries (Watson and Fair, 2013), but, today, it has taken the form of indigenously rooted. Trans-regionally located, externally guided security threats will take longer to be curbed, and it becomes nationally binding to pay much of our attention towards deteriorating Indian internal security (Singh, 2013; Nayar, 2003).

The internal security scenario of the country can be broadly seen as a complex web of multifarious anti-national activities of people in protest against the failure of government machinery in the infested areas. Ever since independence, India has been facing all types of violent conflicts in and around people based on religion, caste, language, ethnicity, and regional loyalties. Political insecurity had further compounded the problem and worsened the situation (Staniland, 2018). Preoccupied with survival, the governments bring temporary peace by compromising with the subversive forces instead of looking at the problem from a long-term perspective.

Compromised Internal Security through Unforgettable Times

Soon after India's partition, the country passed through communal heat, and the fire resulted in influx and efflux in the form of mass movement of people across the border. The country's fabric of integration was never consolidation and knitted tightly since then to the scale one would have expected at that moment. On the one, hand, we were closing upon our territory, but spheres of newer challenges were carving out at the other end (Nayar, 2003; Singh, 2013). Since then, the country's internal security was seen with surmountable confrontations (Watson and Fair, 2013; Singh, 2013; Ahlawat, 2018).

Out of the total internal security issues ranging from terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir to the communal violence in a locality, the gravest is the Naxalist upsurge. Making a beginning in Naxalbari in West Bengal and Telangana in Andhra Pradesh in the 1970s, the move has since spread to Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Maharashtra. Naxalism reflects violent acts by rural and tribal people against the government to the extent they feel dissatisfied with its policies (Manoharan, 2013). They only have a wide-spread perception that "Land reforms and efforts at the redressal of genuine grievances have only been superficial and that the exploiters continue to exploit the poor and landless agriculturists or the tribal" (Staniland, 2018; Singh, 2013). While the eighties saw an unforeseen terrorist uprising in Punjab for Khalistani propaganda under sneaky support of Pakistan, the nineties were marked with the

insurgency in Kashmir having its roots in the wake of partition. Terrorism became cancer all over the country (Nayar, 2003; Manoharan, 2013). Jammu and Kashmir have been landing of unabated conflicts, which is the foreground for infiltrators duped with an ideology of shattering everyone's mind and soul by terror. The separatist forces in the north-east still resurface to its evil extent, and perpetual threats emanate from Bangladesh. The Maoist thrives on Indian soil with no words of warning before a fatal strike is met, and human innocence is overtaken by the death of dutiful police personnel (Manoharan, 2013). Naxalism stretched from Central India to some southern states, and the state of turmoil was never stalled in the Red Corridor belt (Staniland, 2018). We could not see a single decade in the country with uncompromised internal security and hardliners shocking the nation since the dawn of independence. The last two decades are racked up with more dogmatically driven and internationally sponsored terrorism in the hinterland. What it is in J&K has crept in and crumpled the in-house security nationally (Ahlawat, 2018; Nayar, 2003).

Does Good Governance Endorse Idea of a Secure Nation?

When one is born in a nation and holds the citizenship of its land and territory, he is meant to be a person responsible for upholding national integrity and the sanctity of the Indian constitution at all times. While the nation sets itself for human development, the countrymen are deemed national progress (Laxmikanth, 2019; Rajamani, 2007). Anything that does not confer to the standards of the constitution of the country shall bring disgrace to society and offers strong challenges to good governance. Considering the insurgents, Maoists, or the Naxalites as the common man of India, they deserve an honorable and peaceful life through the observance of their constitutionally safeguarded rights to protection of life and personal liberty (Article 21 in the Constitution of India 1949). This article (Laxmikanth, 2019; Baumann, 2000) guarantees unequivocally that,

"No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law."

Taking purview of this matter in the light of rising objectivity, the serious Naxalite menace requires a multi-dimensional approach with a more pragmatic view to review and resolve the situation. One such practical approach can be proper management of resources as the basis of directive planning. The districts prone to such insurgencies have been found more or less backward where geographically, the resources need effective management and sustainability in their socio-economic perspectives (Manoharan, 2013; Nayar, 2003). These backward blocks after effective surveys are found to be areas of gigantic natural resources and not of tapering or falling resources. Natural resources manifest paramount community assets in India. They provide livelihoods and shelter to millions of poor people in under-privileged remote localities with a limited choice of alternative economic opportunities (Leach et al., 1999; Bengston, 2004). Natural resources are mainly renewable Earthly resources like land, water, and air, backed-up by a flow mechanism in the environment in general and habitat more specifically (Baumann, 2000). An enumerative decline in the flow of these resources below a critical-minima, thus instigates a sense of insecurity and anti-governance move in local folk. Factors of poor resource planning and lack of effective, organized mechanisms conspire to make these valuable land resources difficult to monitor and manage sustainably (Kumar and Mittal, 2006; Ormsby and Bhagwat, 2010). The policies have failed only in their careful and judicious usage. Geographically, the resources are nature's gift to humanity. If they are managed judiciously (Lockwood et al., 2010), they shape national wealth, social ways, and cultural bondage. Such menaces have to be addressed on resource development and managerial front also (Marothia, 2010).

Managing Natural Resources Secures A Nation: A Possibilist Theory

Any newly born nation like India in the post-independence period was bound to pick the pace of economic progress by developing locally available natural resources. These resources dictate the purchasing power of a state, which helps it to obtain foreign exchange and build up its reserves; thus, setting up the development cycle in motion (Leach

et al., 1999). Natural resources cover the land, water, forests, mineral resources, marine resources, fisheries, rainfall, topography, and climate (Dollo et al., 2009; Baumann and Farrington, 2003). Many resources have already been discovered, but others may still lie hidden as earth's treasures in one's land and water. Further increase in knowledge about the unknown resources shall increase the resource potential of an area and would create an overall desirable internal security environment therein (Leach et al., 1999).

The government, with the participation of people, should work on the theory of possibilists to solve the problem of internal security using natural resource development and management (Meynen and Doornbos, 2002). The theory propounded by French historian Lucien Febvre (1932) underlines a simple analogy in his words,

"There are no necessities, but everywhere possibilities and man as master of possibilities is the judge of their use."

Thus, according to Febvre, man is the most influential player as a geographical agent on the earth (Husain, 2020; Kumar and Mittal, 2006). This concept of possibilism should lay down the basis of governmental policies and planning to judiciously use, manage and sustain the natural resources in these backward patches suffering from Naxalism or insurgency in our country (Nayar, 2003). This can change the perception of under-development in the minds of extremists going anti-governmental, anti-social, and anti-national. The best examples can be cited from the states of Punjab and Rajasthan, where despite having 3.67% and 4.86% (India State of Forest Report 2019) of forest areas, respectively, the states have no or little evidence of Naxalism. Contrary to them, deeply infested with problems of internal security, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have 41.13% and 29.62% of total forest land, respectively (India State of Forest Report 2019). What are the reasons accounting for these facts? The reasons are a clear-cut approach to proper resource utilization (Lockwood et al., 2010; Manoharan, 2013).

Presently, Punjab utilizes 82.61 percent of its total geographical area for cultivation (net sown area) as a land of fertile soil (Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, Min. of Agri. & Farmers Welfare, GOI.,

2018) and abundant irrigational facilities, and hence, can feed its all people. Rajasthan, though largely covered by ‘The Thar Desert’, has 52.22 percent of its total land area under agriculture (Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, Ministry of Agricultural & Farmers Welfare, GOI., 2018). The Rajasthan economy cannot be heavily banked upon agriculture, so it works over mineral exploitation and export promotion of state made goods like handicraft items and goods. People in these states very well understand that the government alone cannot be a resource creator until and unless the common man is socially aware of the co-relational values existing between resource creation and its management to economically sustain well in all spheres of life (Springer and Boe, 2016; Udayaadhithya and Gurtoo, 2012). Only the government policies can effectively give fruitful feeding to them (Marothia, 2010; Ormsby and Bhagwat, 2010). If we look at the literacy scenes in these states, we observe that all these four states have almost drawn parallelism in literacy. Punjab and Rajasthan stand out at 76.68% and 67.10%, respectively (India Census 2011), while Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh possess 67.60% and 71.0% of literacy levels (India Census 2011). These comparable levels of literacy are indicative of the fact that state literacy cannot form the basis for the maintenance of internal security. These insurgencies are specific to a few selective locality-based sections of a society engulfed by social deprivation and frightening backwardness (Staniland, 2018). Such literacy scenes may not be large enough to signify educational standards in these localities. Once we start pondering over the remedies of internal security problems through careful handling of small-to-large scale natural resources across the grievously infested areas (Manoharan, 2013). The policies and initiatives need to be more and more area-specific, not purely region-specific (Lockwood et al., 2010; Bengston, 2004; Laxmikanth, 2019). Thus, we find to deduce that raising levels of literacy and creating awareness among the people towards their all-natural resources around can substantially impact the processes associated with resource utilization and its management.

Natural Resource Management: A Promising Key to Internal Security

India has been endowed with a bounty of Land, forests, mineral, and water resources with a vast territory of around 329 million hectares (Laxmikanth, 2019). However, statistical information of only around 306 million hectares exits for the country. Due to ever-increasing demands from a tremendous population of the country, the focal point in India remained on increasing production and food supply without adequate attention to managing its natural resource base (Husain, 2020; Kumar and Mittal, 2006). The country has intense pressure on the available natural resources which forms a key element to create and monitor security scenario in an embarrassing situation otherwise (Marothia, 2010; Baumann and Farrington, 2003). In India, forests offer very important natural resources providing timber, fire-wood, fodder, and other minor forest produce to forest dwellers. Forests’ role in environmental and economic sustainability is crucial for a developing nation that has an inherited heritage of natural productivity on its land (Ormsby and Bhagwat, 2010). On the water front, India is blessed with 29,000 kilometers of rivers, 7,520 kilometers of coastline, and 7,520 kilometers of coastline. With nearly 18% of the world’s population, we have 4% of the total water resources of the world (Husain, 2020). We are one of the wettest nations, with an average annual rainfall of around 1100 mm. Mineral resources of economic importance have still not been exploited up to the desired productivity levels.

Most of these wetted zones are also zones of rich mineral belts where the state of internal security is disrupted. Hence, India has a vast and diverse natural resource base in the world. The non-judicious use of natural resources has further increased poverty in these backward patches of society (Rajamani, 2007). The rise in poverty will have a direct bearing over the rising population of the country. Natural resources are the backbone of our country’s social and economic progress and can prove suitable to handle problems of security within our society (Meynen and Doornbos, 2002). The rate of this development is dependent on how the resources are utilized (Meynen and Doornbos, 2002; Kumar and Mittal, 2006). The finite land and water resources are under tremendous

pressure due to the various demands of the expanding population. It thus requires a vision and an integrative methodology for their management to promote products on the lines of optimum resource planning and conservation (Udayaadhithya and Gurtoo, 2012). The availability of resources, appropriate agrotechnologies, and government undertook factors of social and economic development influence how internal security is maintained in the nation. As a consequence, over exploitation and mismanagement of resources are reflected in the frequent occurrence of problems of internal security (Staniland, 2018). The challenge before us is, therefore, to reverse the process of degradation and enhance the resource base of those areas where people feel discontented with the governmental policies (Bengston, 2004).

Some Suggestions with More Pragmatism: A Research Note

Soon after achieving Independence in 1947, the policymakers of India launched several plans for the rapid promotion of agriculture, industries, transport, and other civil infrastructural projects. To reduce inequality of income among people and poverty alleviation, a discernable increase in employment and production was met (Baumann and Farrington, 2003). This prudent act was aimed at establishing a socialist society based on cherished principles of justice and equality enshrined in the Indian constitution (Kumar and Mittal, 2006). However, as time elapsed, our population grew enormously, and so did the mindless and ruthless exploitation of our natural resources. This reflected a scene of political discontent, economic disparities, social unrest, and insecurity among people of the hinterland and widely led to a stalled governance with fragile internal security in select patches of land.

Thus, in totality, the few remedial measures that can be taken in the wake of Indian internal security problems to solve them through the way of resource management and sustainable development are:

1. The government should initially search out all possible natural resources in the region infested with security problems by the application of the latest techniques of Remote Sensing based satellite technology and Geographic Information System.

2. It should focus on the mainstay of the economy of those people who look suffered as these men either depend upon agricultural produces or forest products.
3. Empirically, a decentralized natural resource management regime shall foster equitable access to natural resources by the local poor and guarantees their survival and security. For its worth, decentralized natural resource management plans should strategically consider political willingness and righteousness and ecological limitations in an area.
4. The government may work on three economic bases in the lives of these people as:
 - (a) Economy depending upon agricultural and forest - produces.
 - (b) Economy depending on industries/ industrial goods.
 - (c) Economy depending on the service sector where these people get employed in various organizations under the manufacturing sector.
5. Satisfactorily, the government should perform effective planning and policy initiatives by introspecting and researching in such a way that the natural resources form the basis of any economy. If, the primary sector of agriculture fails in output, the similar benefits should be attained from forestry, at least from those areas, where forest land surpasses agricultural land. If this primary sector fails in the life of people, then the government must work harder to enhance productivity in the lives of people by giving them benefits of industrial or service sector, whether public or private, as on a second priority employment openings to rural-tribal people who heavily depend upon the conventionally adopted methodology of their natural resource usage.
6. The government should create social awareness of resource creativity, usage, and management by enhanced local literacy missions.

Conclusion

It is worthwhile to appreciate the idea that access to common natural resources is crucial to the local livelihood of people by carving a feeling of security among them. Though rural poor folks thrive on the directly available natural resources, yet they occupy

marginal areas with limited inherited rights to natural resources. A recurrent clause of discussion has been the linkages of rural-tribal development with the disturbed state of internal security in Naxalite infected states of India. Since the pace of development and access to natural resources are inter-linked convincingly, the policy of Natural Resource Management bears some direct implications of these linkages? The NRM is one such crucial strategy of securing India internally and a giant leap that overtakes the debate of rural development by wider strides.

Decisively, it can be said that natural resources form the ignition point in the lives of people, which in turn rotates the whole economy of the nation as a whole and if, they are used by proper balanced planning and management for sustainable development, they will greatly bring prosperity in the lives of the common man of Indian society. This will make the environment more secure and flourishing to give us an overall increment in national productivity and wealth. Internal security can be more viably solved through means of judicious usage of resources within our reach. We have so far failed in their management. Our country's land offers us all possibilities to exploit these resources to make our life internally more secure and survive well. Citizens of the country should imbibe national aspirations of resource creativity and their sustainable usage across political, economic, and technological dimensions upheld in participatory governance.

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