

Terrorism and its Implications on Society: A Philosophical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism, in the present world has become a burning and threatening issue. It is a great threat to humanity. So, it is the duty of the thinkers specially philosophers to think over the matter to analysis the situation and to show the causes and effects of terrorism. At the same time it is our duty to show the path to come out of the crisis for the benefit of the society. Keeping focus on this purpose we are trying to deal with the matter in this small paper. To reach at our conclusion we will incorporate the following points i.e. introduction, definition of terrorism, nature of terrorism, possible cause and effects of terrorism and a concluding remarks.

Keywords: Terrorism, Definition, Politics, Religion, Violence, Economy, Psychology economical and social discrimination, Psychology, Social media

INTRODUCTION

Terrorists are not inborn who suddenly start to work with guns, bombs and deadly weapons. It is a gradual socio-political transformation of a person who becomes terrorist from a common people to serve a special ideology offer to him by the sleeping cell. We can say that terrorism is a process and it is a choice. Therefore, terrorism is a political strategy selected from a wide range of options. The process behind adopting the ideology of terrorism always has a historical background, which attract those persons who by right or wrong conception perceive that the present political system is treating them badly. This harsh political treatment may even sometimes related to their ancestors in revenge of which they occupied the path of terrorism. Political actions can take any number of forms. However, one of the most radical forms of political violence is terrorism which differs from other forms of violence. In this paper we will try to reach a conclusion which will elaborate the implications of terrorism on human being and society. Economic and social roots behind terrorism will also be inspected for better understanding the possible causes of terrorism.

Various media like radio, television, newspaper, face book, YouTube etc. inform us that there are very close links between economic and social backgrounds of terrorism. Lastly, it is important to discover the psychological and environmental impacts on the causes of terrorism. Psychological element is very much important to understand the motivations and method of action of terrorists groups will also be an important part of our discussion. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn in order to focus on the important points once more. This will state once again that the main root cause of terrorism is not poverty, ideology or psychological problems, but the failure of political systems. In conclusion this phenomenon of terrorism will also be attached with various theories of philosophy *i.e.* Kantian ethics, human rights and theory of equality etc.

Aims and Objectives:

The aim of the paper is to throw light on the threatening issue of terrorism in a critical-philosophical manner. The objective of the paper is to show the ethical crisis of the present world related to terrorism. The study of terrorism can be organized around three questions:

why terrorism occurs, how the process of terrorism works, and what its social, economical, political and psychological effects are. This paper aims to discuss the root causes of terrorism, which might be political systems and political administration's policies. So, it is quite obvious that without knowing the root cause of terrorism there will be no plausible solution to the problem. Further, this paper tries to prove that the root causes of terrorism might not be social, economical, psychological and religious. The core cause of terrorism is injustice which is the product of political oppression. So, we can say that discussion of terrorism and its implications will not be complete one unless we discuss political systems and its effects. To understand this phenomenon we have started this paper with definition and nature of it.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper is a qualitative one based on literature survey and critical matter.

Definition of terrorism:

Let us begin the discussion of terrorism and its implications with prior understanding of its nature and definitions. The events of terrorists attack in New York on 11th September 2001 made it clear that terrorism can dramatically influence the world as shown by the far reaching and prolonged effects of it. The task of defining terrorism is very much intricate but it is very much necessary to understand its nature and implications. However a suitable universal definition remains elusive because different bodies, organisations and agencies have different conception and definitions about terrorism which satisfy their own purposes. Terrorism is the use of violence with the aim of spreading fear among wide population. The term 'terrorism' originates from Latin word 'terrere'. It means 'to frighten'. Generally terrorism is defined by focusing on the apparent goal of terrorist organizations to spread mental disturbance, anxiety and distress among general victim to achieve political goal and ideological goal.

In Maximilien Robespierre's words:

".....terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of general principle of democracy applied to our country's most urgent needs"¹.

Thus, we can say that terrorism is a tactic of generating anxiety through the use of chronic violence

by clandestine and semi-clandestine individual or group of individual or political actors for some criminal, political or religious reasons by constant method of assassination. But the most shocking nature of terrorist is their direct target or victim is not their actual target. The targets of terrorists are chosen randomly very carefully from a vast population where their message of terrorism and threat can be spread effectively into the entire population. The main propaganda of terrorists is to fulfil some unlawful demand, creating political and administrative change in a state, country or entire world. Spreading religious ideology in targeted population or to create some change in religious belief and creating jihad is the main psychology behind the act of spreading terror.

The United States (US) government and The US Department of Defence have defined terrorism as:

'The calculated use of unlawful violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological'².

Thus, from the general nature and definition of terrorism we can portray its implications on human being and society. Thus we can define an act as terrorism which aim at deliberately threatening a vast population and unduly force concern government of a state or country and international organisation to fulfil their demand or to refrain from performing any act which harm activities and ideology of terrorist organisation. And above all main aim of a terrorist organisation is to destroying the base of politics, economic stability and social bond and relations of a country or state. Terrorists are engaged in various illegal activities to achieve their goal like hijacking, kidnappings, killing a political leader or any influential human brings to make a mark on the society and to leave a fearful impression on the mind of masses.

Thus, according to the European Union definition, "terrorism is not a particular ideology or movement, but rather a method or tactic for achieving various goals"³.

Nature of terrorism:

Terrorism occurs both in the circumstances of violent resistance to the state as well as in the service of state's interests. It is a conventional thought that one country's patriot is another country's terrorist. Terrorism is nothing but a political weapon that is used to threatening general public. If we focus on terrorism directed against governments for the purpose of political change, we are considering the premeditated use of threat of symbolic

violence by radical organizations. In reaching their goal of spreading violence and holding power and position political leaders also use the secret path of violence through the help of terrorist organizations. Terrorists' violence communicates a political message which is spread into masses. The victims or objects of terrorist attack have a little intrinsic value to the terrorist group but represent a larger human audience whose reaction and attraction the terrorists seek. Terrorists are very much aware about that social and electronic media can play a crucial role in spreading terror, state of panic and uncertainty of lives in general public of a nation or state. Now a day, social and electronic media is easily accessible to everybody and it is very easy for the terrorist organizations to provoke them easily through showing offensive videos and spreading life threatening messages.

The definition of terrorism leads us to the concept that terrorism can be of different types. Terrorists serve various purposes and based on that purpose we can divide terrorism in different categories, like:

a. State terrorism and State-sponsored terrorism:

State terrorism refers to acts of terrorism which state conducts against its own citizens or against another state. We can define state terrorism as a violent action used with the pre-dominant intention of causing terror among its population to retain its power and position. Political leaders of a country or state generally try to gain control over a targeted population by using violence. They use violence here in an instrumental manner. Ruling party and opponent party both are very much aware that at any cost they have to sustain or gain control over masses and sometimes they do so by their own appointed person or groups of person who work for their party. Normally gun and bombs are being used as a weapon to spread fear among large number of population also for a long term effect. Their primary aim is to bring political change in the nation. Such groups work without any official authorization from the government. But their motive is to serve for the political party or its leaders very secretly.

On the contrary state-sponsored terrorism is that kind of terrorism where a state support or sponsor terrorists directly or indirectly for attacking other country to fulfil their country's need or motive. Those states who want to fight

war by proxy often do this. Terrorists often engage in violent activities for acquiring their goal. Collecting fund and safe shelter for their living is very much important factor in sustaining activities of their organizations. Here they need help of government. State sponsored terrorism can be divided into two groups' *i.e.* direct-state-sponsored terrorism and indirect-state-sponsored terrorism. Some country sponsor terrorists by giving money and other material help but they do not directly give shelter to terrorists in their country or keep any direct link with them. But direct-state-sponsored terrorism is an active way of providing weapon, money, and shelter to terrorists groups and gaining full control over them.

b. Bioterrorism and non-bio-terrorism:

Bio terrorism is a deliberate attempt of spreading terror by the use of various biological agents which are intentionally contaminated into air, water, food, vegetables, fish meat for terrorists own need. Various biological agents like viruses, bacteria, toxins are used to kill human beings, animals and plants. Biological agents are very easy to develop and easy to spread in huge portion of target throughout the world. These agents have very effective and long lasting impression whose effects are fatal. Small pox, Anthrax, Plague, Corona virus, Ebola virus, Hanta virus and Tuberculosis are some of these bio-agents. Agricultural products are also being targeted and contaminated for spreading terrorism and destructing economic stability of a nation. Through agro terrorism terrorists injects various harmful bio-organism in plants and animals which results as death of them and illness and death of human beings who eat those contaminated food.

Non-bioterrorism is a direct way of spreading terror by use of weapon. The emotion behind such terrorism is something different. Their aim is not always materialistic though there is always some pseudo political interest inherent in it. Ethnic terrorism, religious terrorism, suicide terrorism can be classified into this category. Ethnic terrorists strive for the communal identity and they do it by using the method of terrorism. Ethnic terrorists try to create communal bond by

opposing concern government. Most of the time ethnic terrorists demand of creating ethnic identity, separate nation based on their culture, language etc.

Religion in terrorism is the most important factor. To save one's religion and to spread it terrorists sometimes opt for the path of violence. Monotheistic religions believe that god is only one. And to establish their religion as supreme they create violence. Most of the religious terrorists are free from any worldly bondage and they only act for reaching towards the absolute god and securing a special place in heaven after death. Religious terrorism makes path for suicide terrorism. Suicide terrorism is such a means of achieving political or religious goal by sacrificing one's life. This type of terrorism is done for religious faith, gaining blessings from god for after life.

- c. Global or International Terrorism and Local or Domestic Terrorism:** Global terrorism refers to act of violence, harm or insurgent movement carried out by different groups or organizations with a worldwide impact which is treated as a weapon for global state of panic and disrupt of peace among various nations. It is also called international terrorism that goes beyond international boundaries in terms of method used by the people that are targeted can belong to any democracy of our world other than the places from where the terrorists operate. Such kind of terrorism is the most direct threat to the security of world's countries and international relations, economic stability and human rights. It is a persistent global issue that knows no border, religion and nationality before making a destructive approach.

On the other hand domestic terrorism is that when a perpetrator targets fellow citizens of his country. Thus, it is a home grown terrorism in which the perpetrators and the victims belong to the same country and holds concern country's citizenship. The main difference between domestic and global terrorism domestic terrorism is not sponsored by any other democracy or international groups where as global terrorism is sponsored by international groups and transcend the national boundaries of every nation.

So, we can say that terrorism is indeed very dangerous act of violence which aims to create fear among ordinary people by illegal means. It is a threat to humanity. As per the definitions of terrorism it is quite clear that terrorists only spread violence for a special purpose. Terrorists spread violence because they want to change the social system. Most of the terrorist portray themselves as the victim of situation and they turned to violence after long consideration because they thought they had no other choice except adopting terrorist ideology. The cause behind a man to adopt terrorist ideology can be of two type's political cause and non-political cause. They are as following:-

- a. Political Cause:** Anarchism is often considered as the root cause of terrorism. Some scholars also argued that individuals who feel alienated from the state become violent in their activities. Here, an individual may find it more attractive to join a terrorist organization because there may be various non-violent alternatives to draw equality but only violent terrorist activities has high rates of success. It is very much true that: "Instable or failed states may even serve as schools of international terrorism, where in phases of domestic instability (e.g., civil war) individuals gain an 'education' in violence that they can also use for internationalized terrorist campaigns (Campos and Gassebner, 2009). Political transformation may generally amplify terrorist behaviour, where this process influences both the production of terrorism and terrorists' target decisions"⁴.

Political injustice is the main cause behind terrorism. Oppression of concern government or political leaders and the quest of power and position lead victims to opt for the path of terrorism. Weak government system most of the time causes undemocratic society and this situation leads general people to suffer. This would also results as severe grievance of the general public against the government. When the government of a state or country is unable to provide its population basic needs of living then terrorist organisation attract those people by giving them necessary resources of living. And terrorist organisations also provoke general public by help them to dream about lavish lifestyle this includes treatment, education, jobs, home and

other resources. On the other hand, terrorism is like a hidden weapon of political leaders. If the political system is enjoying power and position adequately then the weapon remain hidden. If the system does not work perfectly terrorism will be visible and then it must be used by the political leaders to retain power and position. Political conversion and lack of stability are also the cause of terrorism. Thus, we can say that political conversion sometimes creates a gap which terrorist groups use to serve their needs. Radical groups most of the time challenge a weak government so that new members can be inspired to join radical organizations to create some revolutionary movements.

b. Non-political Cause: In this category we can include two causes like social and economical discrimination and religious beliefs. They are as following:

i. Social and Economical Discrimination:-

The most popular theory is that poverty causes terrorism. It is a burning cause of terrorism. Some scholars argued that terrorism is deeply rooted in economic deprivation like poverty and inter-country inequality. Because poverty and inequalities are representatives of injustice. If there is no justice, people are ready to fight to gain justice. Violence is generated where there is a discrepancy between what individuals think they deserve and what they are actually receiving through the economic distribution process among the masses from the government. Poor structural economic conditions create frustration among masses which in turn makes violence very naturally. In such circumstances terrorist's organizations find it quite easier to recruit frustrated humans as their members or to receive funds from those organizations that sponsored terrorism when economic deprivation prevails. Lower social and economical status most of the time force those people to snatch equality and social status by doing something extraordinary by spreading terror in the society. Based on such belief terrorists thought that they are deprived of every resources which are

essential for living like equal rights, standard lifestyle, social prestige, home and other possessions.

When economic conditions deteriorate and public's standard of living declines then deprived and unhappy groups will begin organising political protests. New vulnerable members of terrorists most probably belong from very low economic background because such a poor person only concentrates on getting food and shelter. We can say when economic change creates conditions that harms a specific region of a country and creates sense of injustice then it will surely creates extremist ideologies and new political opponent movements.

ii. Religious Belief: Religion is not a direct cause of terrorism but it is rather a way to justify the act of terrorism. While religion is granted as a major factor in human life as well as a recent influential factors of terrorism. Because terrorists assimilate their religious ideology and religious goal with their main motive of creating economic, social and political change to serve their agenda. Shelter of religion provides terrorists a means of dealing with their personal issues and to make their war more powerful and victorious. So we can say that religion enables people to deal with their agenda but religion could not be the root cause of terrorism.

A group's decision to use violence is usually depends on concern situation and is rarely endemic to the religious tradition to which the group is related. Islam does not cause terrorism and this is also true about other religions also with which terrorist activities have been associated. If we relate terrorist activities with a particular religion then it will be called as 'religious terrorists' which is truly a misconception. Because there are millions members who belongs to that same religion are not associated with any radical activities. For a tiny portion of radical people of a particular community the whole of it could not be tagged with terrorism. Thus we can quote that:-

‘Another argument is that the role of society today is overestimated and that religion is essence is “really politics under a different name (Jameson, 2002). This argument negates the deepest makeup and purpose of religion, namely that is a search for human “roots” and meaning, and it provides “wings” to deeper, higher, beyond the limitations of suffering experiences to transcend everyday realities (Kruger *et al.*, 2009). This is not to deny that almost all religions have an extremely violent component as well. It is because religion cannot be separated from other spheres of human life’⁵.

Various causes of terrorism leave multiple implications on our life through various dimensions and on various spheres. We can classify the effects or implications of terrorism in following categories:

a. Implications on physical and mental health

of human being: Terrorism is most of the time termed as ‘psychological warfare’. The main motive of terrorists is to deal with both instrumentally and psychologically to create a political change and spread their ideology. Terrorist organizations select members who can adopt their ideology whether by physical torture or by influencing their mind and thought. These targets have no criminal history in past but their mind is being completely changed to adopt terrorists ideology through the process of radicalization. The next step is of spiritual authorization. The mind of vulnerable members of their organization is transformed from normal human being to a well trained terrorist. Most of the time this radicalization process is supported through the misinterpretation of religious scriptures. Transformation of one’s mind and psychology is often become easier when religious sentiment is attached with the process of indoctrination.

b. Effect or implications on individual and

society: Terrorism leaves a everlasting implications on society and personal life of human being. The ultimate aim of terrorist is to spread fear and anxiety in the society to create uncertainty of lives among general public. The more they can create the terror the ideology and virtue can be spread among the concern society and public. Generally guns, bombs are used to terrorize the population of spread fear among large numbers of target so that the effect of

terrorism can last long. Women also are the victim of terrorism through many ways. They are trapped and used as sex weapon and bondage for satisfying terrorist’s physical need. Children are also being radicalized for training them into the ideology of terrorism. Those women and children can never live normal social life. Terrorism also effects as homelessness in targeted population.

Now a day’s social media is an inseparable element of human life. Content posted on social media leaves an everlasting impression on human life and society. The tactic of terrorists is to make a large number of populations watching them and create terror among them. In fulfilling this purpose they use social media like Face book, Twitter, YouTube, Email etc. for spreading their message. They are very much aware that now a day in this contemporary era social media is accessible to everybody very easily so that they use it as a weapon. Terrorists post various offensive videos on You Tube and Face Book. They even offer links, lists and online training classes for becoming a new member of their organization. By posting on social media videos like rape of a Muslim woman, cruel beheading of a boy of certain religious groups they can easily provoke vulnerable humans to join their groups. In the words of Gabriel Weimann:

“Terrorists use of online platforms is not new. After the events of 9/11 and the antiterrorism campaign that followed, a large number of terrorist groups moved to cyberspace, establishing thousands of websites that promoted their messages and activities”⁶.

c. Effect or implications on economy and

environment: Terrorism affects severely on economy and environment. Terrorism spread on environment is called bioterrorism which is a conscious and well planned attempt of spreading terror by biological agents like viruses, bacteria, toxins that cause instability of environment and also cause pandemic, death, illness of human being, animal etc. Biological weapons are very easy to apply and these are more harmful than instrumental weapon and which is more effective destroying economic and environmental stability of a nation. We can put here example of Corona

Virus which was spread worldwide in 2019. Millions of human lives are destroyed in this pandemic which can be equated as bioterrorism. Not only that, post covid-19 symptoms like heart disease, lungs disease, kidney disease are also existed in corona affected people. Agricultural terrorism is a deliberate effort of destructing agricultural production and creating social and economic instability worldwide. Agricultural production determines economic stability and development of a nation. The aim of agro terrorism is to spread crisis of food and drinking water which creates panic and fear of death in public. Terrorists often target agricultural land and product, poultry farms, cattle and inflict various toxic agents in all these but their main target is human who eat these contaminated food and become serious ill and sometime die. These targets which are used in bioterrorism include viruses, bacteria and toxins. Thus destruction of economic stability through agro and bio terrorism makes human life miserable and fearful.

Conclusion:

In the conclusion it is clear that terrorism is a complicated and most multifaceted issue. The significant variable behind terrorism is poverty, social inequality, lack of education, false consciousness on pride, government repression or weak government system. But whatever the cause may be there terrorism is always unethical and against humanity. Terrorism is opposed to Kantian Ethics. German philosopher Immanuel Kant established the theory of Categorical imperative which entails that for an action to be permissible it must be possible to apply to all people without a contradiction occurring. Kant's formulation of humanity is named as Categorical Imperative which states that as an end in itself, human beings are required never to treat others merely as a means to an end to achieve a goal. But in the act of terrorism a target human being is always treated only as a means of a goal so the act of terrorism could not be universalized. So, it is not permitted according to Kantian Ethics. Not only from the ethical perspectives but also from the perspectives of human rights terrorism could not be permissible. Terrorism directly violates human right because it violates human's right to life, liberty of choice. It destabilizes peace and security of a nation and threatens social and economical development. In ethical philosophy

the theory of utilitarianism determines right from wrong by focusing on its outcome. As a form of consequentialism this theory advocates that to be ethically right one has to produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Utilitarianism also entails that an event that promotes happiness to all is good and everyone's happiness is equally important. But if we look at the nature and consequence of terrorism we can find that terrorism does not go with the theory of utilitarianism because terror, death can never bring happiness, equality in human life and society. We must remember that political interest is a short term gain but human interest is a long term gain. Because political interest has extrinsic value whereas human life has intrinsic value. So, we must conclude that terrorism is not ethically permitted as it is opposed to humanity and ethics.

So, terrorism in any form must be bracketed for the greater interest of humanity. Sometimes terrorism is praised for its patriotic nature. But patriotism cannot be based on terrorist activities. If we think that for the sake of patriotism application of terrorism is ethical then surely we are applying the sense of patriotism comparatively in a narrower sense. Patriotism does not mean to take other's lives or to destroy the property of others in the name of patriotic act. Rather, patriotism means a strong positive sense of humanity where all members of a country will equally treated in respect of human rights and fundamental duties. In this sense terrorism in the name of patriotism cannot be accepted. Patriotism is nothing but a socio-political attitude in favour of a particular country. That does not mean that the interest of the people of the other countries is vulnerable to violate. There should be, there must be equal and reciprocal respect for each other.

Keeping focus on this discussion we can come to the final step of the paper to say that terrorism in no case is permissible.

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